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International Journal of Behavioral Development 2007; 31; 423
DOI: 10.1177/0165025407081470

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Intergroup biases in conflict: Reexamination with Arab pre-adolescents and adolescents

Yona Teichman, Daniel Bar-Tal, and Yasmina Abdolrazeq

Tel-Aviv University, Israel

This study examined the proposition derived from the integrative developmental contextual theory (IDCT) (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman & Bar-Tal, in press) that contextual circumstances determining collective self esteem (i.e. conflict and social status), and developmental stage in which identity development is a central issue (pre- and early adolescence) would influence intergroup biases. This proposition was previously examined with Israeli Jewish participants and here is re-examined in three samples, aged 8–17, including Israeli Arabs and two groups from the Palestinian Authority. The three samples were based in different intergroup contexts in which their group status was relatively high, medium or low. The findings demonstrate differences in the relationship between contextually defined collective self-esteem and intergroup attitudes. Results confirmed the hypothesis that in conflict, irrespective of age highest intergroup biases would be displayed by the high status group. However, the hypothesis that the lowest status group would express only more negativity toward the out-group was not confirmed. The developmental hypothesis that pre- and early adolescents from the high status group would express most varied and extreme biases was also confirmed. With some exceptions in the middle status group, all older adolescents displayed moderation in biases.

Keywords: adolescents; collective self-esteem; conflict; pre-adolescents; prejudice; stereotypes

The focus in this article is on intergroup biases expressed by pre-adolescents and adolescents who grow up in an intractable conflict. The conflict, which is the socio-psychological context of this study is known as the “Israeli–Arab conflict.” Most of our previous research on stereotypes and prejudice in conflict was conducted with Israeli Jewish children and adolescents revealing polarized beliefs and attitudes toward in- and out-group and often peaking biases during pre- and early adolescence (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman, 2001). Given the possibility to access Arab communities we have the unique opportunity to examine some of our theoretical propositions regarding the development of stereotypes and prejudice with participants experiencing the same conflict from the other side. For these participants the Israeli Jews represent the out-group and enemy.

In the last two decades, the examination of the developmental trajectory of intergroup stereotypes and prejudice has drawn on socio-cognitive theory (S-CT) (Aboud, 1988), which contends that cognitive development achieved at the age of 7–9 leads to the reduction of prejudice. Following this line of thinking further cognitive development occurring at the age of 10 and later should moderate the level of prejudice. However, studies conducted in non-violent societies and in conflict that included pre- and early adolescents reported a renewed elevation in prejudice during this age (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Rutland, 1999; Teichman, 2001; Vaughan, 1987). Since S-CT focuses on the development of prejudice in preschoolers and school-age children, and so does most of the research it generated, this theory does not

offer a theoretical explanation for the findings reported for pre- and early adolescents.

On the other hand, the integrative developmental contextual theory (IDCT) we have proposed (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman & Bar-Tal, in press) suggests that stereotypes and prejudice develop in context and at any given time are influenced by affect, cognitive development, and identity development, each gaining salience in a different developmental stage. IDCT covers a developmental span from 2–17 and presents a developmental view of stereotypes and prejudice that includes different stages of adolescence.

In adolescence, 12-years and later (the stage of formal operational thought in Piaget’s terms), abstract and hypothetical thinking is acquired. The advance in cognitive development and acquisition of broader and more flexible perspective taking opens adolescents to relate to moral, social, and political issues (Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1952; Selman, 1980). Further development, in later stages of adolescence (14 and later), is reflected in valuing justice, dignity, equality, and human rights. This approach to social-cognitive development suggests that adolescents’ intergroup biases should decrease (for an alternative view, see Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002; Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006). However, apparently, social-cognitive development constitutes a potential, the realization of which depends on other factors that acquire critical influence in this developmental stage. IDCT suggests that these factors are identity development and the context in which development occurs.

From pre- and early adolescence (ages 10–13 and later),

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Yona Teichman, Department of Psychology, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv 69978, Israel; e-mail: yonat@post.tau.ac.il

We thank Elana Fein and Elana Kleiner-Lowell for their valuable comments.

identity formation and consolidation become the main developmental task (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980, 1998). The development of the integrated self-identity includes different aspects of identity from which personal-identity, collective-identity, and the self-esteem related to each are of interest [here](#).¹ The process of identity formation begins with self-redefinition confronting adolescents with questions such as who they are and who they want to be. Marcia (1998) points out that the “changes attended from puberty and in subsequent adolescence have two effects: they disequilibrate the fairly structured life of the latency-aged child; and they require an accommodation in the form of a new integration of physique, sexuality, ideology, abilities, personal needs, and social demands” (p. 36). In this developmental stage the status of the groups to which one belongs and the drive for self-enhancement identified by social identity development theory (SIDT: Nesdale, 1999, 2000; Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, & Griffiths, 2005; Nesdale & Flessner, 2001; Nesdale, Maass, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005) are highly relevant. In-group and out-group, acceptance or rejection serves to enhance personal and collective worth.

IDCT contends that insecurity related to the process of disequilibration of identity during pre- and early adolescence results in a high need for self reassurance and this need intensifies self-enhancement motivation which in turn incites intergroup biases. At the age of 14–15, through late adolescence (age 16–17), when gradually a more secure identity is achieved, moderations in biases may be expected to appear. It follows that in the different phases of adolescence the progression in cognitive development alone cannot account for social biases. Importantly, here we do not take a position in the controversy over whether personal (Wills, 1981) or collective self-esteem (CSE: Crocker, Baline, & Luhtanen, 1993; Turner, 1999) determines intergroup biases, rather, we propose to view social biases in adolescence as related to the insecurity they experience due to the developmental tasks they face with the integration of all aspects of their identity. We relate to both personal and social identity, but because of the context of our research the focus is on social identity and the CSE related to it.

