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How Peer Norms of Inclusion and Exclusion Predict Children's Interest in Cross-Ethnic Friendships

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The present research examines how perceived inclusive and exclusive peer norms for cross-ethnic relations contribute to predicting interest in cross-ethnic friendship among ethnic minority and majority children. Across two survey studies, European American and African American children (Study 1) and European American and Latino American children (Study 2) reported on the extent to which they perceived inclusive and exclusive peer norms for cross-ethnic relations, as well as their own interest in developing cross-ethnic friendships. Results from both studies showed that perceiving inclusive norms for cross-ethnic relations from in-group peers uniquely predicted children's interest in cross-group friendships, beyond what can be accounted for by perceiving exclusive norms from in-group peers and preexisting cross-group friendships. Similar effects were observed for ethnic minority and majority children, and even after controlling for children's prior cross-group friendships. Implications of these findings for future research and efforts to promote inclusion among ethnic minority and majority children are discussed.

Greater diversity in school environments can provide new opportunities for children from different racial and ethnic groups to come into contact and develop friendships with each other (Moody, 2001). Yet even when children from different groups have opportunities to interact, this positive potential may be undermined by prevailing norms that highlight differences between groups and promote exclusion based on those differences (see Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013). Adding to the growing literature on developmental intergroup processes (Abrams & Killen, 2014), the present research examines how peer norms for

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cross-ethnic relations may enhance or inhibit children's interest in developing cross-ethnic friendships.

Consistent with a long tradition of research on intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), many studies now indicate that contact—and particularly cross-ethnic friendships—can predict positive intergroup attitudes among children and adolescents (Binder et al., 2009; Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Levin, Van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Although cross-ethnic friendships are known to be especially powerful forces for improving intergroup attitudes (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011), we know relatively little about psychological factors that are likely to contribute to the development of children's cross-ethnic friendships.

A considerable amount of research suggests that perceived peer norms can affect children's attitudes toward other ethnic groups and their cross-ethnic friendships. As children approach adolescence, they become more likely to interact in new settings and with members of different groups, which are likely to enhance the salience of ethnic group identities (Hughes, Way, & Rivas-Drake, 2011). Peers become especially important sources of social information as children grow into adolescence and begin to form attitudes toward and relations with cross-ethnic peers (McGlothlin, Edmonds, & Killen, 2008; Nesdale, 2004).

Recent research shows that children are sensitive to peer norms of inclusion or exclusion (Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron, 2003), and that expectations of loyalty to the in-group can influence the extent to which children's intergroup attitudes are biased toward the in-group (Abrams, 2011). However, most studies in this literature focus generally on how peer inclusion or exclusion affects children's intergroup attitudes (e.g., Nesdale, Griffith, Durkin, & Maass, 2005), rather than focusing more specifically on perceived peer norms for cross-ethnic relations.

The few studies that do focus on perceived peer norms for cross-ethnic relations tend to show that perceiving more supportive norms for cross-ethnic relations predict more positive intergroup attitudes (Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009) and greater preferences for cross-ethnic friendship (Jugert, Noack, & Rutland, 2011). Still, perceiving inclusive norms that support cross-ethnic relations, or exclusive norms that may undermine them, tend not to be examined as independent predictors. Prior work in social psychology (Brewer, 1999) and developmental psychology (Aboud, 2003; Nesdale, 2004) indicate that favorability toward the in-group and derogation of the out-group often function as distinct processes. Research has yet to test (i) how inclusive and exclusive norms from in-group peers may both contribute to predicting children's interest in developing cross-ethnic friendships, and (ii) whether inclusive norms for cross-ethnic relations predict interest in cross-ethnic friendships beyond the role of exclusive norms.

Furthermore, most of the research conducted to date has focused on the perspectives of children from ethnic majority groups, rather than considering simultaneously the perspectives of both ethnic majority and minority groups.

