



Children's and Adolescents' Evaluations of Intergroup Exclusion in Interracial and Interwealth Peer Contexts

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Children and adolescents ($N = 153$, ages 8–14 years, $M_{\text{age}} = 11.46$ years) predicted and evaluated peer exclusion in interwealth (high-wealth and low-wealth) and interracial (African American and European American) contexts. With age, participants increasingly expected high-wealth groups to be more exclusive than low-wealth groups, regardless of their depicted race. Furthermore, children evaluated interwealth exclusion less negatively than interracial exclusion, and children who identified as higher in wealth evaluated interwealth exclusion less negatively than did children who identified as lower in wealth. Children cited explicit negative stereotypes about high-wealth groups in their justifications, while rarely citing stereotypes about low-wealth groups or racial groups. Results revealed that both race and wealth are important factors that children consider when evaluating peer exclusion.

Social exclusion based on group membership, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and wealth, is often related to prejudice. Understanding the factors that children and adolescents view as legitimate bases to exclude a peer from a social group is an important window into the origins of prejudice in childhood (Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013; Killen & Rutland, 2011; Mulvey, 2016). One form of intergroup exclusion that is particularly prevalent in childhood and adolescence is interracial exclusion—exclusion based solely on an individual's racial group membership (Brown, 2017; Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005). Interracial exclusion is grounded in biases that are present in young children and are often maintained throughout the life span. Racial biases appear early in life and are associated with

children's abilities to form and maintain social relationships (Kinzler & Spelke, 2011; Newheiser, Dunham, Merrill, Hoosain, & Olson, 2014). Research on racial biases and in-group preference have shown that these early negative biases may even lead to prejudicial attitudes toward racial out-group members (Liu et al., 2015; Renno & Shutts, 2015). Racial prejudices can be exacerbated in peer contexts, as children may selectively include those who are racially most similar to themselves while excluding those of other racial groups (Brown, 2017; Cooley, Burkholder, & Killen, 2019; McGlothlin & Killen, 2010).

However, individuals are members of many social groups in addition to race (McGuire, Rutland, & Nesdale, 2015; Rutland, Nesdale, & Brown, 2017). For example, an individual may be both European American and wealthy. Thus, children's evaluations and preferences may be uniquely impacted by experiences navigating groups that share some of their memberships (e.g., race) but not others (e.g., wealth). Research has not yet explored, however, whether children differentially evaluate intergroup exclusion in a multigroup context, especially when both shared and unshared group memberships are highlighted. Therefore, how these

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multiple group memberships intersect, as well as the outcomes of being a member of more than one group, have recently been discussed as an important topic for empirical investigation (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Ghavami & Peplau, 2018; Rogers, Scott, & Way, 2015).

Two group memberships that are salient in development within intergroup peer contexts are race and wealth status. Highlighting wealth and race as group memberships within peer exclusion contexts provides an important place to begin to disentangle how children evaluate peer exclusion within a multigroup context. Race and wealth are associated in many societies, including the United States. In fact, between early childhood and early adolescence children in the United States increasingly associate racial and wealth group memberships (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Shutts, Brey, Dornbusch, Slywotzky, & Olson, 2016). For example, in early and middle childhood, both African American and European American children report perceptions that African Americans will have lower levels of wealth and European Americans will have higher levels of wealth (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Shutts et al., 2016). Additionally, there is evidence that European American children may associate race with wealth as early as 4 years-of-age (Shutts et al., 2016). Because children and adolescents associate wealth and race, it may be that they are also using perceptions and stereotypes about wealth to make assumptions and predictions about members of different racial groups. These wealth-based assumptions may be used to further justify decisions to include or exclude racial out-group peers from groups or activities.

An essential step for disentangling how children and adolescents evaluate peer exclusion in interracial and interwealth contexts is to assess children's evaluations of interracial and interwealth exclusion while experimentally equating their prior assumptions about the other social category. Specifically, by experimentally matching excluding groups and the targets of exclusion on one social group membership but not the other, children's evaluations of (solely) interracial exclusion and (solely) interwealth exclusion can be assessed. Despite extensive research about social exclusion based on racial group membership, no research to date has been conducted on children's and adolescents' predictions and evaluations regarding peer exclusion based on wealth and racial group memberships when the other factor is held constant.

To address these questions, this study presented 8- to 14-year-olds intergroup exclusion vignettes to

assess perceptions of group exclusivity and evaluations of groups' decisions to exclude peers based on either their wealth or their racial group memberships. Furthermore, this study tested whether children's and adolescents' own racial or wealth background contributed to their perceptions and judgments of the instances of exclusion, and whether group-based stereotypes (e.g., stereotypes about wealth) influenced children's predictions and evaluations about intergroup exclusion based on an individual's wealth or racial group membership.

Children's Social Group Understanding About Wealth

By 8 years of age, children have an emerging awareness of some of the factors contributing to wealth status (Bonn, Earle, Lea, & Webley, 1999; Leahy, 1981; Mistry, Brown, White, Chow, & Gillen-O'Neel, 2015; Shutts et al., 2016; Sigelman, 2012). Most often, children associate differing wealth statuses with the quantity of monetary resources an individual possesses, as well as with differing quality of material items (such as houses and cars) and access to opportunities (such as education, vacations, and summer camps; Bonn et al., 1999; Driscoll, Mayer, & Belk, 1985; Elenbaas & Killen, 2018; Mistry et al., 2015). Children also make assumptions about an individual's wealth group membership using physical appearance and levels of education (Ramsey, 1991; Sigelman, 2013).

Furthermore, children's perception of their own wealth status in comparison to that of their peers may be a powerful predictor of their opinions of other wealth groups (Mistry et al., 2015). Children's perceptions of their own wealth status have recently been measured through self-reported subjective social status, which is the perception of one's familial wealth in relation to one's community (Goodman, Maxwell, Malspeis, & Adler, 2015; Goodman et al., 2000, 2001; Mistry et al., 2015). This measure has increasingly been utilized in developmental research to represent children's perceptions of their own wealth group membership, as children's subjective social status becomes largely stable in late childhood and adolescence and correlates with traditional measures of socioeconomic status and their parents' subjective social status (Goodman et al., 2015; Mistry et al., 2015).

