The title for this Special Section is **Context and Ethnic/Racial Identity**, edited by Eleanor K. Seaton, Stephen Quintana, Maykel Verkuyten, and Gilbert C. Gee

Peers, Policies, and Place: The Relation Between Context and Ethnic/Racial Identity

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This manuscript introduces the special section, Context and Ethnic/Racial Identity

Who am I? What am I? These existential questions have spurred a comprehensive body of research on social identities. Importantly, social identity is not a matter of one's idiosyncratic self-perception but, rather, profoundly shaped by one's social context, including one's social role and place in society. This latter insight has provided the motivation for research on ethnic/racial identity (ERI), which has a long history in psychology, sociology, and related fields. ERI is defined as the significance and meaning that individuals ascribe to being a member of their ethnic/racial group (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). This body of scholarship had matured to a point where there was a recognized need to synthesize what was known and assess what continues to be debated or need to be studied.

In response to this need, the ERI in the 21st century study group was convened by Adriana Umaña-Taylor and Deborah Rivas-Drake in 2012 in order to synthesize theoretical and empirical work on ERI conducted in the United States.[1] The meetings resulted in publications on ERI theory (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), methods (Schwartz et al., 2014), an empirical review (Rivas-Drake, Seaton et al., 2014),

and a meta-analysis of ERI and developmental outcomes (Rivas-Drake, Syed et al., 2014). An important recommendation was the following:

> Our second recommendation is to further theorize the role of social ecologies in the linkages between adolescents' ERIs and their adjustment in various life domains. Explicit examination of youth's everyday contexts—family, school, and peer dynamics—will be another important avenue for future work on both between and within-group variations in ERI and adolescent adjustment (Rivas-Drake, Seaton et al., 2014, p. 52).

To build on this recommendation, Eleanor Seaton and Tiffany Yip helmed the ERI Study Group in 2013 to assess the role of social context on ERI development and content. The emphasis on context was consistent with developmental science's historical embrace of Bronfrenbrenner's model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) and with seminal developmental theories articulating specific contextual influences (e.g., racial discrimination, racial segregation) for minority and immigrant children (see Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Spencer, 2006). A national convening of experts from multiple disciplines highlighted the dearth of empirical research in this area giving the impetus for the current special section, which was intended to expand beyond the U.S. context.

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[1]Eleanor Seaton and Stephen Quintana were members of the original study group.

Linking Context With ERI

At the most macrolevel, Dimitrova et al. (2017) examined the formation of ethnic, religious, and familial identity for Roma adolescents across four European countries, which varied in levels of assimilationist policies. The investigators found partial support for their thesis that Roma youth would report stronger national and ethnic identities when living in countries with stronger assimilationist policies compared to living in countries with weaker policies. Their study of four national contexts, which could be ordered according to assimilationist policies, is a particularly compelling strategy to examine development in the broader societal context. The study raises broader questions about how exactly specific social policies can influence a group's social identity.

At a more mesolevel, Gonzalez et al. (2017) examined relations among identification and support for cross-cultural friendships among indigenous (i.e., Mapuche) and nonindigenous (generally European descent) youth in Chile. The investigators found that the more perceived support for cross-group friendships was endorsed by both the Mapuche and nonindigenous youth, the greater each group identified with Mapuche culture. This study is an important departure from the literature that predominantly focuses on the minority group's changes toward the majority group. The most important aspect of this study is the simultaneous documentation of how majority group members can change as a result of contact with minority group members.

This special issue also includes two studies that analyzed different components of the same larger data set referred to as developmental designs (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2017). Rivas-Drake et al. (2017) adapted the resolution and exploration subscales of the Ethnic Identity Scale, whereas Santos et al. (2017) adapted the centrality, public, and private regard subscales from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity–Teen. Both publications were longitudinal, with Rivas-Drake et al. (2017) examining three semesters among a Midwest sample, whereas Santos et al. (2017) examined two semesters with samples in the Midwest and Southwest. The results from both publications indicate that youth's friendship networks and their ERI's are related. Rivas-Drake et al. (2017) reported that resolution levels—for boys only—was associated with engaging with a more diverse ethnic group, which in turn was associated with greater exploration for both boys and girls. Santos et al. (2017) indicated that youth's public regard levels became more similar to their peer's public regard levels across both samples. Yet, only the Southwest sample demonstrated that youth selected their networks based on similar public regard levels.