Greater emphasis on the role of ethnic differences in children's peer relations is needed (Graham, Taylor, & Ho, 2009), as processes involved in friendship formation are often shaped by ethnic dynamics in diverse social environments (Bigler & Liben, 2007; Killen, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). Consideration of ethnic differences is also critical because ethnic minority and majority youth may have different perceptions of cross-ethnic relations (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Molina & Wittig, 2006), as well as different responses to cross-ethnic contact (Gómez, Tropp, & Fernandez, 2011; Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Ethnic minority youth may also encounter prejudice and ethnic victimization that can negatively impact social relations in ways that differ from the common experiences of ethnic majority children (Quintana & McKown, 2008; Verkuyten, 2006).

Thus, integrating social and developmental perspectives, the present research extends prior work by examining how perceived inclusive and exclusive peer norms for cross-ethnic inclusion may simultaneously contribute to predicting interest in cross-ethnic friendship among ethnic minority and majority children. Consistent with research suggesting the importance of supportive norms for cross-ethnic relations (e.g., Jugert et al., 2011), we expect that perceiving inclusive norms from in-group peers will predict children's greater interest in forming cross-group friendships. Further, we expect that inclusive peer norms for cross-ethnic relations will predict greater interest in cross-ethnic friendships beyond any effects of perceiving exclusive in-group peer norms or children's preexisting cross-group friendships. These issues were examined in two studies with middle school students who completed brief surveys individually in a classroom setting. In each study, children reported the extent to which they perceived peer norms indicating inclusion in cross-ethnic relations, and peer norms indicating exclusion in cross-ethnic relations, as well as their own interest in developing cross-ethnic friendships.

Study 1

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited from two largely racially homogeneous middle schools in New York City: European American children from a school in which only 7% of the student body was African American, and African American children from a school in which only 2% of the student body was European American. The racial backgrounds of participating children were determined through consultation with school staff and facilitators of a local program that brought children from the different schools and different racial backgrounds together. After obtaining parental consent, a total of 179 European Americans (85 boys and 93 girls), and 133 African Americans (59 boys and 50 girls, 24 did not report their sex) completed a brief survey in a classroom setting, as part of a larger study on

children's intergroup attitudes and experiences. Participants' ages ranged from 9 to 12 among European American children ($M = 10.46$ years, $SD = 0.95$) and from 9 to 13 among African American children ($M = 10.43$ years, $SD = 1.09$).

In each school, and with a school staff member of the same racial background as the students, a European American researcher explained to the students that the purpose of the survey was to understand their experiences with different kinds of people. Students were informed that they should include no personally identifying information on the survey, that there were no right or wrong answers to any questions in the survey, and that their survey responses would be anonymous and confidential. The researcher also explained how to respond to the survey questions, with an unrelated sample question, to ensure that students understood how to complete the survey on their own. Upon completion, students placed their questionnaires into an envelope along with other completed surveys, to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Survey items were pilot tested with students from other middle schools in the northeastern United States, and a readability test (Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level: 3.1) ensured that middle school students would readily understand the survey items.

Measures

Participants completed several single-item measures to represent the primary constructs of interest. Specifically, participants reported their perceptions of inclusive norms supporting cross-group relations from in-group peers by stating the extent to which friends from their racial group would accept children from the other racial group as friends (*How much would your friends in your racial group like to become friends with kids who are [White/Black]?*). Participants also reported their perceptions of exclusive norms about cross-ethnic relations from in-group peers by stating the extent to which friends from their racial group made jokes at the expense of children from the other racial group (*How much do your friends in your racial group tell jokes about kids who are [White/Black]?*). These items were scored on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 5 (*Very Much*). The association between the inclusive and exclusive in-group peer norm items was nonsignificant among both European American participants ($r = -.09$, $p > .05$) and African American participants ($r = .08$, $p > .05$); thus, these items were treated as separate, single-item measures in the subsequent data analyses.