Findings that self-esteem drops in adolescence (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002) and that pre- and early adolescents manifested an increase in in-group preference and out-group rejection (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Rutland, 1999; Teichman, 2001; Vaughan, 1987) may be seen as an indirect support for the influence of the need for self-enhancement. So are findings reported by Nesdale and Brown (2004) showing that participants aged 9 and 12 were more sensitive to a negative representative of their in-group than were younger children.

A more direct examination of the association between assessed personal self-esteem, and social biases in adolescents (Sasson, 2003, reviewed by Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005) indicates that low-self-esteem participants displayed unstable in-group and out-group response patterns and particularly those aged 10–12, expressed higher in-group positivity and out-group negativity. Sasson's (2004) findings for the 10–12-year-olds support the theoretical corollary suggested by

Abrams and Hogg (1988) that low or threatened personal self-esteem leads to social biases and the conceptualization regarding the relationship between developmental processes and intergroup responses in adolescence proposed by IDCT. These, however, are initial results that need to be further examined.

As noted, stereotypes and prejudice are molded not only by stage-related developmental experiences, but also by the specific social contexts in which they develop. It may be suggested that since identity development is also associated with the context, the influence of the context in adolescence is even more decisive. It is also plausible to assume that the specific social context of conflict in which the reported study was conducted brings to the forefront intergroup relationships and collective identity. Turner (1999) who used the concept of “shared identity” proposed that in real life situations such as conflict where common fate, shared threat, proximity, similarity, cooperative interactions, or positive interdependence are salient components, awareness of shared social identity becomes obvious and widely recognized. In this type of context it is more likely that collective self-esteem will be most relevant and have a decisive influence on identity development and consequently on the intergroup biases held by adolescents. As suggested by Crocker and Luhtanen (1990), intergroup biases may represent an attempt to enhance the in-group; they may serve the collective rather than personal self-esteem. Thus, in a conflict situation, where group distinctiveness, commitment, and identification increase the enhancement may be associated more with collective than with personal self-esteem.

In the present study, our conceptualization of CSE should not be confused with the specific operationalization of CSE at the individual level (see Crocker et al. (1993). CSE in our research is conceived as a group characteristic that involves the social status, history and intergroup relationships in which particular groups are embedded. Thus, it embraces social standing of the group as a whole in a larger sense, rather than being a measure of individual differences. Viewing CSE as inferred by individuals from the status of their group in the society overcomes a problem of previous research with CSE identified by Long and Spears (1998). According to them “one problem with the previous research is that it has tended to view CSE as a stable, cross group personality trait variable rather than as context-dependent group-specific state variable” and further, “It seems unlikely that the esteem in which a social identity is held can be reduced to a stable individual difference variable. . . . CSE is contingent upon the positivity of a social identity, which in turn varies according to aspects of the context such as the relevant out-group or the dimension of comparison” (p. 916).

In the present study, we assume that individuals are aware of the social evaluation of their groups and integrate it into their identity. Thus, in this study, CSE was neither assessed by an individual self-report measure nor manipulated, rather it was determined by two parameters rooted in the cultural context of the examined groups and accepted in the general society and in their respective groups. The parameters we applied for differentiating among the examined groups were exposure to the conflict, and social-economic status (SES). The group with high exposure to the conflict and high SES was defined as high in CSE (HCSE). The group with low exposure to the conflict and low SES was defined as low in CSE (LCSE), and a group with high exposure to the conflict and very low

¹ Other aspects of self-identity, i.e. gender-identity, religious identity, family identity, etc. are also parts of the integrated identity, but are not considered in this article.

SES was defined as a group with moderate collective self-esteem (MCSE).

Introducing the concept of CSE at the individual level, Crocker et al. (1993) suggested that when threatened, in real meaningful situations individuals with high collective self-esteem (HCSE) will enhance their self-worth expressing in-group preference and out-group prejudice. On the other hand, due to the need to preserve self-consistency, individuals with low collective self-esteem (LCSE) will protect their self-worth by derogating the out-group, i.e., by prejudice. Integrating the propositions regarding the influence of CSE on biases with IDCT's developmental propositions regarding adolescence suggests the following hypotheses: 1. Irrespective of age HCSE group will manifest highest in-group positivity and lowest in-group negativity than the two other groups. Compared with the HCSE group, the LCSE group will manifest same or higher out-group negativity and same or lower out-group positivity. The MCSE will hold an in-between position. 2. Developmentally: Pre and early adolescents will express peaks of in- and out-group positivity/negativity. The predicted age pattern will be most clearly manifested by pre- and early adolescents in the HCSE group. LCSE pre- and early adolescents will express mainly low peaks in out-group positivity and high peaks in out-group negativity. However, because of their unclear identity status pre- and early adolescents in the MCSE group are expected to resemble the LCSE group.

To examine these hypotheses we defined CSE at the group level as a predictor of intergroup biases and assessed positive and negative trait attributions to in- and out-group, positive and negative feelings toward the out-group and readiness for social contact without group members. Positive/negative attributions to the in-group, and to the out-group were analyzed separately, so were positive/negative feelings toward the out-group.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were Arab children and adolescents representing different social contexts. The first group was comprised of Israeli Arab citizens from the city of Taiibe. The two other groups were comprised of Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority, one from the city of Hebron and one from Al-Fawara refugee camp. The Israeli participants are characterized as a LCSE group. They belong to a discriminated generally low status minority group within the State of Israel, with impermeable borders between them and the Israeli Jewish majority. They grow up with a dual identity. On the one hand they enjoy the benefits of the Israeli citizenship, but at the same time share an ethnic and ideological bond with the Palestinians in the Palestinian Authority, many of them preferring to be identified as Israeli Palestinians. Socio-economically, they represent low and middle class. They do not serve in the Israeli army, and only very rarely encounter conflict-related violence.