The findings from these two studies provide an answer that cross-sectional studies could not resolve. Specifically, the reason that peer groups demonstrate within-group similarities could be due to the tendency for peers to select friends who are similar or due to peers influencing those in the peer group. The Santos et al. study demonstrates that peer influence appears to be more closely related to peer group homophily when compared to selection tendencies. The Rivas-Drake et al. study elaborates on the tendency for peers to influence each other's ethnic–racial orientation by demonstrating that growth in, for example, ethnic resolution was influenced by the nature of the peer group. Across both studies, it is apparent that peer context has a strong prospective influence on youth's ERI orientation and development. In other words, although youth tend to befriend peers who are similar to them, the differences (e.g., different ethnic–racial status, differences in private or public regard) within peer groups appear to promote change in ERI orientation and development.

Theoretical and Empirical Considerations

The main concern of this special section is how social context shapes ERI development and content, and how one's immediate environment affects ERI salience and meaning on a moment-to-moment basis (Sellers et al., 1998; Yip & Douglas, 2013). Most research presumes that the effect of context is unidirectional with ERI as the outcome. What has received much less attention in theory and empirical research is the reverse direction from ERI to social context; that is, how ERI depends on social affirmation and can form the psychological basis for shaping and changing the social context.

ERI is not composed of private beliefs or personal convictions that can be sustained without social expression and social validation. ERI is about one's place in the social world and refers to the question of what one is assumed to be socially. As such, ERI depends on recognition and acknowledgment by others and involves the desire to verify who you are as a racial/ethnic group member (North & Swann, 2009).

ERI is sustainable to the extent that it is expressed and affirmed in identity-defined practices, contextualized in specific ethnic–racial

ecologies. Furthermore, the social context is not simply fixed but also shaped by ERI, both individually and collectively. People can act alone or together on the basis of their ERI, and these (collective) actions can change the social setting to reflect or recognize what they are. A dynamic model of the relation between context and ERI should also consider the importance of identity validation in social contexts and the shaping of these social contexts by ERI enactment. Enactment includes the manner in which members of stigmatized groups—such as the Roma in Eastern Europe (Dimitrova et al., 2017)—attempt to manage one's stigma status through a crafted and highly intentional presentation of self in everyday life (Cross et al., 2017). In other words, enactment is the way in which ERI is accomplished and managed during daily interactions with intraracial and interracial individuals (Cross et al., 2017).

Identity Validation

People have a basic need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and tend to secure acceptance as *ingroup* members. Being accepted as a full member of one's racial/ethnic group requires demonstrations of behaviors that communicate and authenticate membership. Individuals negotiate their racial/ethnic self-understanding to in-group members by using various behaviors and signals, such as language and cultural practices. For example, claiming a Mapuche identity will require practicing Mapuche culture and supporting cultural maintenance (Gonzalez et al., 2017). Among South Moluccans living in the Netherlands, the ability to speak the Malay language is used to authenticate a Moluccan identity ("If you can't speak Malay, you're not a real Moluccan"; Verkuyten, 2005).

Importantly, validation of one's ERI is not only gated by members of the in-group but also by out-group members. The intergroup sensitivity effect implies that people are more sensitive to out-group than in-group critics (Hornsey & Imani, 2004). It often is difficult to maintain an ERI without acknowledgment and recognition by relevant out-groups. In identity politics and forms of multiculturalism, not only are equal treatment and rights at stake, but the social recognition and public affirmation of a particular group's history, culture, and lifestyle are also at stake.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) argues that humans strive for a distinctive and positive social identity. When ERI is important for individuals, they will attempt to make themselves favorably distinct on identity-defining dimensions such as accentuating their speech styles, switching to their language, or using specific dialects. Decisions on how to present oneself in an ethnic or racial manner, such as through clothing, behavior, and posture, may be strategies that influence others to accept and validate one's group membership and distinctive ERI (North & Swann, 2009).