Participants responded to a separate item concerning their own interest in forming cross-group friendships (*How much would you like to become friends with kids who are [White/Black]?*), scored on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 5 (*Very Much*). In addition, participants reported their prior cross-group friendship experiences (*How many of your close friends are kids who are [White/Black]?*), on a scale ranging from 1 (*None at All*) to 5 (*Very Many*). This latter item was included to statistically control for the effects of prior cross-group friendship experience

Table 1. Correlations among Variables for European American and African American Children (Study 1)

	1	2	3	4
1. Interest in cross-group friendship	–	0.33**	0.62**	0.03
2. Prior cross-group friendships	0.35**	–	0.42**	–0.02
3. Inclusive in-group peer norms	0.67**	0.38**	–	0.08
4. Exclusive in-group peer norms	–0.05	0.09	–0.09	–

Note. Correlations for European American children appear below the diagonal, and correlations for African American children appear above the diagonal. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; and *** $p < .001$.

when examining relationships between perceived norms from in-group peers and reported interest in forming cross-group friendships.

Results

Preliminary analyses revealed that European American children reported greater interest in forming cross-group friendships ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.88$) than African American children ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(258) = 5.46$, $p < .001$. European American children also reported greater perceptions of inclusive in-group norms ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.95$) than African American children ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.40$), $t(260) = 6.08$, $p < .001$, as well as lower perceptions of exclusive in-group norms ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.26$) compared to African American children ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(301) = -2.26$, $p = .03$. At the same time, European American and African American children reported similar numbers of cross-group friends ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.14$ and $M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.47$, respectively), $t(260) = 0.552$, $p = .58$.

Correlations. Correlations among the variables were conducted independently for European American and African American children and are provided in Table 1. Both inclusive in-group norms and prior cross-group friendships correlated positively and significantly with interest in cross-group friendships among European American and African American children. However, exclusive in-group norms did not significantly relate to interest in cross-group friendships among European American or African American children.

Regression analysis. Using centered variables (Aiken & West, 1991), we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to predict children's interest in forming cross-group friendships (Table 2). We entered participants' prior cross-group friendships, their ethnic group membership, and inclusive and exclusive in-group norms as predictors at Step 1. We included the two-way interaction terms between inclusive and exclusive in-group norms and ethnic group membership at

Table 2. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Interest in Cross-Group Friendship (Study 1)

Predictor variables	Step 1			Step 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Prior cross-group friendships	0.08	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.05	-.08
Ethnic group	-0.18	0.12	-0.08	-0.26	0.39	-0.11
Inclusive in-group norms	0.58***	0.05	0.62***	0.55***	0.09	0.60***
Exclusive in-group norms	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.10	0.12	-0.12
Ethnic group \times inclusive in-group norms				-0.04	0.09	-0.05
Ethnic group \times exclusive in-group norms				0.09	0.08	0.10
Inclusive \times exclusive in-group norms				0.02	0.03	0.10
R^2		0.48***			0.48***	
R^2 change		0.48***			>0.01	
<i>F</i> change		57.37***			0.59	

Note. *B* = raw regression coefficient; *SE* = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient. For the ethnic group variable, "European American" was coded as "0" and "African American" was coded as "1". $\hat{p} < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; and *** $p < .001$.

Step 2, to see whether interactions among these variables would predict interest in cross-group friendships beyond what could be predicted at the first step of the analysis.

At the first step of analysis, inclusive in-group norms emerged as a strong predictor of interest, $B = 0.59$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.62$, $t(252) = 11.59$, $p < .001$, such that perceiving more inclusive in-group norms supporting cross-group relations predicted children's greater interest in forming cross-group friendships. This effect was obtained while controlling for children's prior cross-group friendships, which only marginally predicted children's interest. At the same time, exclusive in-group norms did not significantly predict children's interest in forming cross-group friendships, $B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -0.02$, $t(252) = -0.37$, $p = .71$, beyond what could be predicted by their perceptions of inclusive in-group norms. At the second step of analysis, inclusive in-group norms remained a significant predictor of children's interest in cross-group friendship, and none of the two-way interaction terms qualified this effect, β s ranging from -0.05 to 0.10 , $p > .20$.

