The development of stereotyping and exclusion

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This article reviews the developmental science literature on stereotyping and exclusion, with a focus on gender, race, and ethnicity. Stereotyping of others, which is defined as the attribution of traits to individuals based on group membership, is often used to justify exclusion of others in social group contexts. This review includes a focus on the links between these two constructs. Research on stereotyping and exclusion has drawn on several theoretical traditions, including social domain theory, social identity developmental theory, and subjective group dynamics theory, which are also discussed in the context of the research findings. Key findings on stereotyping include categorization and classification in relationship with decreased in-group bias, and the role of stereotypes in encoding information. Findings on exclusion include the use of available information to make judgments, preferences for in-group members who are normative and out-group members who are deviant, the increased importance, with age, of group functioning in exclusion decisions, and decreased negative evaluation of in-group members who partake in exclusionary behaviors. Though little research has explicitly studied the links between stereotyping and exclusion from groups, this review describes the current literature in both areas and suggests future directions for research.

Stereotyping emerges in childhood and contributes to processes related to inclusion and exclusion. This is because exclusion from groups is often justified on the basis of stereotypic expectations. Individuals who do not fit the stereotypic expectations of a group (and the group identity) are vulnerable to being rejected and excluded by the group. Because exclusion is related to negative social consequences in childhood and adulthood, it is important to understand how and why stereotyping emerges in development, and the links to processes of exclusion. This review of the developmental science literature will focus on stereotyping and exclusion in childhood and adolescence, and provide a foundation for understanding issues of prejudice in development.

Stereotyping reflects cognitive categorizing about the world. Cognitive structures include one’s perception of beliefs, knowledge, and expectations about different social groups, which develop during childhood and play a role in how children and adults reason about and interact with others. Social psychologists focus on stereotypes as the cognitive components influencing intergroup behaviors. In this review, due to space limitations, we will focus on cognitive and social-cognitive aspects of stereotyping and exclusion rather than including emotional and affective dimensions as well.

Stereotypes play a fundamental role in discriminatory actions, such as exclusion from peer groups, which children and adolescents experience throughout their lives. Inclusion and exclusion in an intergroup context, which is defined as an interaction with members of an out-group occurs when children relate to their peers in different ways based on their group membership, such as their ethnicity or gender. Although not necessarily detrimental, exclusion can have long-term negative impacts on children who are excluded; for instance, exclusion can lead to long-lasting struggles with depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal.

Research on stereotyping in childhood has typically centered on gender as well as race/ethnicity. Although there is a long history of studying stereotypes about gender and race/ethnicity in adult contexts, less is known about the connection between the
development of stereotyping and exclusion based on gender and race/ethnicity in childhood. The study of the development of stereotyping and exclusion in childhood is based on developmental theories of cognition, including social-cognition and moral judgment. Beginning with Piaget (1932/1965), the field has differentiated into several recent frameworks. For this review, we will focus on two theoretical models, social domain theory\(^{10,11}\) and social identity theory.\(^{12}\)

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF STEREOTYPING AND EXCLUSION RESEARCH**

Piaget (1932/1965) conducted foundational research on the development of social cognition, which he defined as the thought process required for making judgments about the morally correct action in a specific situation. A lack of a moral viewpoint inevitably leads to prejudice, given that acting on prejudicial beliefs, such as those often embodied in stereotyping, violates moral principles of equality and fairness.\(^{13}\) Thus, Piaget’s research on the development of moral principles is relevant for understanding the emergence of stereotyping and exclusion. Piaget, relying on an interview methodology, determined that children’s morality develops as an outcome of social and cognitive abilities. As children begin to interact with others and form peer relationships, they develop more complex understandings of equality, reciprocity, and respect. Piaget’s work, in particular, his focus on the importance of peer relationships in the development of moral reasoning in children, bears on the study of stereotyping and exclusion as these arise in the context of peer interaction and intergroup relations.