The two other groups have a clear Palestinian identity and a strong commitment to the Palestinian cause. The group from Hebron classified as HCSE group lives in a divided city in which major parts belong to the Palestinians and some quarters to the Jews. In Hebron, conflict and confrontations are daily occurrences creating a very high probability to witness

or experience violence. The participants from Hebron represent a proud middle-class group with long history of rivalry with the Jews that may be traced to times before the establishment of the State of Israel. The second group from the Al-Fawara refugee camp is the MCSE group. They are under Israeli occupation which implies high exposure to conflict-related violence. However, they belong to a disadvantaged low-class uprooted from their homeland, not accepted as equals by their current environment and disrespected by their neighbors.

Altogether there were 852 participants aged 8–17. The LCSE group included 337 participants: 72 were 8–9, 74 were 10–11, 66 were 12–13, 46 were 14–15, and 79 were 16–17. The HCSE group included 195 participants: 56 were 8–9, 42 were 10–11, 48 were 12–13, 30 were 14–15, and 20 were 16–17. The MCSE group included 313 participants: 62 were 8–9, 74 were 10–11, 74 were 12–13, 54 were 14–15, and 55 were 16–17. All three samples were composed from a similar number of males and females. In a preliminary analysis gender did not reveal any systematic differences.

Measures and procedure

Stereotyping was assessed by trait attributions to Jews and Arabs. The specific traits were determined by a pilot study, in which 150 children and adolescents were asked to list the most salient traits of Arabs and Jews. Traits that were noted by at least 80% of the respondents for each social category were included in the rating list. The final list included 18 traits, nine from those identified for Arabs and nine for Jews. In order to include an equal number of positive and negative traits, occasionally opposites were used. The specific traits were: clean, good, thief, smart, terrorist, lazy, beautiful, fresh, stinking, strong, educated, liar, cruel, loyal, hospitable, coward, sociable, and violent. These traits were separated into positive and negative ones. Rating was performed on a 5 point scale indicating the incidence of each trait for each target group: (1) none of them – 0%, (2) few – 25%, (3) half – 50%, (4) many – 75%, and (5) all of them – 100%, as such it also serves as a homogeneity measure. The measure yielded the following Cronbach alphas: For the positive traits attributed to Jews .79 and to Arabs .87, for the negative traits attributed to Jews .79 and to Arabs .87.

Attitudes were expressed in feelings toward the Jews and in indicating readiness for social contacts with them. The measure of positive feelings included: liking, pity, closeness, and empathy, and the measure of negative feelings included: hate, fear, disgust, anger. The responders indicated whether they experienced the particular feeling (3), experienced it moderately (2), or did not experience it at all (1). The mean range for the positive and negative feelings was 1–3. Cronbach alpha for the positive feelings was .70 and for the negative ones .80.

Readiness for social contact with “a Jew of your age and gender who speaks Arabic” was indicated for three possible encounters: to meet with him/her, to host him/her in your home, and to befriend him/her. The responses for each possibility were yes/no and provided a scale from 0 (not ready for any contact) to 3 (ready for the three types of contact).

Participants answered the questionnaires anonymously at school in their classes. The time the data was collected was relatively calm, with no outbursts of violence between Jews and Arabs.

Results

Comparisons of the trait attributions by the 5 age-groups from the three different CSE groups were performed with repeated measures three way ANOVAs. Different analyses were performed for measures indicating positivity and negativity. The independent variables were target (Jew/Arab), responder identity (3 CSE groups), and age (5 age groups). Feelings and social distance were expressed only toward Jews, and thus the analyses performed here did not include target and were repeated measures two way ANOVAs. For a global comparison among the three CSE groups, in the three way ANOVAs, attention focused on the target \times responder identity interaction, and in the two way ANOVAs on the responder identity effect. The interactions of target \times responder identity \times age, and responder identity \times age examine the age-related differences in the three CSE groups for the two targets or one target. Significance of between group differences was determined by Post Hock Scheffe procedure for group comparisons, and within group patterns were examined by curve estimation regression analyses examining linear and quadratic trends. Results that reached a significance level of .05 are reported as statistically significant.

The examination of the influence of CSE yielded consistent results. In all comparisons the HCSE group manifested significantly higher in-group positivity and out-group negativity than the two other groups: For *positive trait attributions to the in-group*, $F(2,813) = 6.42$, $p < .05$ with the means of $M = 3.94$, $SD = .65$, for the LCSE group, $M = 3.99$, $SD = .58$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 4.14$, $SD = .60$, for the HCSE group. The difference between the LCSE and the MCSE group did not reach significance. For *negative trait attributions to the in-group*, $F(2,464) = 47.62$, $p < .001$ with the means of $M = 2.41$, $SD = .74$, for the LCSE group, $M = 2.09$, $SD = .71$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 1.74$, $SD = .69$, for the HCSE group. The difference between the LCSE and the MCSE group reached significance, thus the results single out the LCSE group as the group that attributed to the highest percent of Arabs negative traits.

The HCSE group also attributed *positive traits* to significantly lowest percent of *the out-group members*, $F(2,816) = 73.64$, $p < .001$, with the means of $M = 2.97$, $SD = .68$, for the LCSE group, $M = 2.59$, $SD = .71$, for the MCSE group, and $M = 2.20$, $SD = .74$, for the HCSE group. The difference between the LCSE group and the MCSE group reached significance, namely, the LCSE group attributed to the highest percent of Jews positive traits. Finally, the HCSE group attributed *negative traits* to significantly highest percent of *the out-group members*, $F(2,816) = 73.66$, $p < .001$, with the means of $M = 3.22$, $SD = .81$, for the LCSE group, $M = 3.78$, $SD = .71$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 4.05$, $SD = .80$, for the HCSE group. The difference between the LCSE group and the MCSE group reached significance, thus again the results single out the LCSE group as the group that attributed to the lowest percent of Jews negative traits.

The pattern of attributing positive traits to highest percent and negative traits to lowest percent of the in-group by HCSE group and attributing positive traits to lowest percent of the out-group and negative traits to highest percent of the out-group confirms the predictions regarding this group. However the prediction regarding the LCSE group was not confirmed. The LCSE group manifested lowest in-group favoritism and lowest out-group prejudice. They attributed positive traits to

lowest percent and negative traits to highest percent of in-group members, and lowest percent of negative traits along with highest percent of positive traits to out-group members. With one exception (attribution of positive traits to members to the in-group), the MCSE group differed significantly from the LCSE group thus holding a midway position between the two CSE groups.