Discussion

As expected, results from this initial study suggest that perceived inclusive in-group norms supporting cross-group friendships are especially important for predicting children's own interest in forming cross-group friendships. Lending further support for our predictions, we observed similar patterns of effects among

samples of European American and African American children, and we observed these effects even after controlling for children's prior cross-group friendships. As such, it appears that perceiving inclusive norms from in-group peers can meaningfully contribute to enhancing children's interest in cross-group friendships.

Nonetheless, a clear limitation of this initial study is that only single-item indicators were available in the data set to test the relationships of interest. A primary goal of our second study is, therefore, to determine whether these patterns of effects can be replicated using reliable, multi-item indicators of the relevant constructs. A second goal of our next study was to test whether we might observe similar patterns of effects among ethnic minority and majority youth in a different intergroup context. Patterns of friendship preferences may vary among children in ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous schools (see McGlothlin et al., 2008). Some work also suggests that while African American and Latino American adolescents may be affected by perceived discrimination in many similar ways (Benner & Graham, 2011), they may also be socialized to have different expectations for inclusion or exclusion in their social environments (Hughes et al., 2008). Thus, we conducted a second study with European American and Latino American children in more ethnically mixed school environments.

Study 2

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited from 63 6th and 7th grade classrooms in three public middle schools in Western Massachusetts. These schools were selected because the student populations included mostly European American and Latino American children (56% and 36%, 68% and 24%, 69% and 22% for each of the three schools, respectively), with relatively small numbers of children from other ethnic backgrounds (5–6%) or of mixed heritage (2–3%).

Upon arriving in each classroom, members of a multi-ethnic research team explained that the survey was about “why kids become friends with other kids.” Using procedures similar to those in Study 1, a member of the research team explained how to respond to questions in the survey, and students were informed that there were no right or wrong answers to any questions in the survey, and that their responses would be confidential. To determine their racial and ethnic background, children were asked to respond to the following question: “*If you had to describe your race using the following words, would you say that you are . . .*” and they were welcome to check any combination of the following responses: White, Latino, Black, Asian, and/or Other (with additional space provided to write a more detailed response).

A total of 468 children who identified only as European American (208 boys and 260 girls) and 126 children who identified only as Latino American (60 boys

and 66 girls) took part in the study. Some indicated a more specific ethnic heritage or country of family origin. European origins, such as "Italian" or "Poland", were classified as "European American", whereas Latin American origins, such as "Mexican" or "El Salvador", were classified as "Latino American." Students of mixed heritage were excluded from this analysis. Responses from 17 participants (12 European American, 5 Latino American) were omitted from analyses due to missing data on one of the predictor or outcome variables. After obtaining parental consent and indicating their own willingness to participate, the children completed brief surveys individually in a classroom setting, as part of a larger study on children's cross-group friendships. Participants' ages ranged from 9 to 13 among European American students ($M = 11.66$ years, $SD = 0.66$) and from 10 to 14 among Latino American students ($M = 11.68$ years, $SD = 0.76$).

Measures

Participants completed several multi-item measures to represent the primary constructs of interest. Responses were scored on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*Not at All*) to 5 (*Very Much*).

Inclusive and exclusive in-group norms. Four items assessed children's perceptions of inclusive norms from in-group peers supporting cross-group relations (Kids from my racial group want to be friends with kids from other racial groups, Kids from my racial group would be happy if I became friends with kids from other races, Kids from my racial group encourage me to make friends with kids from other races, Kids from my racial group like it when I "hang out" with kids from other races). Two items assessed children's perceptions of negative norms from in-group peers concerning cross-group relations (Kids from my racial group sometimes make jokes about kids from other races, Kids from my racial group sometimes tease kids from other races).

Principal components analyses with oblique rotation showed that only two components emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1. The four inclusive norm items all loaded onto a first component (loadings from 0.80 to 0.87 for European Americans, 0.88 to 0.93 for Latino Americans) and the two exclusive norm items loaded onto a second component (loadings from 0.92 to 0.93 for European Americans, 0.93 to 0.93 for Latino Americans). Alpha coefficients of reliability were sufficiently high for the four-item inclusive in-group norm measure ($\alpha = 0.87$ for European Americans, $\alpha = 0.92$ for Latino Americans) and for the two-item exclusive in-group norm measure ($\alpha = 0.83$ for European Americans, $\alpha = 0.84$ for Latino Americans).