Social domain theory\(^{11,14}\) builds on this early theory with its focus on social cognition but deviates from the global stage model by (1) providing a domain-specific account of social development and (2) demonstrating the emergence of morality in early childhood. Extensive research has determined that children’s social reasoning is organized by three domains, the moral, social–conventional, and psychological, which co-occur in development and do not reflect an ordered hierarchical, stage-like trajectory.\(^{11,15}\) Research driven by this theory has shown that children from a very young age (3 years) construct their thinking about the social world by differentiating their experiences based on either the moral domain, which includes actions that have implications for someone else’s welfare, fairness, justice, and rights; the social–conventional domain, which includes actions that are contingent on socially agreed upon rules that are alterable and that, in their absence, will cause no direct harm to be inflicted on another; or the psychological domain, which includes actions related to personal choices and preferences (for a review of theory refer to Smetana (2006)). A key element of social domain theory, which holds relevance for the study of stereotypes and exclusion, is the central focus on children’s reasoning and the recognition that children do distinguish, from very early ages, between behaviors and acts which inherently center on issues such as fairness and justice and those which promote group functioning and social interactions (for a review, see Killen, Sinno, and Margie (2007)). This theory has been applied to the topic of stereotyping and exclusion in several ways, as described below, with the predominant focus being the forms of reasons (e.g., moral, social–conventional, psychological) children and adolescents use to justify or reject exclusion decisions, and how stereotyping is explained by children using social–conventional reasons (e.g., traditions, customs, norms). Moreover, exclusion and stereotyping research has centered on contextual variations, stemming from social domain theory, to understand when and how these constructs emerge in development.

While moral principles are required to reject exclusion based on stereotyping, group identity emerges during childhood, which provides a competing consideration for children, one that has the potential to enhance stereotyping of others. A central theoretical framework which bears on the study of stereotypes, exclusion, and social groups is social identity theory.\(^{12}\) According to social identity theory, individuals strive to maintain their in-group identity by viewing their own social group more positively than other social groups, and to identify with social groups with positive social status. Attempts to see the in-group in increasingly positive ways can lead to prejudice toward members of out-groups.\(^{12}\) Self-categorization theory (SCT Turner et al.,\(^{16}\)) extends this concept of self-identification on the basis of cognitive grouping.\(^{2}\) Therefore, people place themselves in a group that they view as most similar to themselves based on some classification label, which is cognitively contrasted with another classification. Such self-categorization emphasizes positive similarities between individuals of the in-group, thus promoting in-group bias, while also focusing on the negative differences of the out-group which may lead to out-group prejudice. This process, then, creates opportunities for the development of stereotypes and acts of exclusion based on group membership.\(^{3}\)
STEREOTYPING AND CATEGORIZATION AS PRECURSORS OF EXCLUSION

Research, specifically, on stereotyping has framed stereotypes as linked to the ability to cognitively organize the social world into categories and examines how stereotypes are used to rationalize behavior with respect to these categories. In a study on in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice with 4–7 year olds, Aboud found correlations between children's classification skill and their scores on the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure. Children who had higher multiple classification skills, and were thus able to classify stimuli into multiple categories, displayed lower in-group favoritism. Thus, this study indicated that, in fact, children's ability to classify may help to mitigate the development of stereotypes. This is because children were able to simultaneously attribute both positive and negative attributes to the same child, decreasing out-group negativity.

Bigler and Liben tested a similar hypothesis considering the effects of teaching children (5–10 years of age) multiple classification skills on gender stereotyping and information processing. Further supporting Aboud's finding that classification skill may decrease stereotyping, prior to the intervention, a significant positive correlation was found between a child's classification skills and their egalitarian gender attitudes. After intervention, results showed that those children who acquired multiple classification skills and who were trained specifically on social categories improved the most on their egalitarian responses.

In a measure assessing participants' memory for occupations that were gender counter-stereotypic, those who were better classifiers remembered more counter-stereotypic information than those who were not. This did not differ between those who received training classifying social categories or those who were trained with non-social categories, thus suggesting that multiple classification skills help children to process counter-stereotypic information even if they have stereotypic attitudes. In another study assessing individual differences in memory of race-related stereotype-consistent versus stereotype-inconsistent information, Bigler and Liben found another correlation between 4- and 9-year-old children's classification skills and their ability to process specific information.

