

Social Identities and Intergroup Bias in Immigrant and Nonimmigrant Children

Jennifer H. Pfeifer
University of California, Los Angeles

Diane N. Ruble, Meredith A. Bachman,
Jeannette M. Alvarez, and Jessica A. Cameron
New York University

Andrew J. Fuligni
University of California, Los Angeles

Ethnic and American identity, as well as positivity and negativity toward multiple social groups, were assessed in 392 children attending 2nd or 4th grade in various New York City neighborhoods. Children from 5 ethnic groups were recruited, including White and Black Americans, as well as recent immigrants from China, the Dominican Republic, and the former Soviet Union. For ethnic minority children, greater positivity bias (evaluating one's ingroup more positively than outgroups) was predicted by immigrant status and ethnic identity, whereas negativity bias (evaluating outgroups more negatively than one's ingroup) was associated with increased age, immigrant status, and (among 4th graders only) ethnic identity. In addition, a more central American identity was associated with less intergroup bias among ethnic minority children.

Keywords: attitudes, development, ethnic identity, immigrants, social identity theory

Two important trends in current research on the development of intergroup attitudes are the increased emphasis on the potential role of social identity (Bar-Tal, 1996; Bennett, Sani, Lyons, & Barrett, 1998; Nesdale, 2004) and the increased focus on improving methodologies of assessing intergroup bias (Aboud, 2003; Cameron, Alvarez, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2001). These trends demonstrate attempts by researchers to better understand the nature of children's intergroup attitudes and, in addition, to differentiate between ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation. In the current study, we aimed to extend previous research on the develop-

ment of intergroup attitudes by examining social identities in relatively understudied populations of ethnic minority and immigrant children, and by using a measure of intergroup attitudes that allows positivity and negativity toward multiple social groups to be assessed separately.

There are many ways researchers define and distinguish among varying aspects of intergroup attitudes; therefore, we used the following terminology throughout for clarity's sake. *Bias* (or *intergroup bias*) refers here to favoritism toward one's own group over other groups. On the other hand, *prejudice* is often considered a more exclusive definition that specifically connotes outgroup derogation, or negativity toward outgroups (see Aboud, 1988; Fishbein, 2002). In the absence of evidence that outright negativity toward other groups is exhibited, the more general term of *bias* or *intergroup bias* is used, but when derogation is apparent, the more specific term of *prejudice* is used.

Identity Development and Intergroup Bias

With increasing frequency, developmental psychologists rely on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979/2001, 1986) to explain children's intergroup bias. This view proposes that identification with a social group drives individuals to maintain a sense that their group is positively distinct from other social groups, which may be a source of increased self-worth. Indeed, membership in novel groups has been shown to produce intergroup bias in children, especially when the groups are functional and salient in the child's environment (e.g., Bigler, Brown, & Markell, 2001; Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997; Yee & Brown, 1992). Although social identity theory is not explicitly developmental, it implies that children's intergroup attitudes are likely to become more biased with age as ethnic or other social identities become incor-

Jennifer H. Pfeifer, Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles; Diane N. Ruble, Meredith A. Bachman, Jeannette M. Alvarez, and Jessica A. Cameron, Department of Psychology, New York University; Andrew J. Fuligni, Department of Psychology and Center for Culture and Health, University of California, Los Angeles.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jennifer H. Pfeifer, Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles, 1285 Franz Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563. E-mail: jpfeifer@ucla.edu

porated into the self-concept. That is, as children increasingly identify with a relevant social group, they become more likely to make social comparisons that positively differentiate that group from relevant outgroups.

On the basis of social identity theory, Nesdale (1999, 2004) developed social identity development theory—a theory that underscores the importance of social identification and social context in intergroup processes. This theory also makes the distinction between bias (i.e., a preference for one's ingroup) and prejudice (i.e., derogation of outgroups). According to this theory, children are first unaware of racial or ethnic differences among people. Later, they move from this undifferentiated phase to an awareness of racial categories. Following this stage of ethnic awareness, young children (between 4 and 5 years of age) tend to prefer their ethnic or racial ingroup, but they only exhibit bias. A transition from this phase of ethnic preference to one of ethnic prejudice, which specifically includes negativity toward outgroups, is possible only when children identify with social groups (between 6 and 7 years of age). Prejudice may also emerge earlier if the social context precipitates it, such as when relevant ingroups possess norms supporting the expression of prejudice, or there is the perception of threat from outgroups.

An outstanding question raised by these theories is to what extent the developmental literature implies a connection between identity and bias. The few developmental studies that have examined whether identification is a necessary condition for biased intergroup attitudes have yielded inconsistent results. As mentioned previously, under certain conditions, assigning children social group memberships can facilitate intergroup bias (Bigler et al., 1997, 2001; Yee & Brown, 1992). However, other developmental research has suggested that social identity development does not always precede intergroup bias (Aboud, 1988). For example, children who were either unaware of or unable to report their own nationality nonetheless made more positive evaluations of their national ingroup than national outgroups (Bennett et al., 1998). Such bias demonstrated by children prior to social identification may represent basic group identification processes, wherein group awareness and socialization produce familiarity with evaluative labels for different groups. Regardless of these findings, this level of inquiry has failed to address social identity predictions directly because individual variability in identification was not assessed.

Similarly, those studies specifically examining whether increases in identification are associated with increases in bias have not yet reached a consensus. Some developmental research has found a positive correlation between identification with relevant social groups and intergroup bias (Bennett et al., 1998; Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, & Griffiths, 2004, 2005; Nesdale, Maass, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005; Nesdale, Maass, Griffiths, & Durkin, 2003). Other work looking at ethnic identity development in adolescents and young adults has suggested that strong ethnic identities constitute markers of maturity, consideration of intergroup differences, and are ultimately associated with less intergroup bias (Berry, 1984; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997).

The inconclusive findings in both approaches—asking whether identity precedes or is associated with increases in intergroup bias during development—may have resulted because each study captured different aspects of ethnic identity, some of which may not

be sufficient to cause intergroup bias. Some researchers treated ethnic identity almost like a categorical variable, essentially separating children by ethnic group membership as if all children felt similarly about that aspect of their identity (e.g., conducting analyses using categorical ethnicity as an independent variable indicating ethnic identity). In other developmental studies, aspects of awareness or self-identification of ethnicity—very early fundamentals of ethnic identity—were the focus (e.g., whether a child can accurately report his or her membership in an actual or novel social group). Very few investigators have measured the pertinent novel or actual social identities in any detailed manner but, rather, have assumed their existence and maturation with age. Therefore, most work has underestimated what is implicated in children's identification with their ethnicity or other relevant social groups (Ruble et al., 2004).