Stereotypes About Wealth

In addition to categorizing themselves and others into wealth groups, children evaluate others based on their wealth group membership. Specifically,

children hold stereotypes about wealthy and poor individuals related to character trait attributions or perceptions about the acquisition of wealth (Elenbaas & Killen, 2018; Mistry et al., 2015; Sigelman, 2012). During the transition from early childhood to early adolescence, children increasingly perceive members of high-wealth groups as competent, hardworking, and smart, while members of low-wealth groups are often associated with laziness and low ability (Leahy, 1981; Mistry et al., 2015; Sigelman, 2012; Woods, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2005). These positive attributes are most often documented in academic or work contexts. At the same time, research assessing children's attitudes about wealth status in social contexts has begun to reveal some of the negative stereotypes that children hold regarding high-wealth groups (e.g., selfish, entitled; Elenbaas & Killen, 2018).

While much less developmental research has focused on the social (rather than the academic or work) context, research with adults shows similar patterns, with wealthy individuals perceived as competent but also as cold and calculating (Fiske, 2002). What remains unknown is whether and how children apply stereotypes about wealth status in peer contexts involving decisions about exclusion, and how such decisions contrast with other categories for exclusion such as race or ethnicity. Because children hold negative stereotypes about high-wealth individuals relating to selfishness and entitlement, it is possible that children associate wealth with exclusivity. Therefore, high-wealth groups may be viewed as particularly exclusive in peer contexts, justified by stereotypes relating high-wealth groups to unsavory social traits like entitlement.

Wealth in an Interracial Context

Children in the United States often associate ethnic majority groups (e.g., European American) with high-wealth status and ethnic minority groups (e.g., African American) with lower wealth status (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Shutts et al., 2016), raising the possibility that children may likewise use race to make inferences about wealth dis/similarities in peer contexts. Given the prevalence of interracial exclusion in childhood, a crucial question concerns whether children's reasoning about this type of peer exclusion might also be influenced by their conceptions of wealth status.

Moreover, children may evaluate exclusion differently when wealth is held constant in interracial contexts and when race is held constant in interwealth

contexts. For example, children who justify interracial exclusion may do so due to their stereotypic associations of wealth and race. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically examine how children weigh information about peers' race and wealth status simultaneously when evaluating exclusion decisions within peer contexts.

Group Membership in Intergroup Peer Exclusion

Children's wealth group membership (subjective social status) and racial group membership may also influence their evaluations about the wrongfulness or acceptability of exclusion. Previous developmental research suggests that European American youth sometimes evaluate interracial exclusion as more likely and acceptable than their African American peers (Cooley et al., 2019; Newheiser & Olson, 2012). Additionally, European American children are also more likely than African American children to endorse reasons for engaging in interracial exclusion (such as a person's parents being uncomfortable; Killen, Henning, Kelly, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). Research has yet to explore children's evaluations of exclusion on the basis of wealth in an intergroup context, but based on previous research on interracial exclusion it is possible that wealth group membership may also differentially influence children's evaluations of interwealth exclusion perpetrated by others.

Present Study

This study investigated children's predictions and evaluations of intergroup peer social exclusion based on wealth and racial group memberships. Specifically, this study examined age-related changes in children's expectations regarding exclusivity in two types of peer exclusion decisions, interracial (when wealth was held constant) and interwealth (when race was held constant). Children aged 8–14 years were sampled given previous research demonstrating that knowledge about wealth status increases during the early adolescent period (Mistry et al., 2015; Sigelman, 2013) and a decline of interracial friendships occurs by early adolescence (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). Additionally, during this age range peer groups become increasingly important factors in children's decision making about exclusion, and children have a developing awareness of the group factors contributing to their social decisions (Killen et al., 2013; Killen & Rutland, 2011). Thus, this developmental timeframe is especially relevant for

addressing questions about intergroup peer exclusion based on wealth and race.

Participants in this study were asked to make a series of peer group exclusion decisions, in which the race and the wealth status of peer groups were varied. The stimuli featured African American and European American children, and participants were also African American and European American children (recruited from the same range of middle to upper middle income families). Participants also provided justifications for their predictions of group exclusivity and their evaluations of intergroup exclusion, which included stereotypes about either wealth or race, perceptions of similarity, wrongfulness of exclusion, and wrongfulness of discrimination (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010).

Theoretical Model

The research aims, hypotheses, and design were informed by the Social Reasoning Developmental Model (SRD; Killen & Rutland, 2011). SRD combines theories from developmental psychology (social domain theory) and social psychology (social identity theory) to frame children's intergroup exclusion decisions as grounded in reasoning about social norms, morality, and group identity (McGuire, Rizzo, Killen, & Rutland, 2018; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turiel, 2002). The SRD framework proposes that children do not uniformly endorse either exclusion or inclusion in intergroup contexts. Instead, by early adolescence, children can more consistently coordinate multiple factors making decisions in intergroup peer contexts (Killen, Elenbaas, & Rutland, 2016). These multiple factors include moral concerns such as priority for fair and equal treatment of diverse others, as well as group concerns such as in-group bias and stereotypes. When children interpret situations using moral reasoning, they often make inclusive decisions and reject exclusion of peers solely on the basis of group membership (Cooley et al., 2019). Yet, when reasoning about stereotypes or group functioning is prioritized, children often endorse exclusion of out-group members which leads to prejudicial treatment (Killen & Rutland, 2011).

In this study, we investigated whether children's biases about race would manifest in decisions about social exclusion when wealth was held constant, and whether biases about wealth would emerge in the same types of decisions when race was held constant. We formulated five primary hypotheses for this study.

Hypotheses

Regarding children's predictions of group exclusivity, we predicted that: (H1) with age, children would predict that high-wealth groups, regardless of their race, would be more exclusive than lower wealth groups; (H2) with age, children would increasingly reference negative stereotypes about high-wealth groups in justifying their perceptions, as recent studies have shown that the negative stereotypes associated with high-wealth individuals may be especially salient in peer contexts (Elenbaas & Killen, 2018).

Regarding children's evaluations of intergroup exclusion, we predicted that: (H3) children would evaluate exclusion based on wealth as less wrong than exclusion based on race, as several studies indicate that children recognize the wrongfulness of interracial exclusion while simultaneously endorsing exclusion of other social groups (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002). Furthermore, (H4) children's own perceived group memberships (specifically their subjective social status and their race) would influence children's evaluations of intergroup exclusion, with groups less likely to experience exclusion (high-wealth and European American) evaluating exclusion as more acceptable. Finally, (H5) children would be more likely to refer to stereotypes about wealth groups than to stereotypes about racial groups when justifying their evaluations, similar to past research showing that stereotype use is associated with rating exclusion as more acceptable (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Horn, 2003).