Using a classification task that included race, gender, and age as possible categories Bigler and Liben found that children's ability to classify was negatively correlated with their stereotypic responses. They also concluded that the problem children had recalling counter-stereotypic information is highly correlated with both children's racial stereotyping and their classification skills, and not related to a child's poor attention, or lower intelligence. Therefore, children's retrieval of information about a category or group is influenced by stereotypes and their ability to classify an individual into one or multiple groups. Yet, while children become capable of classification, stereotyping persists into adulthood. Thus, other explanations are required to explain the trajectory of stereotyping through development.

Stereotype research with adults suggests that people use stereotypes as recall cues. Stereotypes are used when both encoding and retrieving information thus increasing the number of associative paths to stereotypic information. Similar processes may be at work in children's stereotyping processes as well. The relation between stereotypes and memory in children, however, has mostly been studied in the context of children's eye-witness testimony. Young children's encoding, storage and retrieval of information about events are highly influenced by stereotypes and interviewer suggestibility. Two studies that assess the effects of stereotypes on children's testimony propose that it is the schematic nature of stereotypes that helps children remember them. Stereotypes provide information about individuals, which assist children in organizing their memory of specific categories or groups. Research on recollection of categories has shown that children do use schemas to help them remember, and are more likely to remember thematic categories based on functionality than taxonomic lists.

This thematic nature of stereotypes facilitates the encoding of information collected from experiences or the environment, and helps with retrieving information from memory. Stereotypes may also add to information that has not been perceived and misrepresent information that has been perceived. It is worth noting that the relationship between memory and stereotypes is twofold; while on the one hand, stereotypes influence a child's memory, the processes and strategies used to remember also lend themselves to schematic biases that in turn invoke stereotypes. These memory processes to some extent facilitate the use of stereotypic information in children's judgments. However, memory as well as judgment is also driven by the inferences that people make based on what they know. This has been documented when adolescents evaluate peer retribution: in a study which showed that when participants were asked to make judgments about punishment based on ambiguous information, adolescents were more likely to rate punishment for stereotype-consistent transgressions (e.g., jocks
breaking the sound system at a party) as more fair than stereotype-inconsistent transgressions (e.g., computer club members breaking the sound system at a party).29

Drawing on previous literature concerning people’s concepts of intelligence and its impact on self-judgment, Dweck et al.30, Dweck and Leggett,31 Levy and Dweck32 applied the idea of the lay person’s static (entity) versus dynamic (incremental) theory to children’s stereotyping. They hypothesized those who adopt an entity theory and view their social structures as fixed are more likely to stereotype, while those who adhere to an incremental theory and understand their social structures to be malleable are less likely to stereotype. Examining this theory in adults and 11–13 year olds,32,33 findings showed that entity theorists who believed that people’s attributes are fixed displayed higher levels of stereotyping than incremental theorists who thought of people’s attributes as malleable. Studies about the impact of people’s lay theories on stereotype formation based on realistic groups have been conducted only with adults, however, and limited research exists with children.33,34

Recent research has suggested that these implicit theories about intelligence are one component of a broader phenomenon referred to as essentialism.35 Essentialism, the tendency to assume shared invisible traits are held by all members of a group,36,37 may also be at play in some instances of stereotyping,33,38 which can lead to exclusion. A focus on essentialist beliefs appears to impact the development of stereotypes as well as prejudice in certain contexts because essentialism involves generalizing characteristics of an entire group to an individual member of the group. Such generalizations can function to create stereotypes.38

EXCLUSION AND GROUP NORMS

Another explanation for the continuation of stereotyping into adolescence and adulthood lies with the role that stereotyping plays in perpetuating group identity, group norms, and exclusion.1,3 Moreover, social conventional reasoning, identified by social domain theory, often serves to justify stereotyping. Social identity theory proposes that enhancing the group requires in-group favoritism and out-group negativity.3 Out-group negativity may generate stereotyping as well as prejudice and bias. Children frequently base decisions on who to include based on what they believe about others, which is often founded upon the stereotypes that have developed as described above. Studying the social reasoning used by children as they make inclusion and exclusion decisions helps to unveil precisely what role stereotypes and stereotypic information plays in this process.