In contrast, current approaches to social identity are often multidimensional, highlighting different components of identity, including centrality, private regard or evaluation, salience, and knowledge (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Ruble et al., 2004; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Shelton & Sellers, 2000; Waters, 1999). For example, in the case of ethnic identity, these factors consist of the personal importance of ethnic group membership (*centrality*) and personal feelings about one's own ethnic group (*private regard*). Our primary goal in the present study was to examine some of these components of identity as they emerge in middle childhood to further clarify the nature of the connection between identification with ethnic or other social groups and the development of intergroup bias. We selected two age groups in middle childhood (second and fourth grade) because these dimensions of social identity are most likely to be first available for assessment during this period (Ruble et al., 2004).

Alternative Social Identities and Bias Development

Although there appears to be some evidence that social identities at least play a role in the development of intergroup bias, prior research has yet to fully assess a host of specific social identities, such as those related to being a recent immigrant or a member of an ethnic minority group. These social identities provide an opportunity to consider groups that are likely to experience variations in context that may be quite important to the formation of bias. Nesdale and colleagues (Nesdale & Flessner, 2001; Nesdale, Durkin, et al., 2005; Nesdale, Maass, et al., 2005) have demonstrated that when children belong to novel social groups in which prejudice expression is the norm, they are more likely to express prejudice themselves. Furthermore, they have shown that this effect is enhanced when the outgroup constitutes a threat to the ingroup (Nesdale, Durkin, et al., 2005; a phenomenon also known as *realistic group conflict*; see Sherif, 1966). Some additional evidence suggesting that these factors are likely to precipitate prejudice development includes Bar-Tal's (1996) research examining the explicitly negative stereotypes of Arabs held by very young (3-year-old) Jewish Israeli children toward Arabs (see also Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001).

There is good reason to expect that ethnic minority and immigrant children may differ from each other and majority White children in some, if not all, of these factors. First, research has suggested that ethnic identity may be stronger or more salient for

ethnic minority or immigrant children and adolescents compared with White children and adolescents (Phinney, 1989, 1992; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Rumbaut, 1994); in addition, the strength of ethnic and national (i.e., American) identity has been shown to vary among adolescents from different ethnic or immigrant groups (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Second, there is ethnographic and anecdotal evidence of norms in some ethnic minority children's families that supports the expression of prejudice toward outgroups, such as the tendency of West Indian or other immigrant families to make downward social comparisons with Black Americans (Waters, 1999). Third, perceptions of threat (including discrimination) are not uncommon among these groups, and visible minorities might experience different levels of perceived threat than nonvisible minorities (Dion & Kawakami, 1996).

Although group norms and perceptions of threat were not assessed directly, we aimed to examine alternative social contexts likely to be associated with variability in ethnic identity and intergroup bias. However, we also considered the possibility that White children may exhibit more intergroup bias than ethnic minority and immigrant children. This perspective was based on the extensive body of research documenting White children's biases against Black people, primarily using trait stereotyping measures.

Trait stereotyping measures are ones in which children assign positive or negative nonsynonymous traits to individuals representing ingroups and outgroups, for example, the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II (Williams, Best, Boswell, Mattson, & Graves, 1975) or the Multiresponse Racial Attitude measure (MRA; Doyle & Aboud, 1995). Despite their names, the measures typically assess global evaluative associations between different groups and positive or negative affect and, to a lesser extent, cognitive components of prejudice (such as the application of particular traits in a stereotyped fashion to ingroups and outgroups). The trajectory of White children's attitudes based on these measures is thought to consist of ingroup favoritism emerging as early as preschool and then declining in middle childhood (after 8 years); furthermore, these assessments are frequently correlated with cognitive ability and socialization factors (for reviews, see Aboud, 1988; Fishbein, 2002; Williams & Morland, 1976). Much less is known about trait stereotyping during adolescence or in children from ethnic minority groups.

National (Superordinate Group) Identity and Reductions in Bias

The social contexts surrounding studying children with immigrant and ethnic minority status also provide an opportunity to examine alternative theories about the relationship between social identities and intergroup bias. Previous research has suggested that possessing a superordinate group identity can reduce biases at the subgroup level (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). One intervention found that enhancing a novel superordinate identity reduced some forms of subgroup bias in children (Houlette et al., 2004), and another study found that adolescents who possessed more inclusive representations of their high school's student body had less intergroup bias (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, &

Anastasio, 1994). However, this model has not been explicitly tested in middle childhood using superordinate identities that are part of children's everyday lives.

Studies that have examined national (i.e., American) identity in various ethnic majority or minority and immigrant groups have shown that there is variability in the degree to which ethnic minority and immigrant individuals feel "American" and report being perceived as an "American" by White Americans (Barlow, Taylor, & Lambert, 2000; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Waters, 1999). Given the factors described above that may contribute to enhanced intergroup bias in ethnic minority children and immigrant children, we also aimed to examine whether individual differences in national (American) identity were negatively associated with ethnic bias.

Goals

To summarize thus far, we had three primary goals in the current study. The first goal was to investigate whether individual differences in ethnic identity during development were associated with intergroup bias. The second goal was to focus specifically on this relationship across groups of children who vary in immigrant and ethnic minority status, as these children may find themselves in social contexts supporting the development of intergroup bias. Finally, the third goal was to assess whether a superordinate group affiliation, specifically national (American) identity, would reduce children's intergroup bias. To accomplish these goals, we needed to separately measure children's attitudes toward multiple social groups, in addition to aspects of their ethnic and national identity.

Many measures of childhood bias confound attitudes toward ingroup(s) with attitudes toward outgroup(s) by assessing them concurrently (Aboud, 2003; Cameron et al., 2001; Cross, 1991; Lerner & Schroeder, 1975). Effectively separating ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation, however, may be critical to a social identity approach. Whereas there has been some debate about whether social identity theory addresses ingroup favoritism only or is useful for understanding outgroup derogation as well, social identity development theory (Nesdale, 1999, 2004) makes specific predictions about outgroup derogation and, thus, requires its separate assessment.