Method

Participants included 153 children between 8 and 14 years of age ($M_{\text{age}} = 11.46$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.72$; 58% female) recruited from seven schools and summer camps in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Sample size was determined using a priori power analyses using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), which revealed that in order to detect small to medium effects, a minimum of approximately 138 participants would be necessary to test our hypotheses.

Because both racial and wealth group memberships were of interest in this study, the sample was balanced by race and income levels. As identified by their parents, approximately half of the participants were African American ($n = 80$; $M_{\text{age}} = 11.25$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.76$) and half were European American ($n = 73$; $M_{\text{age}} = 11.69$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.65$).

According to parent reported household annual income, both the African American families and the European American families reported slightly above average income levels for their family in comparison with the region, with African American participants' median household income averaging between \$150,000 and \$180,000, and European American participants' median household income averaging between \$120,000 and \$150,000. The median income for a family of four in the region of data collection in 2017 was \$110,300. African American families reported a slightly higher annual household income level on average than European American families; $F(1, 93) = 4.75, p = .03$.

Procedure

This project was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Maryland. All participants received written parental consent to participate and gave verbal assent prior to study administration. Participants completed individual interviews in a quiet space at their school or camp with trained experimenters who were blind to study hypotheses. The interview was accompanied by a PowerPoint that included brightly colored pictures of children and visual representations of wealth. The interview lasted 20 min.

Design

Participants were first introduced to clubs at a fictional school using photos of actual children associated with each club. The clubs were visually depicted to be made up of 6 members (3 boys and 3 girls) who shared the same racial group membership (African American or European American) and wealth group membership (low or high). Children in the photos were selected for similar attractiveness and facial affect by adult research assistants; all had neutral to positive facial expressions. Race was depicted through skin tone differences in the characters.

Wealth was depicted through monetary resources, type of house, type of car, and access to vacations. The high-wealth group was associated with a large stack of dollar bills, an expensive looking house, a brand new sports car, and a picture depicting a beach vacation. The low-wealth group was associated with a small stack of dollar bills, a worn down house, a rusty car, and a picture of an old swing set in a backyard. These depictions of wealth are similar to previous studies on children's understanding of wealth (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Mistry et al., 2015).

Measures

The study reported in this article was part of a larger project on children's and adolescents' social reasoning. The four assessments reported here are: Predictions of Group Exclusivity, Evaluations of Intergroup Exclusion, Justifications for Evaluations, and Subjective Social Status.

Predictions of Group Exclusivity

To examine whether participants would predict that groups would be more likely to exclude on the basis of wealth or on the basis of race, participants answered the following prompt, "Who do you think would be more likely to say that someone cannot join their club, [Club X] or [Club Y]?" while the research assistant pointed to the two clubs. After participants made their prediction, the interviewer followed up by asking children to explain their decision ("Why?").

Counterbalancing. All participants answered one prompt for the Predictions of Group Exclusivity measure. Half of the participants received Version 1, in which they viewed a high-wealth African American club and a low-wealth European American club. Half of the participants received Version 2, in which they viewed a high-wealth European American club and a low-wealth African American club. Responses (in both versions) were coded as (0) for selecting the low-wealth club and (1) for selecting the high-wealth club.

Evaluations of Intergroup Exclusion

All participants were asked to evaluate four different instances in which a single individual was excluded by an after-school club. These four exclusion scenarios included two instances of interracial exclusion and two instances of interwealth exclusion (all within-subjects). What differed between-subjects was whether the instances of interracial exclusion occurred among high-wealth or low-wealth peers, and whether the instances of interwealth exclusion occurred among African American or European American peers.

To examine evaluations of intergroup exclusion, participants answered the same two questions (evaluation and reasoning) about each of the four instances of exclusion described below. In each case the act of excluding was described as follows:

Now let's say that [Peer] wanted to join the [Club]. The [Club] now has to decide if [Peer]

can join their club. They decide that [Peer] *cannot* join their club. Is it okay or not okay for the [Club] to say that [Peer] cannot join their club?

Participants reported their evaluations on a 6-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*really not okay*) to 6 (*really okay*). The interviewer followed up by asking children to explain their evaluation (“Why?”).

Interracial exclusion and interwealth exclusion. That is, for the *interracial* exclusion contexts, all children evaluated two events: (a) the exclusion of an African American from a European American club and (b) the exclusion of a European American from an African American club. In both cases, the peer and club shared a wealth group membership (either high- or low-wealth), which was manipulated between subjects. In parallel fashion, for the *interwealth* exclusion contexts all children evaluated two events: (a) the exclusion of a low-wealth peer from a high-wealth club and (b) the exclusion of a high-wealth peer from a low-wealth club. In both cases, the peer and the club shared a racial group membership (either African American or European American), which was manipulated between-subjects.

Counterbalancing. To achieve this between- and within-subjects design while ensuring that all participants saw some stimuli depicting both races and both wealth statuses, we established two versions of the experimental protocol (as indicated earlier). In Version 1 participants saw a low-wealth *European American* club exclude a low-wealth *African American* peer and a high-wealth *African American* club exclude a high-wealth *European American* peer for their instances of interracial exclusion (i.e., club and target match on wealth, differ on race). These participants also saw an African American *high-wealth* club exclude an African American *low-wealth* peer and a European American *low-wealth* club exclude a European American *high-wealth* peer for their instances of interwealth exclusion (i.e., club and target match on race, differ on wealth).

In Version 2, participants saw a high-wealth *European American* club exclude a high-wealth *African American* peer and a low-wealth *African American* club exclude a low-wealth *European American* peer for their instances of interracial exclusion (i.e., club and target match on wealth, differ on race). These participants also saw a European American *high-wealth* club exclude a European American *low-wealth* peer and an African American *low-wealth* club exclude an African American *high-wealth* peer for their instances of interwealth exclusion (i.e., club and target match on race, differ on wealth).

Justifications

Children’s reasoning for their predictions and evaluations was audio recorded and later coded into four conceptual categories drawn from the SRD model (Cooley et al., 2019; Rutland et al., 2010). Responses were coded as: (a) *Stereotypes*, (b) *Perceptions of Similarity*, (c) *Wrongfulness of Exclusion*, or (d) *Wrongfulness of Discrimination*. *Stereotypes* was defined as attributes or traits assigned to individuals based solely on group membership (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2006; e.g., “They are rich so they will just brag about all their stuff”; “Black people are just nicer”). *Perceptions of Similarity* was defined as perceiving two individuals to be similar (McClouthlin & Killen, 2005; e.g., “Because they have more money and he has more money too”). *Wrongfulness of Exclusion* was defined as generally rejecting exclusion as unacceptable (Killen & Rutland, 2011; e.g., “He might feel left out, and that’s not okay”; “It’s wrong to exclude someone”). *Wrongfulness of Discrimination* was defined as rejecting exclusion as wrong due to the discriminatory nature of excluding someone due to their group membership (Brown, 2017; e.g., “Because they might be judging her on her skin color and it’s not okay”; “It’s not his fault he’s living rich, they shouldn’t exclude him”). Justifications that did not reference any of these four categories (e.g., “I don’t know”) were coded as Other.