Interest in cross-group friendship. Three items assessed participants' own interest in forming cross-group friendships, using the same item stem ("*In*

general, how much would you like to become friends with . . .”). European American children completed three versions of this item in relation to “kids who are Latino/Black/Asian” and responses to these items were averaged ($\alpha = 0.90$). Latino American children completed three versions of this item in relation to “kids who are White/Black/Asian” and responses to these items were averaged ($\alpha = 0.87$).

Prior cross-group friendship. In addition, participants reported on their preexisting cross-group friendships in response to two items asking about the number of children from different groups in their friendship circles “before coming to middle school” and those in their “circle of friends right now.” European American children completed three versions of each item in relation to Latino, Black, and Asian children, and responses to these items were averaged ($\alpha = 0.75$). Similarly, Latino American children completed three versions of each item in relation to White, Black, and Asian children, and responses to these items were averaged ($\alpha = 0.75$).

Results

Initial analyses showed that European American and Latino American children reported similar levels of interest in intergroup contact ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.13$ and $M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.15$, respectively), $t(575) = 1.05$, $p = .29$, as well as similar perceptions of inclusive in-group norms ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.89$ and $M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.15$, respectively), $t(575) = 0.44$, $p = .66$. At the same time, Latino American children reported significantly greater numbers of cross-group friends ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.73$) than European American children ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 0.69$), $t(575) = -5.32$, $p < .001$. Latino American children also perceived significantly more exclusive in-group norms ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.35$) than European American children ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.19$), $t(575) = -2.26$, $p = .02$.

Correlations. Correlations among the variables were conducted independently for European American and Latino American children and are provided in Table 3. As in Study 1, both inclusive in-group norms and prior cross-group friendships correlated positively and significantly with interest in cross-group friendships among European American and Latino American children. However, exclusive in-group norms showed only a modest, negative correlation with interest in cross-group friendships among European American children, $r(454) = -.11$, $p = .02$, and exclusive in-group norms was not significantly related to interest in cross-group friendships among Latino American children $r(119) = -.10$, $p = .27$.

Regression analysis. As in Study 1, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to predict children’s interest in forming cross-group friendships (see Table 4). We entered participants’ prior cross-group friendships, their ethnic group

Table 3. Correlations among Variables for European American and Latino American Children (Study 2)

	1	2	3	4
1. Interest in cross-group friendship	–	0.41**	0.39***	–0.10
2. Prior cross-group friendships	0.34***	–	0.39***	–0.06
3. Inclusive in-group peer norms	0.37***	0.30***	–	–0.25**
4. Exclusive in-group peer norms	–0.11*	0.04	–0.25***	–

Note. Correlations for European American children appear below the diagonal, and correlations for Latino American children appear above the diagonal. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; and *** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Interest in Cross-Group Friendship (Study 2)

Predictor variables	Step 1			Step 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Prior cross-group friendships	0.44***	0.07	0.27***	0.44***	0.07	0.27***
Ethnic group	–0.26*	0.11	–0.09*	–0.28*	0.48	–0.10*
Inclusive in-group norms	0.32***	0.05	0.27***	0.36***	0.10	0.30***
Exclusive in-group norms	–0.04	0.04	–0.05	–0.06	0.14	–0.06
Ethnic group \times inclusive in-group norms				–0.06	0.10	–0.03
Ethnic group \times exclusive in-group norms				0.04	0.08	0.02
Inclusive \times exclusive in-group norms				–0.09**	0.04	–0.10**
R^2		0.20***			0.21***	
R^2 Change		0.20***			0.01*	
F Change		35.91***			2.64*	

Note. *B* = raw regression coefficient; *SE* = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient. For the ethnic group variable, “European American” was coded as “0” and “Latino American” was coded as “1”. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; and *** $p < .001$.

membership, and inclusive and exclusive in-group norms as predictors at Step 1. We then included the two-way interaction terms between inclusive and exclusive in-group norms and ethnic group membership at Step 2, to see whether interactions among these variables would predict interest in cross-group friendships beyond what could be predicted at the first step of the analysis.