Recent research on exclusion has focused on children’s social and moral cognition, drawing on social domain theory11,15 to investigate the reasoning used by children in making inclusion and exclusion decisions. The methods used in social domain research provide a platform for testing children’s judgments about social and moral issues in an intergroup context.13 Participants in this line of research are asked to judge and reason about hypothetical scenarios of fairness and justice in which the target’s group membership is manipulated. Children and adolescents have been shown to elicit the use of stereotypes when making their judgments about inclusion and exclusion1 as well as peer retribution,29,39 attributing intentions of others,30 explaining intergroup discomfort,41 and initiating cross-group and cross-race friendships.32,43

When asked to judge prototypic or straightforward exclusion scenarios based on group membership, such as gender and race/ethnicity, preschool aged children are more likely to evaluate exclusion as wrong using equality and fairness reasons than using social–conventional or personal justifications or relying on stereotypes.1,44,45 In complex or ambiguous situations, however, children and adolescents will rely on stereotypes.1 For instance, Theimer, Killen, and Stangor (2001) analyzed European American children’s (mean age ~ 6 years) evaluation of inclusion in an activity based on gender-stereotypic expectations of peer activities (e.g., doll-playing, truck-playing). Results showed that in the absence of additional information about experience with the activity, participants chose to include the child who fit the stereotype of the activity more often and used stereotypic reasoning in justifying their answers (e.g., ‘Boys don’t know how to play with dolls and dolls are only for girls’ or ‘Girls are quiet and they don’t like to play with trucks’).

In continuation of this research, Killen et al.44 investigated age differences (3–5 year olds) in assessing children’s use of stereotypes in reasoning about similar inclusion scenarios as those used in Theimer, Killen, and Stangor (2001) and counter-probed children about their inclusion decision offering them an alternative reason to include the child they did not pick, thus testing their conviction in their decision. Probing revealed that most children who initially used stereotypic information to make their decision did change their minds to focus on moral judgment when given the opportunity (after a probe by the interviewer in which the fairness of turn-taking was mentioned), while those who initially focused on the moral aspects of the situation did not change to consider the
stereotypic argument as often (after a probe by the interviewer in which the stereotype about who plays with toys was mentioned). However, the study did show that younger children were more likely than older children to choose the stereotypic child prior to probing, and were more likely to base their judgment on stereotypic expectations.

Exclusion based on stereotypes has been studied with older children as well as in multifaceted scenarios, where children must weigh multiple types of information in making exclusion decisions. Killen and Stangor (2001) interviewed first, fourth, and seventh graders, using similar gender-stereotypic activity-based scenarios (e.g., boys joining a ballet club and girls joining a baseball team), however they also included multifaceted scenarios, where children were given information about the skill level of the different possible targets for inclusion and exclusion. They found that children rejected straightforward exclusion and used moral reasoning in judging exclusion as wrong. The children generally chose the non-stereotyped child in the equal skill context multifaceted situation, which suggests active inclusivity. Surprisingly, in-group favoritism was not found. Additionally, the researchers found that most children only used one type of justification (social–conventional or moral).

As expected, age-related differences were documented. Specifically, in the unequal skill context, both first and seventh graders favored the stereotypical child, but fourth graders did not. Most children used group functioning (social–conventional reasoning) for justifying the unequal skill situation, but first and fourth graders used more moral reasoning than did seventh graders. Finally, the study showed gender differences, with girls showing a greater concern for inclusivity. Overall, the findings indicated that, with age, group functioning (in the form of social–conventional reasoning) was provided as a basis for exclusion.