For expressed feelings and readiness for social contact, the main effects of responder identity reached significance and yielded a similar pattern to that obtained for trait attributions, but here the HCSE and MCSE groups did not differ and both manifested significantly lower positivity and higher negativity toward the out-group than the LCSE group. The findings for the different comparisons are: For *positive feelings* $F(2,767) = 93.89$, $p < .001$ with means of $M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.53$, for the LCSE, $M = 1.42$, $SD = 0.46$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 1.31$, $SD = .041$ for the HCSE group. For *negative feelings* $F(2,767) = 85.75$, $p < .001$ with the means of $M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.58$, for the LCSE, $M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.61$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.53$, for HCSE group. For *readiness for social contact with Jews*, $F(2,801) = 90.00$, $p < .001$ with the means of $M = 1.81$, $SD = 1.25$ for the LCSE, $M = 0.69$, $SD = 0.97$ for the MCSE group, and $M = 0.91$, $SD = 0.94$, for the HCSE group.

Positive and negative trait attributions yielded significant third order target \times responder identity \times age interactions indicating significant age-related differences between and within the examined groups: For positive attributions, $F(8,780) = 11.46$, $p < .001$, for negative attributions $F(8,784) = 10.62$, $p < .001$. The means for these interactions are presented in Figure 1a–d. Positive and negative feelings and readiness for social contact that were assessed only toward Jews yielded significant second order responder identity \times age interactions. For positive feelings, $F(8,767) = 6.29$, $p < .001$, for negative feelings $F(8,776) = 11.34$, $p < .001$, for readiness for social contact $F(8,801) = 9.34$, $p < .001$. The means for these interactions are presented in Figure 2a–c.

The critical age groups for significant differences among the different CSE groups are the three younger groups, aged 8–9, 10–11, and 12–13, namely, the age range of 8–13. In these three age groups, the differences between the high and low CSE groups reached significance almost on all the examined variables: The 8–13 year-olds from the HCSE group expressed lower positivity (Fig. 1a, Fig. 2a,c) and higher negativity (Fig. 1c, 2b) toward the out-group than those from the LCSE group. The 8–9-year-olds from the HCSE group also expressed higher positivity toward the in-group than their counterparts from the LCSE group (Fig. 1b). However, one exception to this pattern is the identical level of positivity toward the in-group expressed by the 10–11-year olds in the two compared groups (Fig. 1b). With regard to negativity toward the in-group (Fig. 1d) all three age groups in the HCSE group expressed lower negativity than did those in the LCSE group. Importantly, from the three youngest age groups, most pronounced peaks of low positivity, high negativity toward out-group and high positivity, low negativity toward the in-group were manifested by the HCSE 12–13-year-olds.

The MCSE group produced a less consistent pattern for the three younger groups than the two other groups. Here, the group aged 8–9, differed significantly from the HCSE group in expressing less negative feelings toward the out-group (Fig. 2b). On all other measures the 8–9-year-olds in the MCSE and HCSE groups were very similar. This means