At the first step of analysis, inclusive in-group norms emerged as a significant predictor of interest, $B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.27$, $t(572) = 6.59$, $p < .001$, such that perceiving more inclusive in-group norms supporting cross-group relations predicted children’s greater interest in forming cross-group friendships. This effect was obtained while controlling for children’s prior cross-group friendships and ethnic group membership, both of which also predicted children’s interest, $B = 0.44$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = 0.27$, $t(572) = 6.72$, $p < .001$ and $B = -0.26$, $SE = 0.11$,

$\beta = -0.09$, $t(572) = -2.44$, $p = .02$. At the same time, exclusive in-group norms did not significantly predict children's interest in forming cross-group friendships, $B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -0.05$, $t(572) = -1.15$, $p = .25$, beyond what could be predicted by their perceptions of inclusive in-group norms, prior cross-group friendships, and ethnic group membership. At the second step of analysis, inclusive in-group norms remained a significant predictor of children's interest in cross-group friendship. However, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction between inclusive in-group norms and exclusive in-group norms, $B = -0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -0.10$, $t(569) = -2.64$, $p = .01$, which contributed significantly to the overall proportion of variance accounted for in the analysis, $R^2_{\text{change}} = 0.01$, $F_{\text{change}} = 2.64$, $p = .05$. More inclusive in-group norms generally predict greater interest in cross-group friendship, yet this effect is somewhat stronger when exclusive in-group norms are low as compared to when exclusive in-group norms are high.

Discussion

Consistent with the findings of Study 1, results from Study 2 suggest that perceived inclusive in-group norms supporting cross-group friendships are particularly useful for predicting children's own interest in forming cross-group friendships. Perceiving inclusive in-group norms predicted interest in cross-group friendship, beyond what could be predicted by exclusive in-group norms and children's preexisting cross-group friendships. Similar patterns of effects were observed among both European American and Latino American children. Unlike in Study 1, Study 2 showed a significant interaction between inclusive and exclusive in-group norms, such that inclusive in-group norms were especially predictive of interest when exclusive in-group norms were relatively low. Taken together, these findings suggest that inclusive peer norms are especially important for predicting children's interest in cross-group friendship, yet we must still attend to both inclusive and exclusive norms that may be operating in the social environment.

General Discussion

The present studies examined the extent to which perceiving inclusive and exclusive norms for cross-group relations from in-group peers could predict interest in cross-group friendship among ethnic minority and majority children. Results from these studies suggest that perceiving inclusive norms for cross-group relations from in-group peers are especially important for encouraging children's interest in cross-group friendships. In both studies, perceiving inclusive in-group norms uniquely predicted children's interest in cross-group friendships, beyond what could be accounted for by perceived exclusive in-group norms and children's preexisting cross-group friendships. Moreover, similar effects were observed among

both ethnic minority and majority children across the two studies, and ethnic minority and majority children also reported mean levels of interest in cross-group friendship well above the midpoint on the scale. Together, these findings suggest that both ethnic minority and majority children may generally be willing to develop cross-group friendships, and especially the more they perceive their in-group peers to be supportive of such cross-group relations.

We also note that these relationships between perceived in-group norms and interest in cross-group friendship were observed through both correlation and regression analyses. Even when examined independently, perceiving exclusive in-group norms showed only modest correlations with interest, while perceiving inclusive in-group norms correlated positively and significantly with children's interest in forming cross-group friendships. Thus, perceiving in-group peers to be supportive of cross-group friendships may be more closely tied to children's intentions to form such friendships than perceiving that in-group peers tease or make jokes about children from other groups. This suggests that interventions should not merely aim to curb children's expressions of intergroup rejection and exclusion but also work to establish norms of inclusion and nurture interest in cross-group relations (see Tropp & Mallett, 2011).