We thus aimed to identify existing developmental trends in attitudes toward multiple social groups at a stage during which relevant social identities are developing. In accordance with previously reported developmental trends, we predicted that ingroup favoritism would remain stable or increase with age but not decrease. However, if observed at all, we predicted that outgroup derogation would occur only in children whose immediate social contexts supported such a development. More important, we were interested in the connection between individual variability in ethnic identity and intergroup bias. We predicted that children having greater centrality and positive regard with respect to their ethnic identity would demonstrate more intergroup bias. However, we expected this relationship to apply more to older children, as younger children may be less likely to have developed basic aspects of ethnic identity.

Furthermore, we examined these developmental trends in intergroup bias and ethnic identity in children who were first- or second-generation Americans or members of an ethnic minority group. We thought it was possible that recent immigrants and

ethnic minority children might show greater bias toward other immigrant groups as a result of downward comparison processes and other social contextual factors. However, it was also possible that White American children might show greater intergroup bias, particularly toward non-White immigrant groups, because they may be socialized primarily against exhibiting bias toward Black Americans. Finally, we predicted that children with relatively more central national (American) identities would exhibit less intergroup bias.

Method

Participants

Given the goals of our study, it was important to include children from a variety of ethnic and immigrant backgrounds. In particular, we targeted first- or second-generation immigrant children from the top three immigrant groups in New York City during the 1990s: Chinese, Dominican, and Russian¹ (New York City Department of City Planning, 1996). These groups were especially beneficial to include, given their ethnic diversity and varying experiences in the United States. For example, Russian immigrants are not a racial minority, in contrast to Chinese and Dominican immigrants. We also targeted third-generation or later White and Black American children because these groups are most often included in studies focused on the development of intergroup bias and prejudice. To recruit children from these groups, we conducted the study in several neighborhoods that had large populations of Chinese, Dominican, Russian, or Black American families. Unlike the other neighborhoods, Russian neighborhoods were much more heterogeneous, and it is in these neighborhoods that we also recruited our White sample. Consequently, Chinese, Dominican, and Black children attended schools that were relatively ethnically homogeneous, whereas Russian and White children attended more heterogeneous schools.

We interviewed 600 children for the study; however, 164 did not meet our ethnicity criteria, and an additional 8 did not meet our age criteria, leaving 428 potential participants. Because of missing data on key measures from 36 children, the final sample consisted of 392 children in the second and fourth grades. As shown in Table 1, the sample consisted of similar numbers of Chinese, Dominican, Russian, and White American children across both the second and fourth grades. Our Black American sample was smaller, primarily because of time constraints imposed by these schools with regard to interviewing. The sample tended to be equally divided by gender (girls, $n = 221$; boys, $n = 171$) and grade level (second grade, $n = 177$; fourth grade, $n = 215$). Schools in the sample served children from lower to lower middle-class backgrounds. The percentage of the population receiving free or reduced-cost lunches at the schools ranged from 21% to 99%, with the students from Black, Chinese, and Dominican American backgrounds being more likely to attend the schools with high percentages of free lunch recipients.

Procedure

The study consisted of three separate sessions that lasted approximately 40 min each, with an average of 2 weeks separating each session (in part to reduce possible effects of repeated exposure to similar measures). Each child was interviewed by a female

Table 1
Number of Children in Each Group

Child's ethnicity	Boys		Girls		Total
	2nd grade	4th grade	2nd grade	4th grade	
Chinese	20	32	24	21	97
Dominican	21	17	28	36	102
Russian	16	18	17	18	69
White	13	23	16	29	81
Black	7	4	15	17	43

interviewer of the same racial background. It has been suggested that, although disclosure to same- and different-ethnicity interviewers may be equivalent when the topic is nonsensitive (i.e., topics of low social relevance), disclosure is higher to same-ethnicity interviewers about sensitive topics (e.g., Weeks & Moore, 1981). For these reasons, and for the children's general comfort, same-ethnicity individuals interviewed all children.

Because this study was part of a large study on social development and academic engagement, children received a number of measures in a set order per session. Of the measures presented, only a subset was relevant to this particular study: (a) a group attitudes measure and (b) an ethnic identity measure. In addition to these measures, during the first interview, each child's ethnic background was carefully assessed to determine whether they fit into one of our target groups. If they did not, they completed only a subset of measures and were not included in the present study.

Group attitudes measure. In the group attitudes measure, children were asked to indicate how many people from four different social groups (American, Black, Chinese, and Spanish) possessed each of the following attributes: rich, bad, friendly, ugly, smart, selfish, good at sports, lazy, honest, and shy. These characteristics are a subset of those used in common trait stereotyping measures (e.g., the MRA; Doyle & Aboud, 1995). The social groups used in this measure were selected so that children could evaluate several outgroups and an ingroup that almost all children identified with (i.e., American). For the Chinese, Dominican, and Black American children, this measure also allowed them to evaluate their own ethnic group. Children were presented with a 5-point scale that consisted of the following response items: *none*, *few*, *some*, *most*, and *almost all*, which were presented both verbally and pictorially. Children received these attitude measures in different sessions. Children were asked to evaluate "Black" people in the first session and "American" people as a whole in the second session. In the third session, children evaluated "Chinese" and "Spanish" or "Dominican"² people, with several measures separating these attitude measures.

¹ For simplicity's sake, we use the labels *Chinese* and *Russian*. However, it is important to note that children from Taiwan and Hong Kong were included in the Chinese sample, and children from countries that were part of the former Soviet Union (e.g., the Ukraine) were included in the Russian sample.

² It should be noted that this scale used social group labels that children would understand. Therefore, the label *Chinese* was used in reference to Asian Americans, and the label *Spanish* was used to refer to Latino Americans. However, because of our interest in ingroup evaluations, Dominican children were specifically asked about Dominican people.

Eight intergroup attitude subscales were created by averaging the responses to each of the four groups separately for the five positive (rich, friendly, smart, good at sports, and honest) and the five negative (bad, ugly, selfish, lazy, and shy) items. These eight subscales demonstrated moderate internal consistency. The “shy” item in the negative scale and the “rich” item in the positive scale did not fit with the rest of the items, so they were removed. The alphas ranged from .61 to .74, with a mean of .69, as calculated on the full sample.