Identity validation is not only about youth trying to communicate what they believe about themselves but also about how youth understand themselves. Identity enactment elicits reactions from in-group and out-group members, and claims on identity authenticity and societal recognition can be accepted or rejected. The feedback provided by others can result in confidence and pride or insecurity and shame regarding where one belongs. Although such claims are theoretically appealing, surprisingly little research has surfaced. Thus, it should be a priority for future research to study these feedback loops. Research could be advanced by collecting data on the sense of ethnic/racial self in relation to actual and perceived evaluations of others. This can capture the dynamic interaction between youth and their peers, and could also be modeled with simulations via systems science methods (e.g., agent-based models). Future research should systematically assess these feedback loops because it will advance our knowledge about the reciprocal influences between ERI and social context, providing a dynamic understanding of ERI.

Shaping the Social Context

ERI performance is not only about individuals but can also include groups. Group members also act cohesively to secure the recognition of their ERI and enhance the social standing of their group. Self-categorization theory argues that a coherent social identity is the basis for group coordination and organization: "social identity is the cognitive mechanism that makes group behavior possible" (Turner, 1982, p. 21). A shared sense of "us" gives unity and common direction, and is an important basis for shaping the social world as preferred. When individuals share ERI, it creates the potential to transform individual actions into a social movement. This is evident in struggles for social justice among minority groups in many countries (e.g., #Black Lives Matter; Muslim minority youth in Europe; Cesari, 2013), and also among native youth organizing to maintain the status quo (e.g., "Generation Identitair" in France, and the "Identitäre Bewegung" in Austria).

Unfortunately, the question of when and why social identity forms a basis for collectively shaping the social world has been largely ignored in ERI research. Collective action requires a sense of "us" for changing the social world in line with one's in-group beliefs and values. Thus, ERI is not only influenced by the social context but also unites the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those who belong to the same racial/ethnic group. For example, one important aspect of ERI is group consciousness (Quintana, 1998), which implies linked fate perceptions (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Sellers et al., 1998). When people identify with a particular community or group, it is the functioning and fate of the group that becomes entangled with individual fate. The linked fate aspect of ERI is likely to translate group membership into group-based support and collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Research has shown that higher perceptions of linked fate are associated with political participation among racial/ethnic minorities in the United States (e.g., Sanchez, 2006; Stokes-Brown, 2003) and Muslim immigrants in Western Europe (Verkuyten, 2017). This proposition has important corollary questions, such as whether different cultural groups vary in the strength of linked fate perceptions and why linked fate perceptions do or do not translate in collective action, such as among the Roma in Eastern Europe (Dimitrova et al., 2017).

Empirical Recommendations

Additional research is necessary to understand the precise relation between ERI and context. We offer the following suggestions:

1. It is important to understand the relations among multiple social identities that individuals possess. Intersectionality theory argues that various social categories (e.g., race, gender, class, sexual orientation) interact in complex ways on multiple levels (Crenshaw, 1991). Specifically, domains of societal oppression (e.g., racism, sexism and classism) are not independent of each other but create an "intersection" of multiple forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Rosenthal, 2016). Utilization of the intersectional approach emphasizes the need to attend to the experience and meaning of simultaneously belonging to multiple intertwined social categories (Cole, 2009). An intersectional perspective forces us to consider ERI in relation to other salient identities such as gender, class, religious, and sexual identities. The findings by Dimitrova and colleagues (2017) suggest that identity intersections have implications for developmental outcomes. More importantly, the findings suggest that identity intersections warrant further attention among minority and majority youth and adults. This may be an especially important area of inquiry in European contexts in which religious identifications may be more important than ERI (Dimitrova et al., 2017). How is the meaning and significance attached to ERI influenced by other important salient identities? How are other salient identities influenced by ERI? Under what circumstances are intersecting identities linked to improved or diminished child outcomes among minority and immigrant youth?