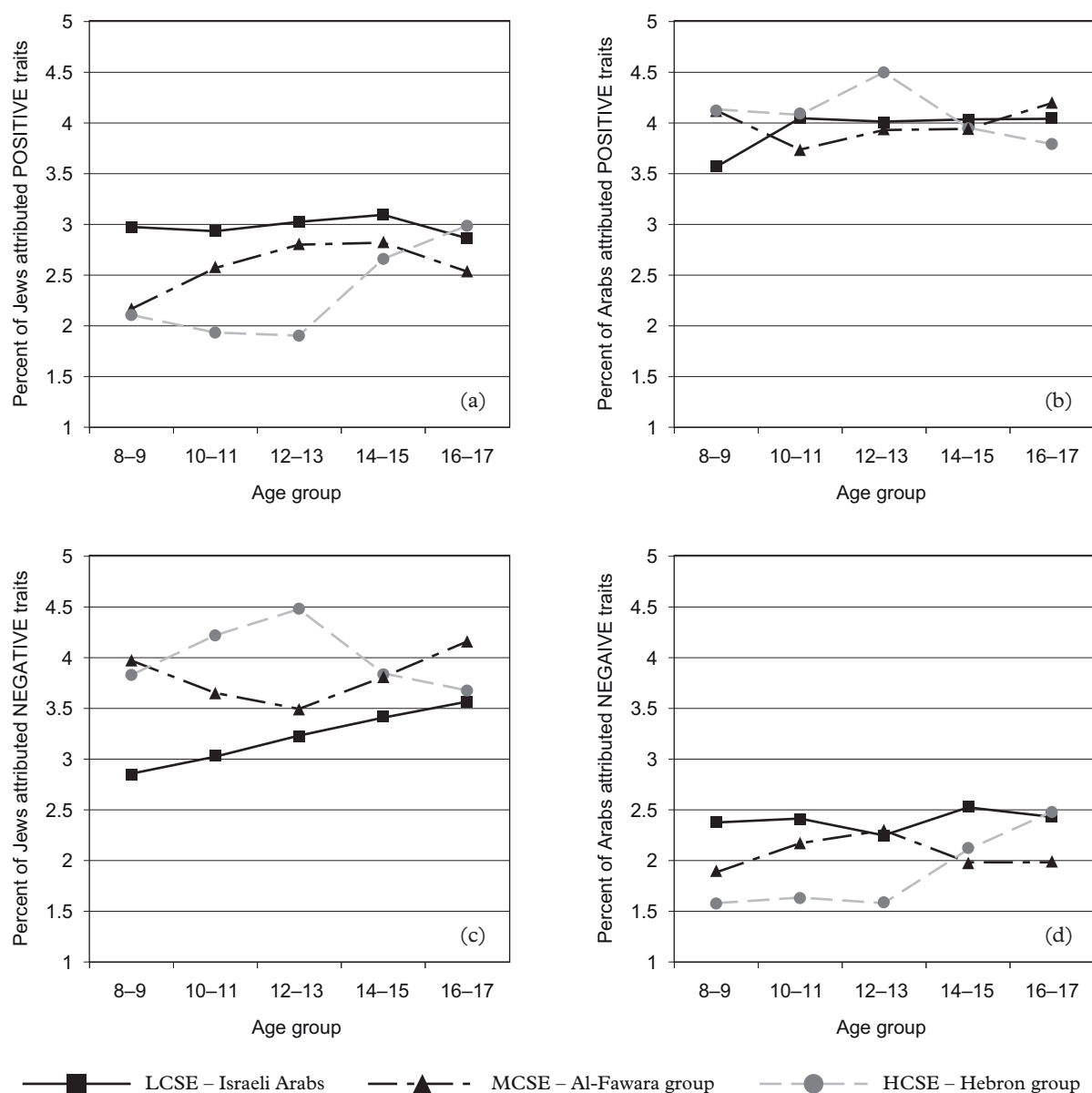


Figure 1. Positive and negative trait attributions to Jews and Arabs (1 = 0%; 2 = 25%; 3 = 50%; 4 = 75%; 5 = 100%).

that at the age of 8-9, on most measures the difference between MCSE and LCSE was also significant (Fig. 1a-d, Fig. 2a,c).

From the age of 10-11 through 12-13, participants from the MCSE group tended to abandon the extreme beliefs and attitudes characterizing the HCSE group maintaining it only on two measures of expressed positivity toward the out-group (Fig. 2a,c), otherwise they were closer to the LCSE group than to the HCSE group or held an in-between position that did not differentiate them significantly from the other groups (Fig. 1a-d, Fig. 2b).

The groups aged 14-15, in the three CSE groups reached very similar level of moderation in positivity/negativity toward the in- and out group (Fig. 1a-d, Fig. 2a-c). With two exceptions, the moderation and similarity among the CSE groups were maintained by the 16-17-year-olds. The exceptions appeared in the MCSE group, in which the 16-17-year-olds expressed significantly more negative feelings toward the out-

group (Fig. 2b), and lower wish for social contact with its members than the two other groups (Fig. 2c).

Results for age trends are presented in Table 1. As may be seen, three measures yielded significant linear trends not accompanied by a quadratic trend (negative attributions to the out-group in the LCSE group, positive feelings toward out-group in the MCSE, and negative feelings in the HCSE group). In most instances either quadratic or both trends reached significance. Since the quadratic trends account for more variance in each case and our interest is in a particular age groups, when both trends are significant the focus is on the quadratic trend. Inspection of the actual curves reveals different trends according to sample, positivity/negativity and target, but almost always the peak and turning point in the curve was at the age of 12-13, i.e. in early adolescence.

The LCSE group produced fewer significant trends than the other groups indicating more stability over the age span than the two other groups. The significant linear trend obtained for