Ethnic identity measure. The ethnic identity measure was developed specifically for this study, in a format similar to Harter’s (1985) Self-Perception Profile for Children. It was presented in Session 2 and included six items intended to tap ethnic centrality (Items 2, 5, and 6 from the list that follows) and private regard (Items 1, 3, and 4). These items asked children to report whether they are happy to be [ethnicity], believe being [ethnicity] is an important part of self, are proud to be [ethnicity], like being [ethnicity], see self as more [ethnicity] than American, and believe being [ethnicity] is a big part of who one is. The dimensions of centrality and private regard came directly from the social identity literature, and specific items were based on those used with adults but revised to be suitable for young children (Ashmore et al., 2004).

Children were asked about their own ethnicity (Chinese, Dominican, Russian, Black, and White), which we categorized as their “basic” ethnicity. (It is important to note that, prior to this measure, we established that all children categorized themselves as members of their basic ethnic group.) In this measure, participants were presented with two groups of children; for example, children in the first group felt that their ethnic identity was important (or felt good about their ethnic identity), and children in the second group felt that their ethnic identity was not important (or did not feel good about their ethnic identity). Participants were asked to indicate which group of children they were most like, and then specify if that was really true for them or just sort of true for them. Like the group attitude measures, this scale demonstrated moderate internal consistency. One item in the scale fit particularly poorly: whether the child saw him- or herself as more ethnic than American. After removing this item, the alpha improved ($\alpha = .65$, as calculated on the full sample).

However, because of the intragroup variability of this item, we used it in one analysis that examined the link between national (American) identity and group evaluations. This item was used to conduct a split that allowed us to compare average intergroup attitudes between ethnic minority children who reported feeling more American than ethnic ($n = 135$) and children who felt more ethnic than American ($n = 107$).

Results

To clarify the results and discussion sections, we use the following terms throughout: positivity bias, negativity bias, and intergroup bias. *Positivity bias* refers to the extent to which children reported that positive traits applied to more of their own ethnic or national group members than to outgroup members. *Negativity bias* refers to the extent to which children reported that negative traits applied to fewer of their own ethnic or national group members than outgroup members; it was used in this case because there was no strong evidence that the bias was so severe as to

constitute outgroup derogation or prejudice (i.e., means on negative trait items were far below the midpoint of the scale, indicating that children applied negative traits to few people in any social group). The subscales used to measure negativity bias toward different social groups were recoded such that higher values indicated less negativity toward a given group to mirror the direction of the positive subscales. As a result, *positivity bias* scales and recoded negativity bias scales were positively correlated. Finally, *intergroup bias* refers to the sum of reported positivity bias and negativity bias.

Patterns of Intergroup Attitudes

The initial step was to examine differences in attitudes toward multiple social groups on the basis of age, gender, or ethnic group membership for evidence of intergroup bias. We predicted that children would generally be more positive and less negative toward their own ethnic or national group members than outgroup members. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with three between-subjects factors—ethnicity (Chinese, Dominican, Russian, White, and Black), gender (male and female), and grade level (second and fourth)—and two within-subject factors—target group (American, Black, Chinese, and Spanish/Dominican³) and valence of attribute (positive and negative [recoded] subscales) on the intergroup attitude subscales. We were specifically looking for evidence of intergroup bias, which would be indicated by a two-way interaction between target group and child’s ethnicity. To the extent that intergroup biases varied by the valence of attributes children were ascribing, we expected to find a three-way interaction between target group, ethnicity, and valence. When sphericity assumptions were not met, we applied the Greenhouse–Geisser correction. Post hoc multiple comparison procedures used Bonferroni correction to assess the significance of differences between pairs of cell means.

As predicted, there was a significant interaction between target group and child’s ethnicity, $F(11, 333) = 6.9, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$. The means in Table 2 suggest that children from some ethnic groups demonstrated more intergroup bias than others. Specifically, post hoc multiple comparisons indicated that immigrant (Chinese, Dominican, and Russian) children demonstrated some degree of intergroup bias, whereas nonimmigrant (White and Black) children did not. Immigrant children were significantly more positive and less negative toward their own ethnic or national group members than toward Black people (see Table 2). Because there was a relatively smaller sample of Black children, an absence of significant differences in attitudes toward target groups might also have been due to a larger standard error in this subsample. This two-way interaction qualified a main effect of target group, $F(3, 333) = 7.4, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .02$, that suggested that children were significantly more positive and less negative toward Americans and Spanish/Dominican people than toward Black people, whereas there were no significant differences in attitudes toward Chinese people relative to other target groups (see Table 2).

³ To reiterate we used the label *Spanish/Dominican* in this section to refer to the target group. Although the label *Dominican* was used with Dominican children, the label *Spanish* was used with all other children to ensure they understood to which target group we were referring (Latino Americans).

Table 2
Positivity and Negativity Toward Multiple Social Groups as a Function of Children's Ethnic Group Membership

Child's ethnicity	American ^a						Black						Chinese						Spanish/Dominican ^b					
	Positive		Negative		Average		Positive		Negative		Average		Positive		Negative		Average		Positive		Negative		Average	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Chinese	3.89	0.6	3.52	0.6	3.70	0.5	3.67	0.7	3.34	0.8	3.51	0.6	3.86	0.6	3.72	0.6	3.79	0.5	3.66	0.7	3.50	0.7	3.58	0.5
Dominican	4.06	0.7	3.52	0.7	3.79	0.6	3.87	0.7	3.16	0.9	3.51	0.7	3.70	0.9	3.39	0.9	3.54	0.7	4.23	0.5	3.75	0.7	3.99	0.4
Russian	3.92	0.6	3.61	0.7	3.77	0.5	3.62	0.8	3.34	0.8	3.48	0.7	3.59	0.8	3.71	0.6	3.65	0.6	3.79	0.7	3.69	0.6	3.74	0.5
White	4.11	0.6	3.52	0.6	3.81	0.5	3.90	0.7	3.62	0.7	3.76	0.6	3.69	0.7	3.69	0.6	3.69	0.6	3.83	0.7	3.48	0.7	3.65	0.6
Black	3.84	0.8	3.40	0.9	3.62	0.7	4.06	0.7	3.36	0.8	3.71	0.6	3.78	0.9	3.58	0.9	3.68	0.6	3.84	0.7	3.55	0.8	3.60	0.6
Average	3.95	0.7	3.51	0.7	3.74	0.6	3.77	0.7	3.34	0.8	3.59	0.7	3.70	0.8	3.60	0.7	3.67	0.7	3.85	0.7	3.60	0.7	3.73	0.6

Note. Potential scores on both scales ranged from 1 to 5. Negativity scales have been reverse coded such that higher scores indicate less negativity toward a group.