Participants’ responses were coded, and later analyzed, as proportions, with 1 = full use of the category, 0.5 = partial use, 0 = no use of the category. Two research assistants who were blind to the hypotheses of the study conducted the coding. On the basis of 30% of the interviews ($n = 46$), Cohen’s $\kappa = .84$ for interrater reliability.

Children’s Social Group Memberships

Children’s racial group membership was obtained through parental report (as described earlier). To measure children’s perceptions of their family’s wealth in relation to others in their neighborhood, participants completed the subjective social status measure (Goodman et al., 2000; Mistry et al., 2015). This pictorial measure consists of a ladder, each rung containing a number (1–10). Participants were told:

Here is a ladder. Now think about where you live. At the top of the ladder are the people who have the most money and at the bottom of the ladder are the people who have the least money.

Now, think about your family. Where do you think they would be on this ladder? Point to the step where your family would be on this ladder.

Participants indicated the rung on the ladder that best represented their family's wealth in comparison to where they lived, and a research assistant recorded the associated whole number. This measure has been used to represent children's and adolescents' perceived wealth group memberships in several studies (Goodman et al., 2000, 2015; Mistry et al., 2015). In this study participants used most of the 10-point scale (responses ranged from 3 to 10, $M = 6.70$, $SD = 1.48$), and responses were correlated with parent's reported annual income at $r = .25$, $p = .02$. This measure captures children's perceptions of their wealth status in relation to their community.

Results

All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 24 (IBM Corporation, New York, United States). We first conducted preliminary analyses to confirm that children's predictions of group exclusivity and evaluations of intergroup exclusion, as well as their reasoning, did not differ significantly by gender. There were no significant effects ($ps > .05$), thus gender was dropped from subsequent analyses. Next, we calculated ICCs for each variable of interest; these ranged from $-.037$ to $.094$, indicating little shared variance among children from the same sites.

Predictions of Group Exclusivity

Overall, 92% ($n = 141$) of participants predicted that the high-wealth club would be more exclusive than the low-wealth club, $\chi^2(1) = 108.77$, $p < .001$.

To test H1, we ran a binomial logistic regression model testing the effects of Club Race (Version 1, Version 2), Participant Age (8–14 years), Subjective Social Status (high, low by median split), and Participant Race (African American, European American) on predictions of group exclusivity. Participant Age and Club Race were entered in the first step, resulting in a significant improvement in fit from the null model, $\chi^2(2) = 6.82$, $p = .03$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .10$.

Supporting H1, the significant effect for participant age indicated that increasing age was associated with increasing predictions that the high-wealth group would be more likely than the low-wealth group to say that someone could not join

their club, $\beta = .47$, $t(153) = 4.88$, $p = .03$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.60$, 95% CI [1.05, 2.42]; see Figure 1. The effect of Club Race was not significant, $\beta = .50$, $t(153) = 0.59$, $p = .44$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.64$, 95% CI [0.46, 5.86]. Adding Participant Subjective Social Status and Participant Race did not result in a significant improvement in model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 2.549$, $p = .28$, nor did the inclusion of interactions between Age and Club race, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 0.081$, $p = .78$. Thus, from middle childhood to early adolescence children increasingly predicted that the high-wealth group would be more exclusive than the low-wealth group, regardless of group race.

Justifications for Predictions

Overall, 94% ($n = 143$) of children referenced stereotypes when explaining their predictions. There were no references to the other three reasoning categories; the remaining 6% of participants' reasoning was coded as "other." The majority of these participants ($n = 131$, 92% of stereotypes) made references to high-wealth groups' negative qualities like entitlement or rudeness. For example: "Rich people tend to be very exclusive with who they hang out with. They want to be with people like them. They can be snobby and might not appreciate someone different"; "The rich people feel like they're better and people can't be as good as them"; "The popular people and the people with a lot of money only want the people who are like them and they are kind of brats."

As no other conceptual categories were referenced in response to this question, participants' justifications were recoded for analyses as either use of a *negative* stereotype about high-wealth groups (1) or no use of a stereotype (0). To test H2, we ran a binomial logistic regression model testing the effects of Club Race (Version 1, Version 2), Participant Age (8–14 years), Subjective Social Status (high, low by median split), and Participant Race (African American, European American) on participants' specific use of negative stereotypes about high-wealth groups. Participant Age and Club Race were entered in the first step, resulting in a significant improvement in fit from the null model, $\chi^2(2) = 7.35$, $p = .03$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .08$.

Supporting H2, the significant effect of Participant Age revealed that increasing age was associated with increasing use of negative stereotypes about high-wealth groups, $\beta = .39$, $t(153) = 6.53$, $p = .01$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.48$, 95% CI [1.10, 1.99]; see Figure 2. The effect of Club Race was not significant, $\beta = -.05$, $t(153) = 0.01$, $p = .92$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.95$, 95%