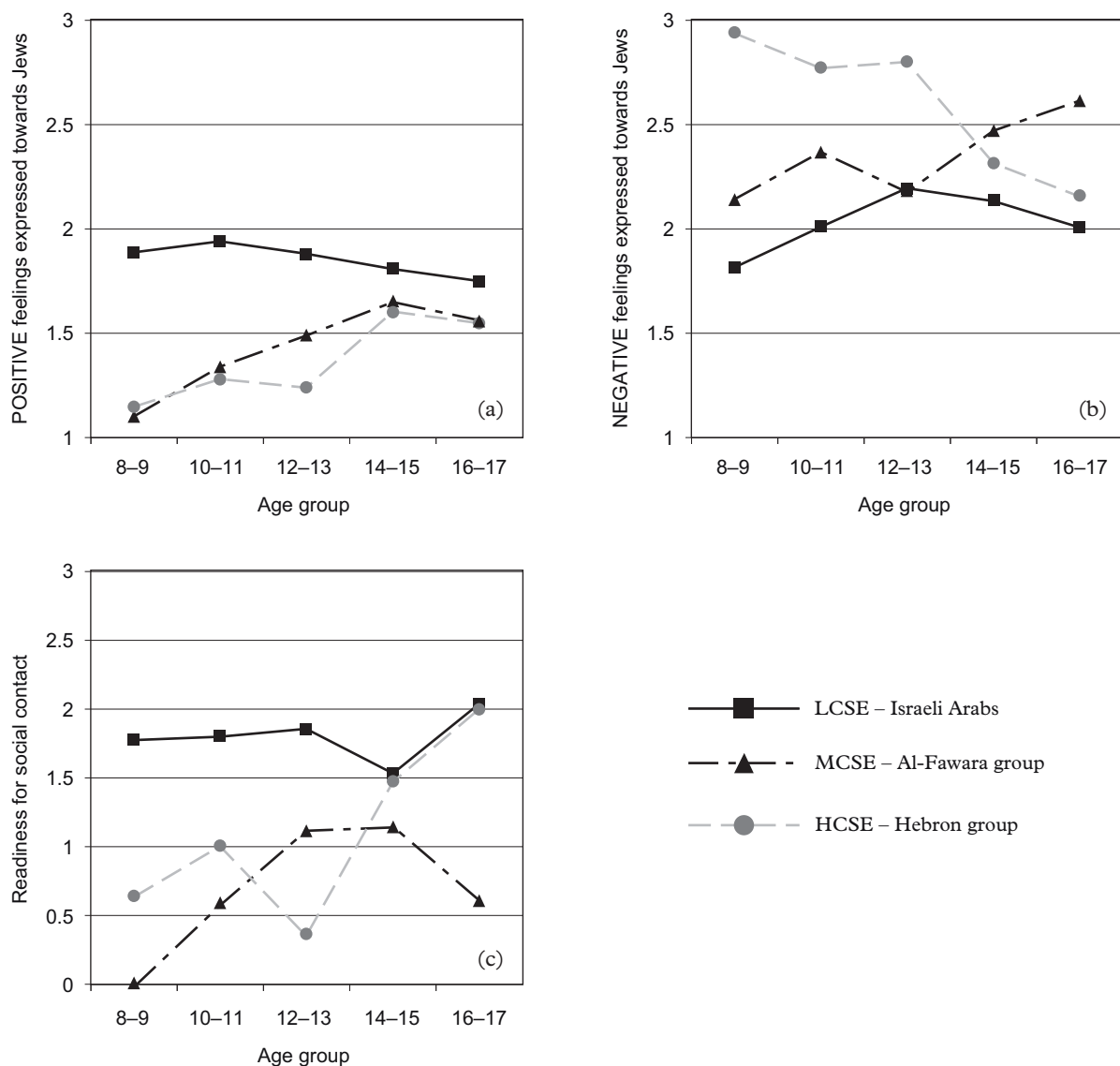


Figure 2. Positive and negative feelings expressed toward Jews and readiness for social contact with them.

the LCSE group indicates that negative attributions toward the out group increased with age. However, the highest level of their negative attributions toward the out-group reached the lowest level of the negativity attributed by the two other groups (Fig. 1c). The other significant trends for the LCSE group include positive attributions to the in-group and negative feelings expressed toward Jews. Both yielded quadratic trends indicating an increase from age 8-9 to age 10-11, but whereas after this increase the positive attributions to the in-group remained unchanged (Fig. 1b) the negative feelings toward the out-group continued to increase reaching a peak at 12-13 and only at the age of 14-15 and 16-17 decreased gradually (Fig. 2b).

For the MCSE group, all variables yielded significant trends most including both linear and quadratic trends. An inspection of the curves indicates a *decline* in positivity toward the in-group at age 10-11 and maintenance of this level through the examined age trajectory (Fig. 1b). Negativity toward in-group *increased* with age, then, at the age of 12-13 decreased forming a gentle inverted U curve (Fig. 1d). An opposite trend emerged toward the out-group, here a gradual *increase* in positivity

continued till the age of 14-15 and decreased at the age of 16-17 (Fig. 1a, Fig. 2c) reaching the lowest point at the age of 16-17. The same trend appeared with respect to positive feelings toward the out-group, only here the trend was linear, namely the observed reduction in this measure in the oldest age group did not change the linear trend (Fig. 2a). Negativity toward the out-group was not consistent, negative attributions followed a gentle U pattern of a *decrease* and then at the age of 14-15, an increase (Fig. 1c). Expressed negative feelings toward the out-group formed a zigzagging pattern, first rising with age, then at the age of 12-13 declining and at age 14-15 increasing and continuing to increase reaching the highest point at the age of 16-17 (Fig. 2b).

The curves in the HCSE group are more distinct, and in contrast to the age variability characterizing the MCSE group, the HCSE group displayed very consistent trends always involving a peak in the same age group (12-13-year-olds). The graphs depict an increase in positivity toward the in-group only for the 12-13-year olds, (Fig. 1b) and a stability of a very low negativity toward the in-group till the age of 12-13 and then, at 14-15, an increase (Fig. 1d).

Table 1*Results of trend analyses for the three CSE groups according to age: Beta and p values*

	<i>Positive attributions to Jews</i>	<i>Positive attributions to Arabs</i>	<i>Negative attributions to Jews</i>	<i>Negative attributions to Arabs</i>	<i>Positive feelings</i>	<i>Negative feelings</i>	<i>Readiness of social contact</i>
LCSE (Low Collective Self Esteem) – Israeli Arabs							
Beta linear	–0.02	0.18**	0.35***	0.05	–0.12	0.15*	0.01
Beta quadratic	–0.11	0.15*	–0.01	0.01	–0.04	0.17**	0.03
MCSE (Medium Collective Self Esteem) – Palestinians from Al-Fawara refugee camp							
Beta linear	0.50***	–0.22*	–0.10	0.40***	0.38***	–0.51***	0.54***
Beta quadratic	0.38***	–0.35***	–0.37***	0.26**	0.07	–0.24**	0.31***
HCSE (High Collective Self Esteem) – Palestinians from Hebron							
Beta linear	0.26***	0.07	0.06	0.12	0.33***	0.26***	0.27***
Beta quadratic	–0.31***	0.20**	0.26***	–0.29***	–0.17**	0.04	–0.32***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; *** $p < .0001$.

Two measures of positivity toward the out group, (Fig. 1a, Fig. 2a) display a stable trend of low-outgroup positivity for the three younger groups and then, at the age of 14–15 increase. The third measure of positivity displays a more erratic pattern in the younger groups, but here more distinctly, the lower point is in early adolescence and there after an increase (Fig. 2c). Negative attributions to the out-group display an inverted pattern, increasing with age reaching the highest point at the age of 12–13 and then decreasing (Fig. 1c). Negative feelings represent the only exception for this group. This measure produced a linear trend indicating a decrease with age to a similar point reached by the LCSE group (Fig. 2b).

Discussion

The present study aimed to advance the understanding of developmental and contextual influences, during different stages of adolescence on intergroup responses. It presents a re-examination with Arab participants, of predictions derived from IDCT, previously examined with Israeli Jewish participants. It was hypothesized that CSE and the experiences related to the development of identity in pre- and early adolescence have a decisive influence on intergroup beliefs and attitudes. Based on previous propositions and findings (Crocker et al., 1993; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Erikson, 1968; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991; Marcia, 1980, 1998; Tajfel, 1981, Turner, 1999), we expected that irrespective of age, and particularly in pre- and early adolescence CSE will influence intergroup attitudes. Largely our predictions were confirmed and were in line with previous research that has examined CSE as an individual difference measure (Crocker et al. 1993; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991).