^a American was used to refer to American people as a whole. ^b Although the label Dominican was used with Dominican children, the label Spanish was used with all other children to ensure they understood to which target group we were referring (Latino Americans).

These general patterns of intergroup bias were qualified by a three-way interaction between target group, valence of attribute, and child's ethnicity, $F(11, 349) = 1.9, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Post hoc multiple comparisons indicated that each ethnic group had a slightly different pattern of positivity bias (Figure 1) and negativity bias (Figure 2; see also Table 2). Although both White and Black children showed no indication of intergroup bias at the more general level, some differences emerged when distinguishing between positivity and negativity bias. Specifically, White children were more positive toward American people than toward Black, Chinese, or Spanish/Dominican people, but they exhibited no significant differences in negativity toward any group. However, Black children still did not exhibit any significant differences in positivity or negativity toward any group; again, this may have been due to lower power in this group.

These higher order interactions qualified a two-way interaction between target group and valence, $F(3, 349) = 21.4, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$. The means in Table 2 suggest that children were least positive toward Chinese people and most negative toward Black people. This general pattern may indicate that the traits captured both evaluative and stereotypic biases to some extent, and that children felt positive traits were least stereotypical of Chinese people and negative traits were most stereotypical of Black people.

Several additional main effects and lower order interactions were found, which were unexpected or irrelevant to the primary goals of the study. These included main effects of valence, $F(1, 372) = 86.4, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$, and grade level, $F(1, 372) = 11.4, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$, a two-way interaction between valence and child's ethnicity, $F(4, 372) = 4.3, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$, as well as an uninterpretable four-way interaction between target group, valence of attribute, child's ethnicity, and grade level, $F(11, 349) = 2.3, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$. The main effect of valence showed that children were more positive than negative toward groups ($M_s = 3.8$ and 3.5 , for positivity and negativity, respectively), indicating, as expected, the presence of a well-documented bias toward excessively positive self- or social evaluations (Schuster, Ruble, & Weinert, 1998). Similarly, the main effect of grade level indicated that older children were less positive and more negative toward target groups overall, in comparison to younger children ($M_s = 3.8$ and 3.6 , for second and fourth graders, respectively), as would be predicted from previous research on the decline of this tendency toward overly positive evaluations (Schuster et al., 1998). The two-way interaction between valence and child's ethnicity suggested that Dominican participants tended to use the endpoints of the scales more frequently. They were more positive toward groups overall than other children except for White participants, and they were also more negative toward groups overall than other children except for Black participants.

Relation Between Ethnic Identity and Intergroup Attitudes

Although the repeated measures ANOVA indicated some evidence of intergroup bias, our primary goal was to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and intergroup bias. For theoretical reasons (which were also supported by the significant three-way interaction between target group, valence of attribute, and child's ethnicity), we created new variables to separately capture the degree of positivity bias and negativity bias for each child. That is, ascription of positive traits to ethnic outgroups was

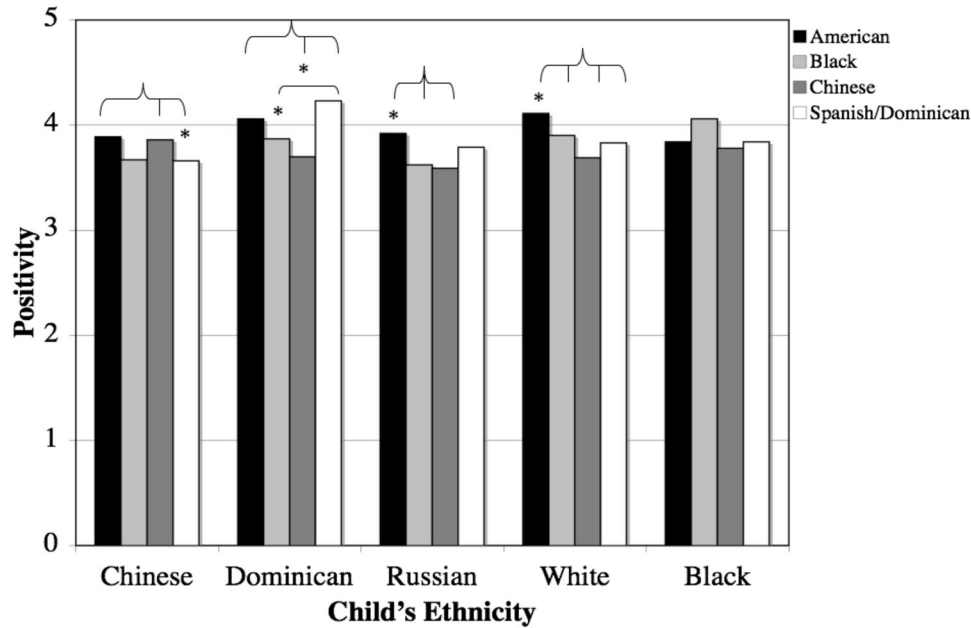


Figure 1. Degree of positivity by child's ethnicity. Asterisks indicate significant differences between the marked bar and the other bars with which it is grouped.

averaged and subtracted from positivity toward children's ethnic ingroup. Similarly, ascription of negative traits to ethnic outgroups was averaged and subtracted from negativity toward children's ethnic ingroup. This latter calculation also used the recoded negative subscales, so that, in both cases, a greater degree of intergroup bias was indicated by higher scores on these new variables of positivity bias and negativity bias. Because nonminority (Russian and White American) children ascribed traits only to their national ingroup and ethnic outgroups, not their ethnic ingroup, this subset of children was excluded from this particular analysis.

We used multiple regression analysis to examine whether possessing a more central and positive ethnic identity, in addition to other predictor variables, was associated with children's positivity bias and negativity bias. To examine how alternative social identities influenced the development of intergroup biases, we included immigrant status as a predictor variable (all children in this analysis were members of an ethnic minority group). Gender was also included as a predictor because research with adults has suggested that men tend to display more prejudice than women (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Finally, because we hypothesized that ethnic identity may be more predictive of intergroup attitudes in older children as compared with younger children, we included variables accounting for grade level and the interaction between ethnic identity and grade level. The interaction term was entered in a second block, after entering the main effects of ethnic identity (group mean centered), immigrant status, grade level, and gender. Two separate regressions were conducted, one for each dependent variable of positivity bias and negativity bias.