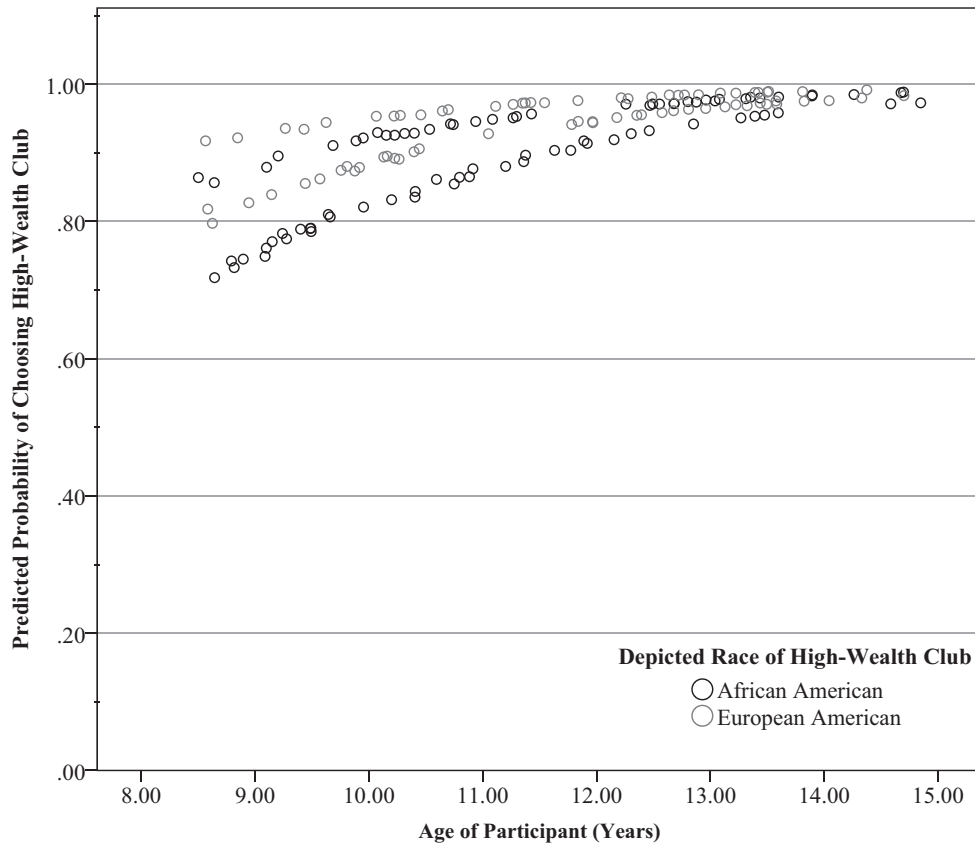


Figure 1. Children's predictions of group exclusivity for the high-wealth group.
 Note. Circles indicate predicted probabilities of selecting the high-wealth group as most exclusive.

CI [0.37, 2.42]. Addition of the predictors Subjective Social Status and Participant Race did not result in a significant improvement in model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 0.47, p = .79$.

Evaluations of Intergroup Exclusion

To test our hypotheses regarding children's evaluations of intergroup exclusion (H3 and H4), we conducted a 2 (Subjective Social Status; high, low by median split) \times 2 (Participant Race; African American, European American) \times 2 (Participant Age; 8–11 years, 12–14 years) \times 2 (Club Group Memberships; Version 1, Version 2) \times 4 (Target of Exclusion; African American Excluded, European American Excluded, High-Wealth Excluded, Low-Wealth Excluded) analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on the last variable.

Supporting H3, the main effect of Target of Exclusion was significant, $F(3, 441) = 15.39, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$. Specifically, follow-up Bonferroni adjusted analyses revealed that participants evaluated instances of interracial exclusion as more

wrong than instances of interwealth exclusion, $ps < .05$. There were no significant differences in participants' evaluations within each context, $ps > .05$ (see Figure 3).

In regards to H4, we found an interaction between Target of Exclusion and Subjective Social Status, $F(3, 441) = 2.69, p = .046, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Follow-up Bonferroni adjusted analyses revealed that participants who were higher in subjective social status found it less wrong to exclude in the interwealth contexts than participants who were lower in subjective social status, $ps < .05$ (see Figure 4). Evaluations of interracial exclusion did not differ significantly as a function of subjective social status, $ps > .05$. Furthermore, there were no significant interactions between Target of Exclusion and Participant Age, $F(3, 441) = 0.90, p = .44, \eta_p^2 = .006$, or Participant Race, $F(3, 441) = 1.18, p = .31, \eta_p^2 = .02$, or between Target of Exclusion and Club Group Memberships, $F(3, 441) = 2.19, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .02$.

Thus, H4 was partially supported. Children with higher perceived wealth viewed interwealth exclusion as less wrong than children with lower

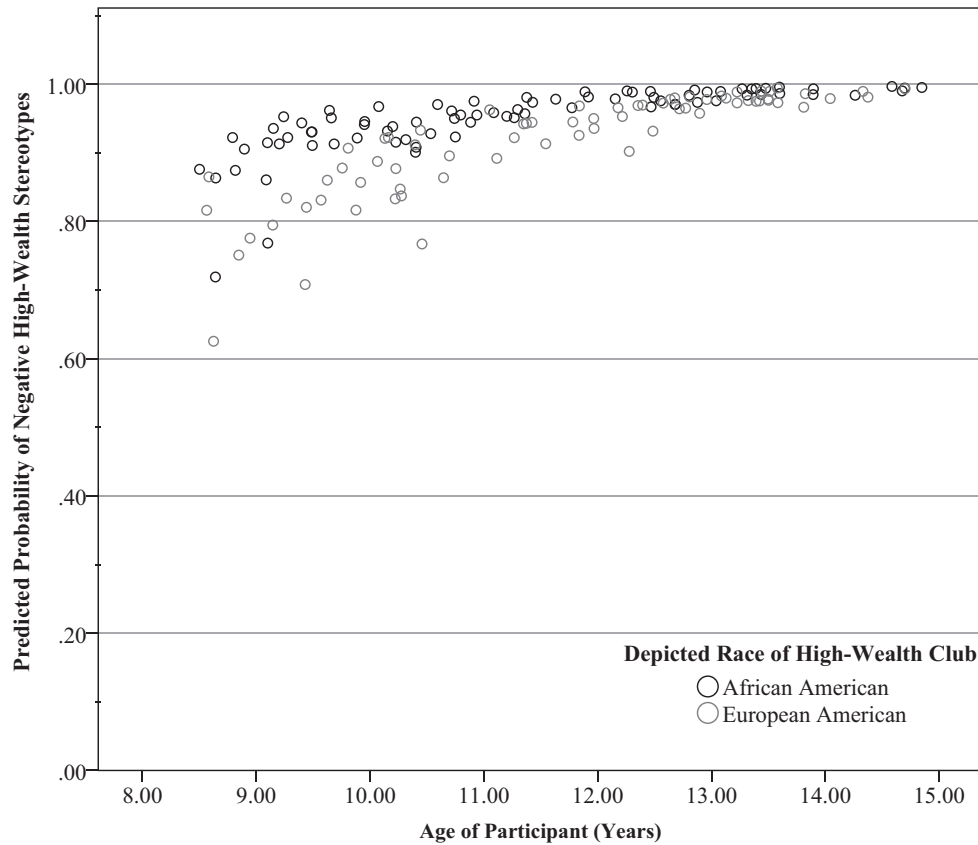


Figure 2. Children's use of negative stereotypes about the high-wealth group to justify predictions of group exclusivity. Note. Circles indicate predicted probabilities of citing negative stereotypes about the high-wealth group to justify perceptions of group exclusivity.

perceived wealth. However, children's racial group membership did not significantly affect their evaluations of interracial exclusion.