Horn46 built from this line of research, capturing the explicit use of stereotypes in making moral judgments about peer relationships in adolescence.46 Using ambiguity in scenarios presented to ninth and eleventh graders that focused on peer cliques (e.g., the ‘cheerleaders’ excluded a ‘gothic,’ the ‘jocks’ excluded a ‘techie’), Horn46 found that such lack of information influenced the use of stereotypes by adolescents. In this study when judging a scenario where only group membership information was provided, participants were more likely to rely on either purely moral concerns (‘It’s unfair to exclude the gothic’) or only stereotypic information (‘A techie is not athletic’) when making decisions about exclusion or distribution of resources. This was compared with scenarios where information about individual merit was given. In ambiguous scenarios, adolescents relied on whatever information was available to make judgments, thus stereotypes served as a source of information. Thus, Horn’s research reveals how complexity, such as multiple considerations, and ambiguity, such as a lack of individuating information, contribute to stereotyping by adolescents regarding exclusion from social cliques.

More recently, social domain theory on exclusion has focused on race and ethnicity.47 A set of studies has examined other variables that contribute to why and how children and adolescents justify or reject exclusion, including social experience, such as intergroup contact and cross-race friendships. These variables stem from both Piagetian theory with his emphasis on peer interaction and social experience contributing to social knowledge, as well as social psychological theory regarding intergroup contact. In Allport’s17 foundation theory on the nature of prejudice, he hypothesized that a set of conditions need to be met for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice;48,49 one of the strongest predictors for prejudice reduction is cross-race friendships.49

Crystal et al.50 tested whether intergroup contact in the form of cross-race friendships was related to evaluations of interracial peer exclusion. Using three contexts that varied in intimacy (friendship, sleepover, dating), the findings indicated that both ethnic majority and minority participants in fourth, seventh, and tenth grade viewed interracial exclusion as more wrong when they had a higher level of intergroup contact, which was a measure that included contact in classrooms, schools, and neighborhoods.50 In another study, researchers demonstrated that intergroup contact in the form of cross-race friendships was significantly related to the use of stereotypes by White European-American students in fourth, seventh, and tenth grade to explain interracial peer discomfort.41

In this study, participants were asked why it was that there might be discomfort in interracial interactions. Students with low reported levels of cross-race friendships were more likely to explain racial discomfort in terms of stereotypes such as lack of shared interests and levels of aggressiveness by the out-group than students with high levels of cross-race friendships.41

Finally, a comparison was made for how ethnic majority and minority US participants (fourth, seventh, tenth grades) evaluated interracial peer encounters in which the purported reason for exclusion by the excluder was either ‘non-race’ such as lack of shared interests, or ‘race-based’ such as explicitly referring to race. Although all participants...
used moral reasons, such as a lack of fairness and unequal treatment to evaluate race-based exclusion, there were differences between the majority and minority samples regarding the ‘non-race’ reasons for exclusion with minority participants viewing it as more wrong than majority participants (and using more moral reasons). For example, minority students viewed a White student not having lunch with a Black student because the Black student ‘did not like soccer’ as less wrong than did ethnic majority students, who viewed this type of decision as a ‘personal choice’ (in a manner similar to how same-race peer encounters would be evaluated). Ethnic minority students referred to reasons such as empathy and perspective taking, as well as reasons referencing a lack of fairness to evaluate exclusion as wrong.

Age-related differences emerged regarding the context. With age, participants viewed exclusion from a sleepover party as wrong, rejecting parental pressure to keep a party same-race; at the same time, with age, participants viewed exclusion from a friendship encounter as legitimate, accepting peer pressure to conform to same-race dating expectations. As a whole, these findings provide information regarding how stereotypic expectations emerge, and are related to evaluations of intergroup exclusion. Focusing on group functioning becomes more salient for children, with age, and particularly by adolescence. In fact, the roots of group identity begin in early childhood.