Results showed that ethnic identity and immigrant status each accounted for significant and unique proportions of variance in ethnic minority children's positivity bias, and the overall model was significant, $F(4, 285) = 5.2$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$. The regression coefficients (see Table 3) illustrated that possessing a

more positive and central ethnic identity was associated with greater positivity bias, and children with recent immigrant status demonstrated greater positivity bias than nonimmigrant children. Grade level and gender, as well as the interaction between ethnic identity and grade level, were not significant predictors of positivity bias. Therefore, the addition of this interaction term did not significantly improve the model, $F(1, 284) = .82$, $R^2 = .003$, ns .

Results also showed that ethnic identity, immigrant status, gender, and grade level accounted for significant and unique proportions of variance in minority children's negativity bias, and the overall model was significant, $F(4, 284) = 6.3$, $R^2 = .08$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, with the addition of the interaction term, the model accounted for a significantly greater proportion of variance, $F(1, 283) = 9.0$, $R^2 = .03$, $p = .003$, and the overall model was significant, $F(5, 283) = 6.9$, $R^2 = .11$, $p < .001$. However, with the addition of the interaction term between grade level and ethnic identity, the main effect of ethnic identity was no longer a significant and unique predictor of outgroup negativity. The regression coefficients (see Table 3) illustrated that children with stronger ethnic identities and those with recent immigrant status demonstrated greater negativity bias. In addition, girls exhibited less negativity bias than boys, and fourth graders showed less negativity bias than second graders.

Regressions conducted separately for second and fourth graders demonstrated that ethnic identity was a significant predictor of negativity bias for fourth graders but not for second graders (see Table 4). For second graders, immigrant status and gender were both significant and unique predictors of negativity bias, and the model was significant, $F(3, 132) = 6.3$, $R^2 = .13$, $p = .001$. For fourth graders, only ethnic identity was a significant predictor of negativity bias, and the model was significant, $F(3, 149) = 5.4$, $R^2 = .10$, $p = .001$. These findings were consistent with our developmental predictions regarding the relationship between eth-

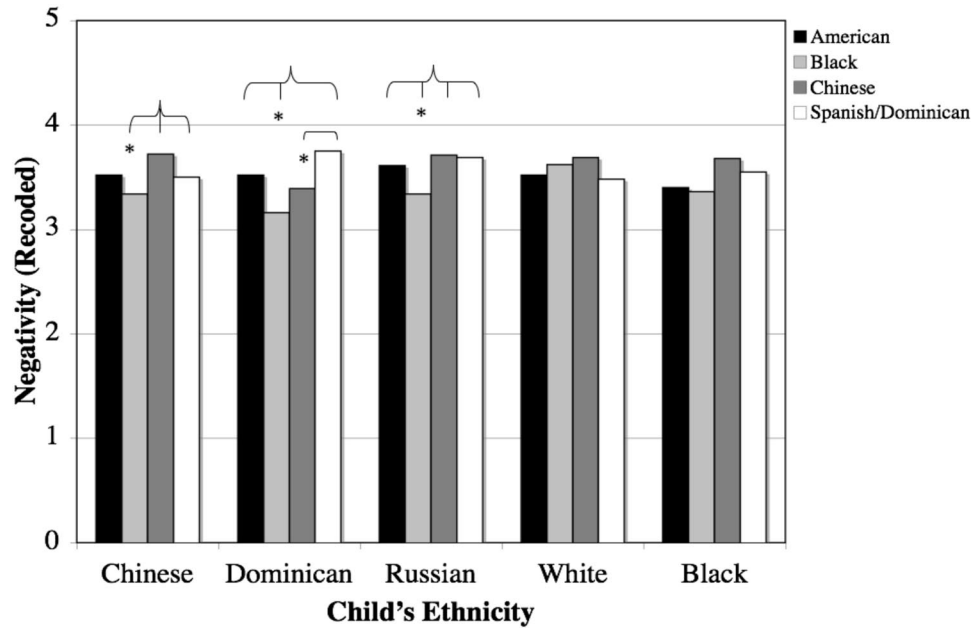


Figure 2. Degree of negativity (recorded) by child's ethnicity. Asterisks indicate significant differences between the marked bar and the other bars with which it is grouped.

nic identity and negativity bias, namely that associations between ethnic identity and negativity bias may present themselves only in older children.

Relation Between National Identity and Intergroup Attitudes

Although the regression analyses indicated that both ethnic minority children with stronger ethnic identities and immigrant children evidenced greater intergroup bias, our third goal was to examine whether identification with a superordinate group (i.e., nationality [American]) was associated with less intergroup bias, as suggested by previous research. Specifically, we predicted that children who felt they were more American than ethnic would demonstrate lower levels of bias. Again, because Russian children did not evaluate their ethnic ingroup, they were excluded from this analysis, along with White children. Our hypothesis was supported, as minority children who reported feeling more American than ethnic demonstrated significantly less intergroup bias

than children who felt more ethnic than American, $t(1, 240) = 2.1, p < .05, Ms = .36$ and $.20$. This pattern was confirmed separately in each of the Chinese, Dominican, and Black American participant groups, which indicated that the effect was not driven by the Black children feeling more American than the immigrant children. For further confirmation, we broke down intergroup bias into its separate components—positivity bias and negativity bias—and examined the patterns of means for each. Importantly, this indicated that children who felt more American than ethnic simply did not feel less positive and more negative toward their own ethnic group, which would decrease the difference scores between ingroup and outgroup evaluations, but that they also felt more positive and less negative toward ethnic outgroups.