Justifications for Evaluations

Next we analyzed participants' reasoning for their decisions (see Table 1).

Stereotypes. To test H5, we conducted a 2 (Subjective Social Status; high, low by median split) \times 2 (Participant Race; African American, European American) \times 2 (Participant Age; 8–11 years, 12–14 years) \times 2 (Club Group Memberships: Version 1, Version 2) \times 4 (Stereotype Use; African American Excluded, European American Excluded, High-Wealth Excluded, Low-Wealth Excluded) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable. The main effect of Stereotype Use was significant, $F(3, 441) = 19.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. No other effects were significant. Supporting H5, follow-up Bonferroni adjusted analyses revealed that participants referenced stereotypes significantly more often when evaluating interwealth exclusion than when

evaluating interracial exclusion. Additionally, children referenced more wealth stereotypes when the high-wealth child was excluded than when the low-wealth child was excluded (Table 1).

Children primarily referenced negative stereotypes about high-wealth vignette characters both in the condition in which the high-wealth child was excluded (94% of stereotypes used) and the condition in which the low-wealth child was excluded (88% of stereotypes used). For example, in regards to the exclusion of a high-wealth child: "They probably think he is going to brag"; "I don't like people who just go around, you know wearing super fancy clothes, showing off." In regards to the exclusion of a low-wealth child: "Because they would probably tease her if she was in the group"; "Because he would probably be the only one that might get bossed around a lot by all of them." The remaining 6% of stereotypes about an excluded high-wealth peer and 12% of stereotypes about an excluded low-wealth peer were negative stereotypes about low-wealth groups. Thus, H5 was supported, as children referenced stereotypes about group

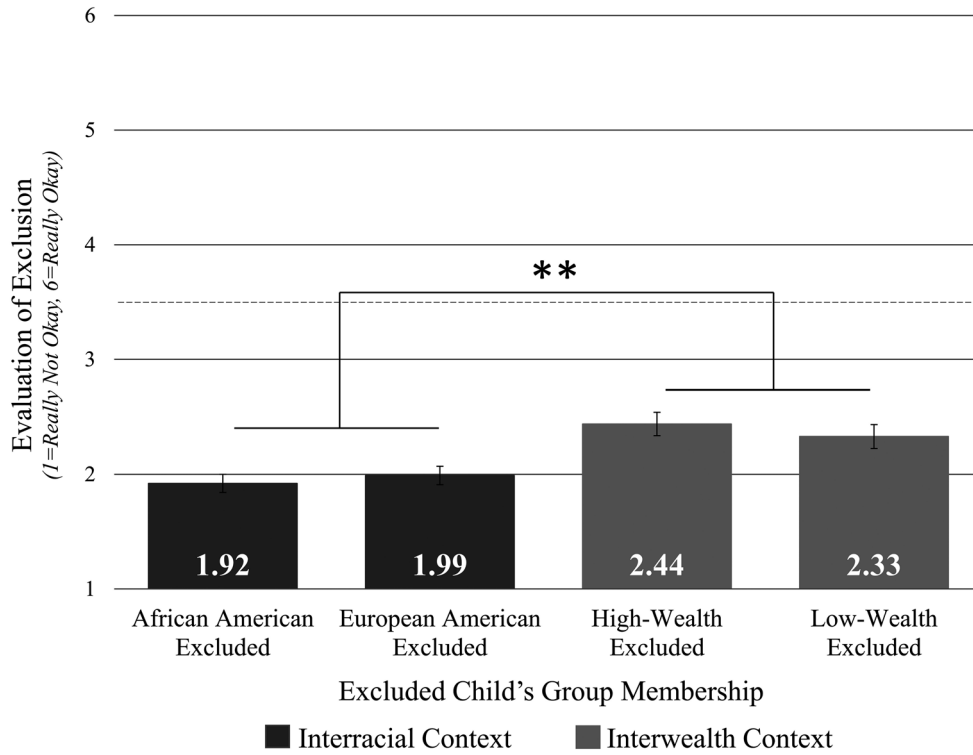


Figure 3. Evaluations of intergroup exclusion in interracial and interwealth contexts.
 Note. **Indicates significance at the .01 level.

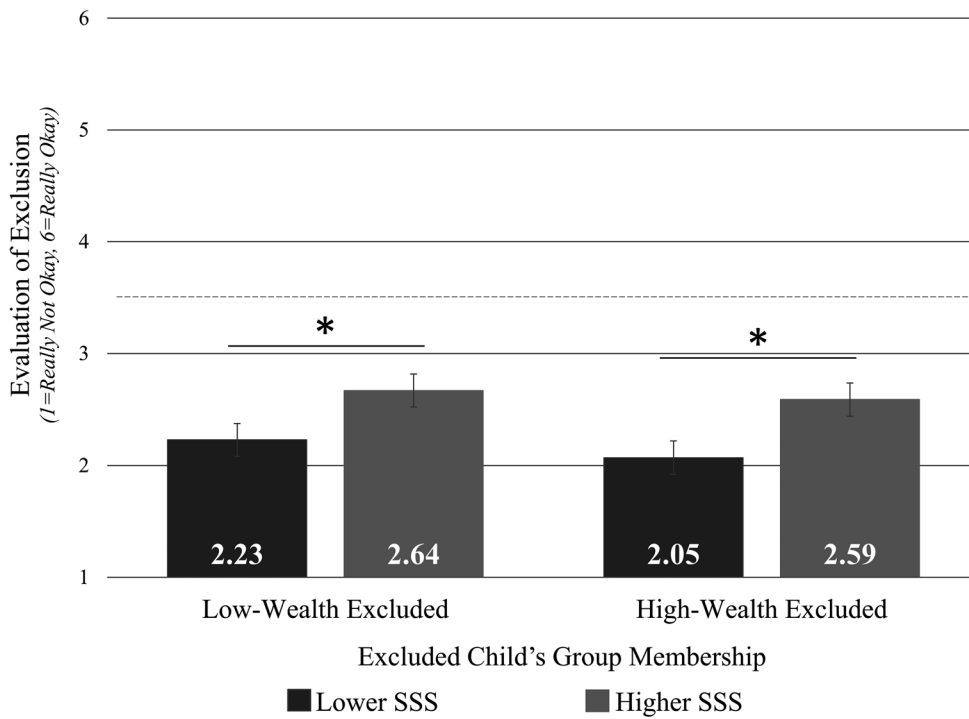


Figure 4. Participants' evaluations of interwealth exclusion by subjective social status.
 Note. *Indicates significance at the .05 level.