2. There is burgeoning research examining online contexts as sources for racial discrimination among African American and Latino youth (see Tynes, Umaña-Taylor, Rose, Lin, & Anderson, 2012; Umaña-Taylor, Tynes, Toomey, Williams, & Mitchell, 2015). Similarly, future research needs to consider online contexts as antecedents and consequences of ERI, as well as places where identity meanings are negotiated (Hoekstra & Verkuyten, 2015). This is especially relevant as the majority of adolescents are Internet users (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013), and minority adolescents spend more time with computers and mobile media than their White counterparts (Rideout, Lauricella, & Wartella, 2011). We suggest that future research consider the dynamic relation between the ERI's enacted on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube videos, Instagram, and the ERI in individual's daily lives. Given the salience of Twitter hashtags that have prompted racial discourse and activism (e.g., #Black Lives Matter, #Oscars So White, #NoDAPL), it is imperative to understand their relation to other aspects of ERI among minority and majority youth in America, and among indigenous, minority, immigrant, and majority youth in European, African, Asian, and South American contexts (e.g., #Black Lives Matter Brazil).

3. Given the increasing number of interracial marriages among the heterosexual and homosexual population in the United States (Qian & Lichter, 2011), future research needs to examine biracial and multiracial children, adolescents, and adults, given that the bulk of

ERI research has been conducted among monoracial youth (see Schwartz et al., 2014). How is the dynamic relation between context and ERI complicated for biracial and multiracial individuals who choose nontraditional labels (e.g., Blaxican, Mexipino, Afro-Latino)? How is this relation complicated when biracial and multiracial individuals are reared and socialized in extended families, schools, and neighborhoods comprising people from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds? A related point concerns the phenotype of biracial and multiracial individuals. Historically, the United States has practiced the "one-drop rule" in which one drop of non-White blood resulted in a person being labeled non-White, especially for African Americans (Sharfstein, 2007). What role does monoracial bias—the tendency to assume that others are, should identify, or be members of a single racial group—influence biracial and multiracial youth? Additionally, what is the role of phenotype in the relation between ERI and context for biracial and multiracial individuals? Does the role of context vary for individuals who are "racially ambiguous" compared to biracial and multiracial individuals who appear to be monoracial?

4. There is a dearth of ERI empirical research among White children, adolescents, and adults in the United States and around the world. This dearth of research is especially salient in the United States because demographers forecast that the United States' majority will be composed of minority groups by 2043 (Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, 2016). The 2016 U.S. Presidential election was observed to reflect White nationalism and racial bias. Despite theoretical formulations articulating the presence of "Whiteness" (see Hughey, 2010), little is known about the content, development, and contextual influences on ERI among White children, adolescents, and adults. One reason it may be difficult to study ERI among White individuals is cultural imperialism, which is the idea that dominant group experiences are considered representative of humanity and "normative" (Young, 1990). Thus, many White individuals may not perceive themselves as having an ERI given the omnipresence of cultural imperialism. At the same time, research also suggests that some organizations actively cultivate a White identity among youth in order to maintain ideas of racial supremacy (Ezekiel, 1995). Thus, empirical research is needed to understand the development and content of ERI among White individuals. Do White individuals distinguish between White identity and American identity given cultural imperialism? What role does history, power, and privilege play in understanding ERI among White youth? What advantages and disadvantages are there for White individuals to deny or embrace an ERI? Does ERI for White individuals precede or result from a color blind ideology? How is the content and development of ERI among White individuals impacted by social movements, social media, and intergroup contact as evident in Gonzalez et al. (2017)? The findings from Gonzalez and colleagues suggest that support for intergroup contact resulted in stronger identification with the indigenous group and greater support for the maintenance of indigenous culture among majority children and adolescents. Furthermore, the findings from Gonzalez and colleagues suggest that identity intersections warrant further attention among White children, adolescents, and adults in the United States and around the world.