Polarization and generalization

A general look at the results portrayed in Fig. 1 reveals that positive (Fig. 1a, b) and especially negative (Fig. 1c,d) attributions toward each of the two groups are plotted on the opposite sides of the scale. Namely, while a high percent of in-group members were attributed positive traits and only low percent

were attributed negative traits, an opposite configuration is associated with the out-group. This pattern demonstrates that conflict polarizes in- and out-group perception homogenizing the beliefs about both groups. Further, it may be expected that the negative feelings for the out-group and low readiness for social contact (Fig. 2b,c) will reinforce and generalize the biases. This in turn may lead to the categorization of the out-group as immoral, to its moral exclusion (Opatow, 1990) and delegitimization (Bar-Tal, 1989, 1990).

The same polarized characterizations of the in- and out-group, and same pattern of attitudes were displayed by same aged Israeli Jewish participants (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman, 2001). This reciprocity demonstrates that conflicts have similar effects on biases of the involved parties and may offer a partial explanation for the difficulties faced by groups in conflict to resolve the controversial issues that antagonize them. Realizing that intergroup biases are formed in early childhood may help to prevent them or to help design age-related interventions for changing them (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman & Bar-Tal, in press).

Differences between the CSE groups

HCSE participants attributed to the highest percent of in-group members positive traits, and to a lowest percent negative traits. Toward the out-group the pattern was reversed: Significantly lower percent were attributed positive traits and a highest percent were attributed negative traits. The HCSE group also expressed more negative feelings and least positive feelings toward the out-group, and lowest readiness for social contact with its members than the LCSE group, but on these measures did not differ significantly from the MCSE group. The consistent difference between the HCSE and LCSE groups as a whole, confirm the hypothesis that as in minimal group situations, in a real threat situation, the HCSE group displays social biases. The new finding in this study is that along with the pronounced in-group positivity, HCSE participants also displayed the highest out-group negativity and lowest out-group positivity than the LCSE and on trait attributions also than the MCSE group. Sharing a high sense of group pride, in a real, meaningful social context (Crocker

et al., 1993; Tajfel, 1981), it appears that these participants used all the possible ways for expressing biases and presumably for enhancing their self-worth.

The LCSE group expressed lowest in-group positivity and highest in-group negativity, namely, as in previous studies (Crocker et al., 1993; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991) they did not distort in-group representation. However, since we assessed in-group negativity separately our findings are more compelling. On the other hand, contrary to the hypothesis, even in conflict and in a sensitive developmental stage, the LCSE participants did not protect their esteem by displaying markable out-group negativity or lowest out-group positivity.

With the exception of positive attributions to the in-group, in which the MCSE group did not differ significantly from the LCSE group in attributing to low percent of their in-group members positive traits, in all other variations of trait attributions it differed significantly from the two other groups. They expressed less in-group negativity, more out-group negativity and less out-group positivity than the LCSE group, but also less positivity and more negativity to the in-group and more positivity less negativity to the out-group than the HCSE group. With regard to feelings and readiness for social contact the MCSE group did not differ from the HCSE group; at the same time, both MCSE and HCSE groups differed significantly from the LCSE group that expressed highest out-group positivity and lowest out-group negativity. These results and the means obtained for the MCSE group for the different measures, indicate that as hypothesized the MCSE group may be characterized as holding a midway position with one similarity to the LCSE and three to the HCSE group. This suggests that although attributing to less in-group members positive attributions than the HCSE group, generally, they employ an intergroup strategy that enables a better self-enhancement than the LCSE group, though apparently, not as effective as the HCSE group.

Differences between age groups in the compared CSE groups

In each of the LCSE and HCSE groups the three younger age groups resemble each other. In the MCSE group the 8–9-year-olds display a different pattern, while the two following age groups (10–11; 12–13), generally resemble each other. With a few exceptions the older groups in the three CSE groups also resemble each other. Accordingly, in comparing the specific age groups in the different CSE groups we shall look generally at the younger and older groups.

As in the overall comparison between the LCSE and HCSE groups when specific age groups were compared, the differences between each of the three youngest groups were significant. One exception diverted from this pattern in which the 10–11-year-olds in both CSE groups attributed to the same percent of in-group members positive traits. This was expected for the HCSE group less for the LCSE group. However, this one diversion from the expected pattern does not change the general tendency obtained for the two samples in which the younger groups in the HCSE group attributed to the in-group higher positivity and lower negativity, and to the out-group lower positivity and higher negativity than these age groups in the LCSE group.

For the MCSE group, in most instances, the 8–9-year-olds resembled their counterparts in the HCSE group, expressing

positivity and negativity toward in- and out-group. In this age, the similarity between the two groups exposed to conflict (HCSE and MCSE) and the difference between them and the group with no exposure to conflict (LCSE) suggests that the reactions of the 8–9-year-olds were influenced mainly by the threat than by CSE. Indeed, in the age of 8–9 identity issues are less salient, and it is possible that in the group with an ambiguity regarding the CSE the youngest children did not internalize the satellites regarding their collective identity and how it compares with others. Support for the interpretation that 8–9-year-olds react to threat rather than to esteem issues may be found in the findings that same aged Israeli Jewish participants, who also experience high exposure to conflict, tended to display similar responses toward their respective in- and out-groups to the response obtained here for the 8–9-year-olds in the HCSE and MCSE groups (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005).

Pre- and early adolescents in the MCSE group became significantly different from those in the HCSE group and resemble same aged groups in the LCSE group. Whereas the HCSE pre- and early adolescents expressed highest positivity and lowest negativity toward the in-group, and lowest positivity and highest negativity toward the out-group, the responses of these age groups in the MCSE group mellowed. These comparisons between pre- and early adolescents in the three CSE groups constitute the first support for the predicted age differences, pointing out that pre- and early adolescents in the HCSE group differ from those in the two other groups in the predicted way. Apparently, as hypothesized, pre- and early adolescents belonging to HCSE groups express more biases and are able to better confront identity issues than the other groups. The shift in the MCSE reducing their biases at pre- and early adolescence indicates that though on some of the general comparisons they resemble the HCSE, in the critical age groups of identity formation they resemble the LCSE group.