Table 1
Children's Justifications for Their Evaluations of Intergroup Exclusion

Context × Target Group	Stereotypes M (SD)	Perceptions of similarity M (SD)	Wrongfulness of exclusion M (SD)	Wrongfulness of discrimination M (SD)	Other M (SD)
Interracial context					
AA excluded	.01 ^a (.11)	.25 ^a (.41)	.40 ^a (.48)	.28 ^a (.44)	.06 (.25)
EA excluded	.00 ^a (.00)	.21 ^{ab} (.36)	.39 ^a (.47)	.29 ^a (.43)	.11 (.32)
Interwealth context					
HW excluded	.19 ^b (.38)	.14 ^{bc} (.34)	.32 ^a (.46)	.22 ^a (.40)	.13 (.33)
LW excluded	.10 ^c (.29)	.11 ^c (.31)	.22 ^b (.42)	.46 ^b (.49)	.11 (.31)

Note. Row proportions total to 1.0. Subscripts that do not match within a column indicate proportions that differ from each other at $p < .05$. AA = African American; EA = European American; HW = High-Wealth; LW = Low-Wealth.

membership in interwealth exclusion contexts more than they did in interracial exclusion contexts, and these stereotypes primarily referenced negative perceptions of high-wealth groups.

Perceptions of similarity. Using the same analytic approach as just described, we examined children's references to Perceptions of Similarity. Only the main effect of Perceptions of Similarity was significant, $F(3, 441) = 5.91$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$ (Table 1). A higher proportion of children referenced perceptions of similarity in the context in which the African American child was excluded than in either interwealth context, and a higher proportion of children also referenced perceptions of similarity in the context in which the European American child was excluded than in the context in which the low-wealth child was excluded. Typical responses included "It's not okay because they have lots in common"; "Because Taylor has so much in common with the Comets, why would they decline someone like that? It doesn't make sense."

Wrongfulness of exclusion. Using the same analytic approach as just described, we examined children's references to Wrongfulness of Exclusion. Only the main effect of Wrongfulness of Exclusion was significant, $F(3, 441) = 8.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$ (Table 1). A higher proportion of participants referenced the general wrongfulness of exclusion (without making specific references to group membership) in all contexts but the one in which a low-wealth child was excluded. Typical responses included "It's not fair because he might feel left out"; "That's excluding people before you even get to know them, so it's not okay."

Wrongfulness of discrimination. Using the same analytic approach as just described, we examined children's references to Wrongfulness of Discrimination. Only the main effect of Wrongfulness of Discrimination was significant, $F(3, 441) = 13.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$ (Table 1). A higher proportion of

children referenced the specific wrongfulness of discriminating against low-wealth individuals than in any other context. Typical responses included "Because it's not fair just because she doesn't have money that you don't want to be friends with somebody"; "Even though he is poor, it wouldn't really be fair to not let him into a club that rich kids are in."

Discussion

This study tested children's and adolescents' predictions and evaluations of groups' decisions to exclude peers in contexts when individuals' and groups' wealth and race were experimentally contrasted. Three primary novel findings emerged. First, children and adolescents expected high-wealth groups to be more socially exclusive than low-wealth groups, regardless of whether the groups were comprised of African American or European American peers, and explained their perceptions in terms of negative stereotypes about high-wealth individuals. Second, children viewed interwealth exclusion (when individuals shared a racial group membership but differed in wealth) as less wrong than interracial exclusion (when individuals shared a wealth group membership but differed in race). Third, children and adolescents who perceived themselves as higher in wealth evaluated interwealth exclusion as less wrong than their peers who perceived themselves as lower in wealth.

The majority of participants viewed high-wealth groups as more willing to exclude a peer than low-wealth groups, and this association increased between late childhood and early adolescence. This suggests that wealth becomes an increasingly salient group membership within peer exclusion contexts over the course of late childhood and early adolescence. There were no age-related differences in

children's perceptions of group exclusivity as a function of group race. Instead, children primarily focused on wealth as an indication for group exclusivity.

The idea that children and adolescents may perceive wealth to be an indicator of group exclusivity fits well with previous research relating wealth to status more generally (e.g., Olson, Shutts, Kinzler, & Weisman, 2012), and with recent studies indicating that children sometimes hold negative perceptions of high-wealth peers (Elenbaas & Killen, 2018). No distinctions were made, however, between high-wealth European American groups and high-wealth African American groups in this context. For this sample of middle- and upper-income European American and African American children and adolescents, wealth was more salient than race when predicting who would exclude a peer.

Furthermore, children referenced negative stereotypes about wealthy peers being snobby, mean, or rude when explaining their perceptions. These findings reveal children's negative perceptions about high-wealth individuals in peer contexts, alongside recent research highlighting negative stereotypes about competence directed at low-wealth groups (Mistry et al., 2015; Shutts et al., 2016; Sigelman, 2012). One possibility is that children often visualize the extreme end of the economic spectrum (such as "billionaires") when describing rich individuals, while identifying themselves as middle class (Mistry et al., 2015). Additionally, although there is evidence that children view differing levels of wealth as distinct social groups (Mistry et al., 2015), wealth is changeable (to an extent) which makes it different from many other social group memberships, such as race or sex, that tend to remain stable throughout one's lifetime. The malleability of wealth could create especially potent stereotypes about wealth groups.

In fact, there is evidence that stereotypes about competency and work ethic lead children to assume that individuals have full agency (and responsibility) to change their wealth group membership (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999). Children's stereotypes about entitlement and selfishness could be operating in a similar way, with children assuming that wealthy people use cold and conniving traits to gain their economic status. These perceived negative traits may be viewed by children as grounds for exclusion.

Along these same lines, children evaluated interwealth exclusion less negatively than interracial exclusion in this after-school club context. Importantly, averages were negative (i.e., "not okay") for both types of exclusion, however, these findings indicate that children may consider it less

deplorable to exclude peers of different economic backgrounds than to exclude members of differing racial groups. Children may be sensitive to patterns of wealth-based segregation that occurs in many school contexts, which may lead to assumptions about the acceptability of interwealth exclusion. Previous research has shown that children and adolescents view interracial exclusion to be more wrong than exclusion based on gender (Killen et al., 2002). In some contexts, children and adolescents expect that their peer groups will include on the basis of ethnicity more than on shared interests, a decision that potentially leads to ethnic segregation (Hitti & Killen, 2015). Thus, wealth could be a social group that children also consider particularly important in peer contexts (Mistry et al., 2015), leading to higher acceptability ratings of exclusion.