5. Future research needs to consider the relation between temporary identities and ERI. Transitional identities are temporary identities due to specific circumstances that are short term in nature such as pregnancy, pubertal status, unemployment, forced migration due to war or national conflict, and/or refugee status, especially when situations are enduring such as forced migration. Consequently, transitional identities may be unique antecedents and consequences of ERI. For example, pubertal development is a normative developmental process, but pubertal timing and tempo vary by race/ethnicity and gender. Although African American and Mexican American girls start puberty earlier than their White counterparts, African American girls evidence slower pubertal tempo compared to their White counterparts (Keenan, Culbert, Grimm, Hipwell, & Stepp, 2014; Sun et al., 2005). Similarly, African American and Mexican-American boys illustrated early pubertal timing compared to White boys (Cota-Robles, Neiss, & Rowe, 2002; Sun et al., 2002). Despite observed disparities in pubertal timing and tempo, ERI has rarely been examined in conjunction with pubertal development among

minority and immigrant children and adolescents. Given the robust relation between ERI and positive developmental outcomes (see Rivas-Drake, Seaton et al., 2014), how might ERI influence the relation between pubertal timing and adverse outcomes among minority youth? How does ERI in middle childhood influence subjective perceptions of the bodily changes associated with pubertal changes in adolescence?

6. Future research needs to consider the degree to which ERI fluctuates and the contexts in which fluctuations occur. Seminal theories propose that ERI consists of stable dimensions (see Cross & Smith, 2001; Phinney, 1989; Sellers et al., 1998). Yet, recent work provides evidence of racial identity fluctuations among Asian American adolescents (see Yip, Douglass, & Shelton, 2013; Yip & Fuligni, 2002) and African American college students (see Fuller-Rowell, Burrow, & Ong, 2011). The study on African American college students illustrated an association between a macroevent and ERI fluctuations since the election of Barack Obama as the president of the United States resulted in daily increases in public regard, racial centrality, and private regard on subsequent days, and public regard increases were evident 5 months after the election (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2011). Additional research is necessary to understand ERI fluctuations, the antecedents and consequences of ERI fluctuations, and the dynamic relation between ERI fluctuations and various contextual influences (e.g., schools, neighborhoods, social media, and macroevents).

7. A related point is the need to understand identity motives and identity enactment in relation to ERI among minority and immigrant youth. Social identity theory emphasized the role of identity motives regarding self-esteem and distinctiveness (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Recent theoretical formulations propose that individuals embrace social identities for reasons other than self-esteem and distinctiveness, including continuity within their social identities (Verkuyten, 2016; Vignoles, 2011). Cross, Smith, and Payne (2002) emphasized that a well-developed ERI is capable of multiple expressions, and particular expressions will be linked to specific situations. Similarly, Cross and colleagues introduced different identity enactment types, which included buffering, code-switching, attachment–bonding, and internalized racism. The primary idea is that identity enactment types serve different purposes in various situations for minority group individuals (Cross et al., 2002). Future research should examine these identity enactment types and seek to uncover if other enactments arise in various situations that minority individuals encounter. Future research should also examine ERI fluctuations in relation to the identity enactments that assist minority individuals with challenges associated with being a racial/ethnic minority. Similarly, future research should disentangle whether ERI fluctuations impede or contribute to the continuity of identity motives and/or identity enactments for minority individuals.