Discussion

The overarching purpose of this study was to address whether individual differences in social identities during middle childhood

Table 3
Regression Coefficients for Positivity and Negativity Bias

Variable	Positivity bias		Negativity bias	
	B	SE	B	SE
Ethnic identity	0.15	.049**	—	—
Immigrant status	0.03	.001**	0.03	.001*
Gender	—	—	-0.22	.079**
Grade	—	—	-0.24	.078**
Ethnic Identity × Grade	—	—	0.32	.11**

Note. Dashes indicate data not reported due to nonsignificance. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4
Regression Coefficients for Negativity Bias as a Function of Grade Level

Variable	2nd grade		4th grade	
	B	SE	B	SE
Ethnic identity	—	—	0.27	.069***
Immigrant status	0.04	.002*	—	—
Gender	-0.43	.122***	—	—

Note. Dashes indicate data not reported due to nonsignificance. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

are significantly associated with variability in children's intergroup bias. Our primary findings suggest this was indeed the case across a number of social identities. First, we found that ethnic identity was associated with greater positivity bias in both younger and older ethnic minority children. However, only among older ethnic minority children was having a stronger and more central ethnic identity associated with greater negativity bias. Second, we demonstrated that immigrant status was associated with greater positivity and negativity bias. Finally, we observed that national identity was associated with less intergroup bias among ethnic minority and immigrant children.

Positive Associations Between Ethnic Identity and Intergroup Bias

The discovery of a positive association in middle childhood between ethnic identity and intergroup bias provides strong support for social identity theory, thereby supporting its applicability to developmental populations. Importantly, this was demonstrated in a context outside that of novel social groups, from which the majority of evidence for both social identity and social identity development theories has been obtained. The association between positivity bias and ethnic identity in ethnic minority children from both age groups may represent the construct of ethnic preference specified by social identity development theory (Nesdale, 1999, 2004). During this phase, children are aware of their ethnic group membership and are concerned primarily with continuing membership in this group and positive distinctiveness from outgroups (see also Cameron et al., 2001). On the other hand, the increased level of negativity bias seen in fourth graders with more positive and central ethnic identities may mark the beginnings of ethnic prejudice. This is noted as a possibility because, all else being equal, fourth graders tended to display less negativity bias (not to be confused with the greater overall use of negative traits exhibited by fourth graders in the repeated measures ANOVA). The significant interaction between grade level and ethnic identity also highlights the increasingly important role of ethnic identity in older children. In contrast, the basic group membership variables that predicted young children's level of negativity bias (i.e., immigrant status and gender) were not predictive for older children, suggesting that relatively simple categorization processes may be informing children's judgments before a more complex sense of self has developed.

Further research should continue to explore this association between increases in ethnic identity strength and intergroup bias in middle childhood and early adolescence to confirm this finding, as well as determine whether it is correlated with more positive or detrimental outcomes. This is important because these results, along with social identity and social identity development theories, seem to contradict multicultural theories based on research conducted with older adolescents and young adults. A multiculturalism perspective suggests that achieving a strong ethnic identity reduces intergroup biases and enhances well-being (Berry, 1984; Berry et al., 1977; Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997). One possible way to integrate these disparate sets of findings is to propose that, at the earliest stages of ethnic identity development, intergroup bias may be expected to increase with ethnic identity strength because of classic group identity effects. Only after going through all the stages is a more complex understanding of ethnic identity

achieved, which then results in its association with less intergroup bias. Alternatively, different aspects of ethnic identity strength may be relevant during different developmental periods (for example, adolescents may emphasize group belonging and affiliation more than children).

Another potential integration of our results with these varying theoretical perspectives may be achieved given that the nature of the intergroup bias we observed appears to be primarily ingroup favoritism, rather than outgroup derogation. Although we created separate subscales for positive and negative items, the means for negative subscales were substantially lower than average (prior to recoding), indicating that children tended to ascribe negative traits to only a small proportion of each group. Because of the consensus among immigrant children in reporting the most negativity and least positivity toward Black people, it seemed possible that Black people as social targets were being derogated. However, these children may have known significantly more about Black people than the other target groups they were evaluating (or formed evaluations of them earlier), or there may have been an order effect, because Black people were evaluated in the first interview session of the study. Thus, in this sample and pertaining to these social targets, both positive and negative subscales appeared to be indicators of varying degrees of favoritism, rather than outright prejudice. These results provide further evidence supporting the account that at this age and using explicit measures of trait stereotyping, outgroup derogation is exceedingly rare and may be seen only in extreme social structural conditions (Bar-Tal, 1996; Cameron et al., 2001). As a result, we chose to refer to children's attitudes as positivity bias and negativity bias to indicate their difference from outgroup derogation. The results of this study also demonstrate that positivity bias and negativity bias have both common and unique predictors, thus suggesting that they should continue to be assessed independently of each other.

Positive Associations Between Immigrant Status and Intergroup Bias

The second goal of this study was to examine intergroup bias among not only ethnic minority children but among those from immigrant families. Our results demonstrate that immigrant status was a unique predictor of both positivity bias and negativity bias, controlling for other significant factors such as grade level, gender, and ethnic identity. Immigrant status may indicate greater exposure to, or acceptance of, familial or cultural norms supporting the explicit expression of bias against outgroups (Waters, 1999). Furthermore, recent immigrant families may face greater threats to the ingroup, including competing for resources, maintaining model minority status, and perceiving discrimination from outgroups (Dion & Kawakami, 1996; Waters, 1999). Because the immigrant ethnic minority (Chinese and Dominican) children lived in relatively homogeneous neighborhoods and attended relatively segregated schools, one might expect these children to be least likely to directly experience or perceive such threats from outgroups. Perhaps perceptions of threat and real intergroup conflict primarily affect parents or other socializing agents, who subsequently communicate these threats to children or model intergroup biases to children that were derived from their own intergroup experiences. However, these children are likely to be exposed to the potential for discrimination even if they attend homogeneous schools. Other

factors, such as linguistic differences, may highlight their status as “outsiders” in this country (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). The absence of data detailing the social contexts experienced by these immigrant children remains a limitation of our study and an important area for future research.

Downward social comparisons may thus result from immigrant children’s efforts to enhance self-esteem. However, the basic analysis of intergroup attitudes suggests that all three groups of immigrant (Chinese, Dominican, and Russian) children may target Black people for this process of self-enhancement via intergroup bias, given that they were significantly less positive and more negative toward this group than any other. This particular pattern of downward social comparison between immigrants and Black Americans has been documented previously, lending some credence to this idea (Waters, 1999). In particular, Dominicans and other immigrants from the West Indies are often mistaken for being Black. This results in efforts to differentiate themselves from Black Americans (including, but not limited to, downward social comparison) because of perceptions that this group is often negatively evaluated by society. As mentioned above, however, alternative explanations are that children evaluated Black people first and may have simply known more about Black people than other target outgroups. This may have been especially true in the case of Chinese people, given that children seemed to feel that the traits (both positive and negative) applied least well to that target group.