Children's and adolescents' own wealth group membership (measured through their subjective social status) predicted their evaluations of exclusion based on wealth. Specifically, children who perceived themselves as higher in wealth compared to their community evaluated exclusion on the basis of wealth as less wrong than children who perceived themselves as lower in wealth. This is consistent with previous research showing that group membership plays a role in how exclusion is evaluated, with traditionally higher status groups (e.g., European Americans, boys) evaluating exclusion of lower status groups as less wrong than their peers of traditionally lower status backgrounds (Cooley et al., 2019; Killen et al., 2002).

This finding is distinct, however, because children with higher perceived wealth evaluated interwealth exclusion as more acceptable both when the low-wealth and high-wealth peer was excluded. These children may have believed that exclusion based on wealth was more valid or accepted overall. It could also be that children who see themselves as lower in wealth than others have experience with or fears about interwealth exclusion, highlighting the wrongfulness of the act. Importantly, this study revealed a difference in children's evaluations as a function of wealth background in a middle to high-middle income sample. Future research should expand this work to examine if wealth differences in evaluations of interwealth exclusion become even more pronounced among especially high- or especially low-wealth samples.

Although this study did find differences in children's evaluations of interwealth exclusion based on their own perceived wealth (i.e., subjective social status), there were no differences in children's judgments of interracial exclusion based on children's

own racial group membership. While previous research has found racial differences in evaluations of interracial exclusion (Cooley et al., 2019), the lack of racial differences in this study could be due to the fact that we experimentally manipulated wealth in the interracial context. Assumed differences in wealth between European Americans and African Americans may contribute to European American children's acceptable evaluations of interracial exclusion in prior studies (e.g., Cooley et al., 2019). By experimentally manipulating wealth within the interracial context, we removed ambiguity that may account for why some children justify exclusion of ethnic minority peers (expecting them to be low-wealth; Stark & Flache, 2012). These findings suggest that, in cases of interracial exclusion, children could be considering wealth differences as a justification for exclusion. If this is the case, it would provide an avenue for intervention in children's evaluations of interracial exclusion as well as for the promotion of cross-race friendships.

Explicitly matching the wealth group membership of the characters within the interracial context may also give European American children less covert avenues for justifying exclusion. Previous research has shown that matching shared interests, for example, increases perceived similarity among peers of different races (McGlothlin & Killen, 2005), and children prefer inclusion of individuals who share interests over those with differing interests but the same racial group membership (Hitti & Killen, 2015). Matching wealth group membership could be operating in a similar way to shared interests, giving children evidence of mutual similarities other than race. Future research should directly evaluate this prediction by testing different assumptions within this multigroup context, including by manipulating groups' and targets' wealth and race so that children must predict group's preferences for inclusion when possible targets match on one category (such as wealth) but mismatch on the other (such as race).

Additionally, children used stereotypes about wealth to justify their evaluations of interwealth exclusion but not to justify their evaluations of interracial exclusion. In fact, children revealed primarily negative stereotypes about high-wealth individuals both when the high-wealth child was the target of exclusion and when the low-wealth child was the target of exclusion (by a high-wealth group), which has implications for how children may navigate wealth as a social group within peer contexts. Previous research has linked children's stereotype use to more acceptable ratings of peer

exclusion (Hitti & Killen, 2015). However, these stereotypes are usually about members of lower status groups (e.g., stereotypes about ethnic minority peers). These negative stereotypes about traditionally high status groups (e.g., high-wealth groups) are particularly novel, especially in intergroup peer exclusion contexts. Future research should further examine children's stereotypes about wealth within peer exclusion contexts and other social contexts relevant in childhood.

Future research should also explore how children's perceptions and evaluations of exclusion based on wealth group membership are related to their stereotypes about high-wealth groups. In particular, future research should investigate how children compare high- and low-wealth groups to middle wealth groups. Most children identify as middle class (Mistry et al., 2015), and thus may be viewing both higher and lower wealth groups as out-groups. Research has also indicated that middle class groups are viewed most positively by children (Mistry et al., 2015), so positive perceptions about the middle class may influence whether they assume a middle class group would exclude others. In this study, the large majority of children viewed the high-wealth group, as opposed to the low-wealth group, as most likely to exclude a peer (92%), and viewed exclusion on the basis of wealth as more acceptable than exclusion on the basis of race. It would be interesting to explore how children's predictions of exclusivity and evaluations change when children are given a third option, such as a middle class group or a "neither group" response. The potential change in the pattern of responses may illuminate how children's judgments and reasoning about exclusion is influenced by a wider representation of the wealth spectrum.

Children also referenced discrimination, or the specific wrongfulness of excluding based on group membership, particularly when evaluating the exclusion of a low-wealth peer by a high-wealth group. This may be because the specific material consequences associated with wealth segregation (such as the preservation of wealth inequality) may cue children into its discriminatory nature. This pattern of results is interesting, and necessitates further research on how children perceive and interpret wealth-based discrimination. In particular, future research should further investigate what unique considerations arise when a low-wealth peer is excluded that generate spontaneous references to discrimination.

This study demonstrated that wealth is an important group in intergroup exclusion contexts,

which has implications for intergroup relationships, including stereotypes, bias, and prejudice, as well as for building social knowledge about inequalities that exist in society. Moreover, the link between wealth and race is important, and future research should further investigate how the two social groups are related in peer contexts. For example, investigating children's and adolescents' judgments about exclusion and inclusion decisions in situations in which more than one group membership is varied (e.g., both wealth and race) would be important for further understanding how these attitudes manifest in decision making about peer relationships.

Children's beliefs about interracial and inter-wealth peer exclusion provide evidence regarding the reduction in negative peer interactions based on group membership as well as the promotion of cross-group friendships. Addressing these conceptions in childhood is important, as these potentially negative beliefs about wealth and race, as well as negative relationships between differing wealth and racial groups may become entrenched by adulthood. Discovering the emergence of and age-related changes to attitudes about interracial and inter-wealth peer exclusion in childhood will provide valuable information for reducing stereotypes and biases as well as promoting positive peer relationships in childhood.

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