At the same time, it should be noted that the inclusive and exclusive norm measures used in the present research assessed somewhat different dimensions of peer responses to cross-group relations. The inclusive norm items assessed perceptions of in-group peer support for cross-group friendships, whereas the exclusive norm items assessed perceptions of the extent to which in-group peers engaged in exclusionary behavior toward other groups. As such, the inclusive norms measure may have been more explicitly tied to children's reported interest in cross-group friendships than the exclusive norms measure, which would correspond to a stronger correlation between inclusive norms and interest than the correlation between exclusive norms and interest. Future research should explore whether different patterns of effects might be observed when different dimensions of inclusive and exclusive norms are used to predict children's interest in cross-group friendships. Additionally, the present research did not test the extent to which inclusive and exclusive norms contribute not only to interest in cross-group friendship, but the development of such friendships. Thus, further work is needed to test how these norms, as well as reported interest, eventually predict the development of actual cross-group friendships.

We also observed some differences in effects among ethnic majority and minority children across the two studies. For example, in Study 1, European American and African American children reported similar numbers of cross-group friendships, whereas European American children reported fewer cross-group friendships than Latino American children in Study 2. It is possible that these patterns are due to differences in the contexts in which the data were collected. Children in Study 1 were recruited from racially homogenous schools, likely with

similar opportunities to develop cross-group friendships inside and outside of school; by contrast, European American children constituted greater proportions of the student populations in the schools we studied, such that Latino American children would likely have greater opportunities to forge cross-group friendships with European American children.

European American children also reported significantly greater interest in cross-group friendships than African American children in Study 1, while European American and Latino American children did not differ significantly in their reports of interest in Study 2. It is conceivable that European American children may have inflated their reports of interest in cross-group friendship to some degree, to minimize the possibility that they might be perceived as prejudiced (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Devine & Vasquez, 1998). It is also possible that prior exposure to ethnic prejudice and discrimination may help to explain why African American children reported less interest in intergroup contact in Study 1 relative to their European American peers (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Migacheva & Tropp, 2013; Tropp, 2006). Additionally, differences in perceptions of discrimination and socialization experiences among African American and Latino American youth may further explain why African American children reported significantly less interest in intergroup contact than European American children in Study 1, yet no significant difference in interest was observed among European American and Latino American children in Study 2 (see Graham et al., 2009). Nonetheless, even with such differences, the overall patterns of effects were quite similar across the two studies, suggesting the importance of inclusive in-group norms to promote interest in cross-ethnic friendships among ethnic majority and minority children.

Conclusions

Taken together, and complementing other recent work from a developmental intergroup perspective (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Killen et al., 2013), these studies emphasize the role of peer norms for children's cross-ethnic relations and illuminate how inclusive peer norms may be especially important for encouraging the development of cross-ethnic friendships. Although further research is still needed, findings from these studies suggest that a greater focus on inclusive peer norms could augment efforts to improve intergroup relations among youth. Indeed, when inclusive norms are absent, people are often inclined to believe that they cannot trust members of other groups (e.g., Kramer & Wei, 1999), or to assume that members of other groups lack interest in cross-ethnic relations (e.g., Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Nonetheless, people's own attitudes toward cross-ethnic relations are often more positive than what they perceive among members of their own groups or other groups (Tropp & Bianchi, 2006).

Additionally, extensive research has concentrated on the ways in which peer norms can have detrimental influences on youth (Prinstein & Dodge, 2008), yet

peer norms can also exert many positive influences on youth attitudes and behavior (Allen & Antonishak, 2008). Recent studies show that when youth encounter in-group norms that support cross-ethnic relations, they themselves report greater openness to cross-ethnic relations and interest in contact with other groups (e.g., Gómez et al., 2011). Future studies and interventions should therefore grant greater attention to the establishment of inclusive peer norms among youth, in order to facilitate positive cross-ethnic relations and the development of cross-ethnic friendships.

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