Unfortunately, we were limited in our ability to compare the intergroup attitudes of immigrant and nonimmigrant children. The lack of bias demonstrated by White children directly contrasts previous research in which White children report bias against Black people (Aboud, 1988; Fishbein, 2002; Williams & Morland, 1976), but this may have resulted because we assessed White children’s attitudes toward a national ingroup only, not an ethnic or racial ingroup. Because we did not explicitly assess White or Russian children’s attitudes toward White or Russian people, respectively, we were unable to ascertain whether White children with stronger ethnic identities were more biased, or whether being White made Russian children less biased. In addition, our conclusions about Black children’s relative lack of bias may be due to a lack of power to detect significant differences resulting from a smaller sample. Therefore, future research should specifically compare attitudes of immigrant and nonimmigrant children from ethnic majority and minority groups to disentangle the effects of immigrant and minority status.

Negative Associations Between National Identity and Intergroup Bias

The third and final goal of the current study was to examine whether a stronger superordinate group identity (specifically, national [American] identity) would be associated with less intergroup bias toward its constituent subgroups. We observed that ethnic minority and immigrant children who felt more “American” than ethnic reported less intergroup bias. Identifying as an “American” may be associated with children opposing familial or cultural norms favoring the expression of bias toward ethnic outgroups such as African Americans, as has been reported in the case of West Indian immigrants (Waters, 1999). Alternatively, possessing a more central national identity may be associated with children’s greater exposure to, or acceptance of, “American” (i.e., White

majority) norms prohibiting the expression of explicit prejudice against outgroups (Brown & Bigler, 2004; Rutland, 1999, 2004; Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). Finally, a strong national identity also may have reduced children’s intergroup bias via ethnic outgroup members’ inclusion in this superordinate group. This particular finding implies that there are positive intergroup outcomes associated with ethnic minority children possessing a strong national identity, but the exact process underlying this association remains to be examined in future research.

The results obtained from the repeated measures ANOVA also suggest the possibility that national identity is associated with less intergroup bias. Specifically, nonimmigrant (i.e., White and Black American) children showed relatively little indication of intergroup bias; the only significant finding was that White children were significantly more positive toward Americans than ethnic outgroups. This may have resulted in part from stronger national (superordinate group) identities in these children as compared with immigrant children, although it is difficult to distinguish superordinate from ingroup identities (and associated consequences) for these children. However, there are a variety of other reasons that nonimmigrant children may have demonstrated less intergroup bias. As mentioned previously, this also may have resulted from a small sample of Black children or a lack of knowledge about some of the target groups. In addition, these children probably receive a significant amount of socialization about acceptable treatment of ethnic outgroup members, both at home and at school. Again, future research should look directly at intergroup biases of White children given that the only ingroup for these children measured in the current study was a national one.

Limitations

One major caveat is that, although our independent variables of ethnic identity, immigrant status, grade level, and gender significantly predicted positivity and negativity biases among ethnic minority children, the amount of variance captured by these variables was relatively low. Our estimates of R^2 ranged from .07 to .13, suggesting that, on average, these particular variables may account for about only 10% of the variance in ethnic minority children’s intergroup attitudes. This implies that other untapped factors also have an impact on young children’s attitudes, and future research should attempt to capture the effect of these factors. For example, educational variables addressing the child’s classroom composition or exposure to antibias curricula may play an important role in attitudes toward particular groups. Alternatively, it is possible that our independent variables would capture a greater percentage of variance on other measures of intergroup attitudes, such as ones that are less susceptible to social desirability factors or other forms of systematic bias that may have captured a substantial amount of variance on our measures. Similarly, our estimates of η_p^2 were in the small to moderate range for the factors of interest in our repeated measures ANOVA (specifically, the two-way interaction between target group and participant ethnicity and the three-way interaction between target group, participant ethnicity, and valence of attribute). Although the interactions suggested many children possessed some degree of intergroup bias, including both positivity and negativity biases, overall children were unlikely to attribute negative traits to very many people from any social group.

In addition, a limitation of the analysis relating national identity centrality and intergroup bias among ethnic minority children is that a single item was used to split the sample into two groups: children who felt more ethnic than American and vice versa. It should be noted that immigrant children and adolescents often feel that they are both ethnic and American (e.g., Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). However, there was additional evidence suggesting that the forced-choice item captured national identity centrality in a meaningful way for these children. On a separate item to which children simply indicated how American they felt (independent of how they felt about any other social identities), those who selected more American than ethnic on the forced-choice item had significantly higher scores than the remaining children, $t(240) = 2.6, p = .01$. The more concrete forced-choice item may have been necessary at this early developmental period to test the hypothesis that national identity centrality would be associated with less intergroup bias. In the future, it would be ideal to develop more refined scales of national identity centrality that would allow comparisons among children with a variety of patterns of national and ethnic identity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analyses reported here contribute in an important way to the closer investigation of the roles social identities play in the development of intergroup attitudes. By demonstrating an association between ethnic identity strength and intergroup bias, this study provides strong support for social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979/2001, 1986) across a variety of authentic intergroup contexts, including ethnic minority children and those from recently immigrated families. It similarly supports its counterpart, social identity development theory (Nesdale, 1999, 2004), although we contend that no convincing evidence of outgroup derogation was observed in this diverse sample. This study also demonstrates that greater centrality of ethnic minority and immigrant children's national identity is associated with more positive attitudes toward other ethnic outgroups, supporting the superordinate ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner et al., 1993; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Furthermore, it underscores the assertion that measures of children's intergroup attitudes should no longer confound measures of positivity and negativity (Cameron et al., 2001). The separate assessment of each construct demonstrated that positivity bias and negativity bias possessed different, unique predictors. However, ethnic identity strength and immigrant status were significantly associated with both kinds of bias, suggesting that a continued exploration of the relationship between identities or contexts and intergroup attitudes during this period of development will prove fruitful. In particular, as previous research on adolescents and young adults has proposed that ethnic identity development decreases intergroup bias (Berry, 1984; Berry et al., 1977; Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997), an important next step is to determine why this relationship is reversed in children—an endeavor that may require measures of ethnic identity that differentiate between regard and centrality, as well as other components of a multidimensional identity.

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