As children begin to associate with social groups, they develop preferences for different groups based on behaviors or traits of individuals within those groups, thus intergroup relations find a foothold in stereotypic beliefs which children form about other groups.2,12,51,52 A theoretical framework that has looked at this process is social identity development theory (SIDT), which, while focused on ethnic prejudice, provides a foundation for thinking about intergroup contact and conceptions of the in-group and out-group in relation to the self. SIDT proposes that children move through four phases as they develop ethnic prejudice: undifferentiated, ethnic awareness, ethnic preference, and ethnic prejudice.53 SIDT is relevant for studying many forms of exclusion (ethnic or otherwise) because of its analysis of group relationships in the ethnic preference phase.

Specifically, according to SIDT, as children enter the ethnic preference phase, they exhibit a concern with maintaining membership in the in-group and a strong focus on the identity of that in-group.54 SIDT would predict, then, that children in the ethnic preference phase would adhere tightly to in-group norms, including any in-group norms of exclusion, which may lead to both stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward the out-group and move them into the ethnic prejudice phase.54 Children ages 4–5 years old, according to SIDT, are likely in the ethnic preference phase and may be engaging in out-group derogation.54 The theory proposes that the development of out-group derogation is dependent on several factors: the level of identification that a child has with his/her in-group, the extent to which prejudice is an in-group norm, and the extent to which the in-group members perceive the members of the out-group as a threat.54–56

Nesdale et al.54 assessed SIDT’s prediction that children would actively dislike out-group members when the in-group had a norm of exclusion as well as when out-group threat was present. Their findings, which revealed that group norms of exclusion do lead to children developing more prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes toward the out-group, provide support for much of SIDT.54 However, they found age-related changes not accounted for by SIDT: when the in-group held a norm of exclusion, older children expressed neutrality toward the out-group, not outright dislike.54 Research outside of SIDT has revealed that, with age, children are less likely to attribute negative traits to the out-group.57 Thus, these findings reveal that there may be greater complexity to individuals’ experiences and decision making with regard to in- and out-groups.

Children use stereotypic information when making decisions about how much they like in- and out-group members and, therefore, whether they will include or exclude these members. Nesdale55 conducted a study focused explicitly on how children use stereotypic information in making judgments about how much they like or dislike in-group members, with a focus on ethnic groups. Specifically, 8-, 10-, and 12-year-old children were told stories about in- and out-group members of different ethnic groups (Australians and Vietnamese) who displayed behavior that was either stereotype-consistent or stereotype-inconsistent for their ethnic group. Not only did older children have better memory recall for the in-group member stereotype-inconsistent information, but also they liked the out-group member (who expressed stereotype-inconsistent information) better than the in-group member who expressed stereotype-inconsistent information. Younger children still preferred the in-group member, even when this member expressed stereotype-inconsistent information. Thus, children do actively use stereotypes in making decisions about who they like.

This finding leads directly to the work of Abrams and Rutland, who have looked explicitly at how one makes decisions about including or excluding...
in- and out-group members who adhere to or resist group norms. Their work, which has focused on the intersection of stereotyping and exclusion in an intergroup context, is founded upon the framework of subjective group dynamics (SGD). SGD focuses on group identity and the relationship between judgments about members of one’s in-group and judgments about in-groups and out-groups generally. Specifically, SGD examines children’s reasoning about in- and out-group members who express deviant and normative attitudes toward the group.

Research has found that children prefer individuals who express normative, or loyal, ideas about the in-group, regardless of their group affiliation and likewise express greater dislike for individuals who deviate from the in-group norms. Additionally, research on SGD has shown that, in moral situations, children use intergroup bias, which often has its foundations in stereotypes, for group-based evaluations, but not morality-based evaluations. SGD has also revealed that, with age, children adhere more to group norms and rely more on group functioning in decision making. Thus, SGD brings to the study of exclusion a focus on the salience of group identity and an understanding of how individuals evaluate in- and out-group members who are either loyal or deviant toward group norms.