The results obtained for the two older groups (14–15 and 16–17) in the three compared groups, generally indicate moderation on all biases. Often, the two older groups draw closer to each other in their beliefs and attitudes. Apparently, when cognitive development advances and secure identity begins to emerge, the need for self-enhancement is less predominant and intergroup biases tend to mellow. This consistent change that was reported also for same aged Israeli Jewish participants (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Teichman, 2001) may be seen as an additional confirmation for the association between insecure identity, the need for self-enhancement, and social biases.

However, the similarity between the two older age groups in the three compared groups is not complete. In two instances, the 16–17-year-olds in the MCSE group diverted from the moderation pattern expressing more negative feelings toward the out-group and less readiness for social contact with its members than the two other groups. These responses may be seen as a delayed attempt of protecting their self-esteem. However, since these two responses represent exceptions and changes only in attitudes, unless more direct changes toward the out-group follow (like, for instance, the appearance of negative attributes), the observed changes do not appear to suffice for protecting self-worth.

Considering the changes between the CSE groups it is evident that the consistent difference between the younger age groups in the HCSE and LCSE groups has the main

contribution for the global differences reported above between these two groups. The unique age patterns obtained for younger and older age groups in the MCSE group reflect that ambiguous social identity and collective self-esteem interfere with self enhancement and especially in the stage when it is most needed.

Age trend within the different CSE groups

The examination of the age trends in the LCSE group shows a high age stability, i.e. a defused age pattern in which the five age groups displayed similar responses. The significant trends were gentle showing a mild linear increase in the percent of out-group members attributed negative traits that in its highest point reached the point of lowest attributions made by the other groups, a small increase in positive traits attributed to the in-group, occurring in one age group (10–11), and negative feelings toward the out-group mildly increasing with age, at the age of 12–13 reaching a peak and then decreased. Though these trends are similar to those manifested by the HCSE, they may be defined as too few and too mild. Thus, again, it is evident that the LCSE group does not engage in an effective self-enhancement (by expressing in-group positivity and out-group negativity) or self-protection (by expressing out-group negativity) and the pre- and early adolescents in this group manifest rare and weak attempts for such intergroup responses.

The age trends manifested by the HCSE group are consistent and the curves for this group are distinct indicating that pre- and particularly early adolescents show the predicted trend of high peak in in-group positivity, low peak in in-group negativity, and a reversed trend for the out-group. Occasionally, the trend in the three young groups is stable (Fig. 1a,d, 2a,b), in another instance there is a gradual increase and decrease (Fig. 1c), and occasionally the early adolescents stand out (Fig. 1b, 2c). The negative feelings toward the out-group are the only variable that produced a linear trend indicating a decrease. However, the decrease proceeds from the maximal point possible for expressed negativity, not reached by any of the other groups to a point still higher than the one reached by the LCSE group. It appears that in the insecure stages of pre and early adolescence, adolescents who feel that they can draw on the status of their group for advancing their positive identity take advantage of all available means. In a later stage, when more secure with regard to their identity, the adolescents in this group consistently allow themselves to express moderation in in- and out-group biases.

The age-related findings for the HCSE group replicate many of the developmental patterns obtained for same-aged Israeli Jewish participants. The resemblance between the results of the HCSE Palestinians and those often obtained for the Jewish participants may be attributed to the fact that the latter, being a middle and high SES group, experiencing an intractable conflict also represents a HCSE group.

Generally, the age trends for the responses for the MCSE group reveal a pattern that may be characterized as an opposing pattern to that manifested by the HCSE group. The significant trends for this group indicate a *decrease* in positive attributions to the in-group at the age of 10–11 that in the next age group is followed by an increase and then maintains stability (Fig. 1b). This is accompanied by a mild *increase* in negative attributions to the in-group peaking at the age of 12–13 and decreasing thereafter (Fig. 1d). With regard to the out-group gradual age-related trend of *increase* on all measures

of positivity may be observed till the age of 14–15, or 16–17 (Fig. 1a, 2a,c), and a *decrease* in negativity peaking at the age of 12–13 and increasing thereafter (Fig. 1c).

Interestingly, the lowest points of in-group positivity and highest point of in-group negativity, and lowest point of out-group negativity and highest point of out-group positivity in the MCSE were displayed by the early adolescents and the change occurred thereafter. This consistent trend indicates that in the MCSE group as well, 12–13 is a critical age, but before changing their response patterns expressing more negatively toward the out-group or rejecting it, the pre- and early adolescents in this group resemble the LCSE group with being more favorable toward the out-group and less accepting of the in-group. These findings demonstrate the difficulties of pre- and early adolescents in groups with ambiguous CSE or LCSE.

The trends for the older age groups in the MCSE indicate that the significant changes obtained in the comparison between them and same aged groups in the two other CSE groups stem from significant changes they have undergone in relating to their group and to the out-group, most probably attempting to cope with identity issues in a similar way to that of the pre- and early adolescents in the HCSE group. It appears that in groups in which pre- and early adolescents do not manifest intergroup biases, older adolescents either continue patterns from younger ages (LCSE group), or increase biases in a later stage (MCSE group). The fact that the older adolescents in the HCSE group reduced all types of biases suggests that intergroup biases in pre- and early adolescence are an adaptive strategy for coping with identity issues.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the fact that in this study the LCSE and MCSE participants did not express biases or expressed mild and rare biases does not mean they did not hold biases. It only indicates they could not express them directly. In line with the idea offered by Aberson, Healy, and Romero (2000), it may be suggested that participants with low or unclear collective self-esteem have similar needs to those experienced by participants with HCSE however they need to be provided with different channels, like for instance implicit measures, for expressing these needs. Nonetheless, overall the consistent results obtained in this study suggest that the development of intergroup biases in adolescence is influenced by CSE.

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