Specific findings from within this theoretical framework illuminate exactly how children use information about groups, specifically group norms, in making decisions about who to exclude. In one study, focused on summer school-based groups, which are minimal where children have not had time to form strong bonds or relationships with their in-group members, Abrams et al. found that children (6–7 year olds and 10–11 year olds) showed a strong in-group bias, even though the groups were minimal. Additionally, older children were even more focused on differentiating their responses to loyal and deviant in- and out-group members than younger children. Thus, older children seem better able to consider multiple categories, which lead to a greater dislike for group members who deviate from their own in-group norms and greater like for group members who support in-group norms. Older children, then, in some ways are able to overcome their conceptions of the out-group, which may be based on stereotypes, and value individual out-group members who express deviant views, thus supporting the in-group.

Building on this study, researchers found, contrary to earlier suggestions, that multiple classification skill is not related to intergroup bias. In other words, while children, with age, did develop better multiple classification abilities, it did not reduce their level of intergroup bias. Instead, it seems that with age, children are even more focused on group dynamics and their concern with being loyal to group norms increases, which may perpetuate stereotypes and lead to greater exclusion. This finding is in contrast to other SGD work which found that older children showed decreased racial prejudice and stereotyping, due to public self-focus. In other words, older children expressed less intergroup bias because of their perception that adults would not approve of such beliefs. Thus, while adults can have a powerful impact on the explicit expression of prejudicial attitudes, children seem poised to continue exclusive behavior based on adherence to group norms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, age-related changes regarding stereotyping and exclusion are multiple. A few readily identifiable patterns are that: (1) with age, explicit stereotypes diminish in straightforward contexts but are activated in complex exclusion situations; (2) with age, multiple forms of reasoning are brought to bear on exclusion decisions, including moral, conventional, and psychological reasons; (3) social identity increases with age and contributes to in-group bias; (4) with age, an understanding of group dynamics becomes more complex and knowledge enables children to differentiate in-group identity and social norms which bear on exclusion; (5) group identity can both foster and hinder stereotyping, depending on the context; and (6) social experience in the form of intergroup contact and cross-group friendships can reduce prejudice and increase tolerance.

While much research has been conducted investigating the developmental trajectory of stereotypes and exclusion, there are many gaps to be filled. Further analysis is needed to understand what drives children’s use of group functioning in their judgments. Can it be explained by a stereotypic understanding that only people of the same social category can function well together in a group, or are there other reasons? Although the research reviewed touches on some studies that look at developmental differences in moral reasoning, there is currently no line of work that tracks the frequency or contextual relevance of the use of stereotypes developmentally. Further research is necessary to document children’s use of stereotypes in moral reasoning and how this changes cognitively and contextually from early childhood to adolescence.

This review has mapped the importance of categorization and classification skills to children’s use of stereotypes and their egalitarian attitudes. More research is needed to investigate how and when
these skills bear on children’s conceptualization of and theorizing about social exclusion.

It has been found that stereotypes add to or distort children’s recollection of information, regardless of if the information is factual or false. The schematic process involved in remembering stereotypes and retrieving them from memory does provide some insight into the role of memory in invoking stereotypes in children. However, developmental scientists can draw from the extant and vast research on stereotypes and memory processes with adults. Social psychologist have conducted research with a plethora of samples of university students to investigate the associative-network model and the schema-pointer tag model and how they can be applied to remembering expectancy-congruent and expectancy-incongruent information, or similarly stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent information. Creating age relevant measures and testing these memory processes in children can help further clarify how stereotypes are encoded, stored, and retrieved from memory.

While exclusion literature has drawn extensively on minimal groups and ethnic groups, more work should be done drawing out exclusion based on gender, religion, language, and culture, as these are areas of continued relevance in the increasingly global world. By investigating and classifying the reasoning used by children and adolescents when making inclusion and exclusion decisions, researchers can identify how children interpret these social experiences, and thereby reveal the areas for change and intervention. Ultimately, the application of most of the research outlined above should be in the development of effective curricula to promote positive intergroup experiences and to reduce or diminish stereotypes, bias, and discrimination. A greater awareness of the connections between stereotyping and exclusion will provide an empirical database for the development of effective interventions designed to reduce prejudice.

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FURTHER READING