8. ERI remains a central theme in youth development, but much of that work has been conducted in the United States. Empirical research is necessary that provides understanding of social identities in different national contexts including the context of diaspora. The findings from Dimitrova and colleagues, as well as Gonzalez et al. (2017), highlight the need to understand ERI among minority and majority youth in international contexts. For example, it would be invaluable to compare ERI formation and content of Black youth who grow up in different countries (e.g., South Africa, Trinidad, and France). How is ERI affected among individuals who move from a country in which their racial/ethnic group is the majority (e.g., Nigeria) to a country in which their racial/ethnic group is the minority (e.g., Great Britain)? Similarly, more information is needed regarding the adoption of pan-ethnic ERI's (e.g., Asian American) when individuals migrate from origin countries (e.g., China) to countries in which they are the minority (e.g., United States). Do social variations in blatant and violent racism contribute to the social identities individuals choose to adopt, potential counter movements, and the effects of individual actions on group norms and values?

9. How does ERI develop amid increased overt racism and racial discrimination? Prior research among African American adolescents indicated that racial discrimination experiences were linked with public regard levels (Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009). Additional research is necessary to understand the dynamic relations among racism, racial

discrimination, and ERI among minority and majority group members. This is especially relevant given the increase in hate crimes against ethnic/racial minority individuals, Muslim individuals, and members of the LGBTQ community after the 2016 U.S. election ("This Week in Hate," 2017). There have also been increases in hate crimes committed against immigrants in Europe after the Brexit referendum (Serhan, 2016). What implications does an increase in more open and direct racism and racial discrimination experienced at macro- and microlevels have on ERI among minority and immigrant individuals? This question is particularly relevant given the end of the Obama presidency and shattering of the illusion that America was "postracial."

10. Arguably, one silver lining of the 2016 U.S. election is the burgeoning consciousness and participation of White individuals in protest movements against racism, bigotry, and misogyny such as the worldwide Women's Marches. One can assume that White participation in resistance movements fosters interracial friendships, which are ultimately beneficial for minority and majority individuals based on the findings from Gonzalez et al. (2017). How is the ERI of White individuals affected by their participation in resistance movements against racism and racial discrimination? Are the implications similar for American Whites and their global counterparts?

11. Previous research has operationalized context using diversity indices assessing the ethnic/racial compositions of schools and neighborhoods (Benner & Graham, 2013). This approach may not capture the complexity of context for some minority and immigrant youth. For example, an African American adolescent is more likely to live in a predominantly African American neighborhood given the nature of racial segregation (see Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2015). If the adolescent attends a racially integrated school, their honors and advanced placement courses will include Asian American and White peers, given the racialized nature of academic tracking (see Tyson, 2011). The "context" for this African American adolescent changes drastically in the course of a day. What is the relation between these context types and ERI among minority and immigrant youth? Is it possible that some contexts are promoting, whereas others are inhibiting for ERI

development and/or content? Is the relation between ERI and dynamic context dependent on the youth's racial/ethnic background, whether they are monoracial or biracial/multiracial?

Conclusion

The studies in this special section provide insight into how context influences ERI development and content. The findings suggest how various aspects of context influence the meaning, significance, and development of ERI. Two implications are evident: (a) Discouragement of one's cultural practices at a macrolevel (e.g., assimilationist policies) strengthens ERI and (b) encouragement of one's cultural practices at a microlevel (e.g., peer relations) strengthens ERI among minority youth. It is possible that encouragement of engaging one's cultural practices at microlevels, particularly from the peer group, mitigate discouragement of engaging one's cultural practices at macrolevels, through specific policies. Thus, positive proximal factors might mitigate the negative effects of distal factors such that ERI is strengthened among minority youth. The special section enhances existing research with identification of specific proximal and distal factors that influence ERI content and development among minority youth.

The findings have theoretical implications as well. The findings across the articles are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's model suggesting that various contextual systems, ranging from micro- to macrosystems influence development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The present findings suggest the need to understand the ways in which contextual systems reinforce and contradict each other regarding ERI. Similarly, the findings are consistent with the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory, which argued for the need to consider the influence of structural factors, life experiences, and environments in which individuals live and function (Spencer, 2006). The present findings reinforce the need to understand the linkages between specific contexts (e.g., peers) and the development and content of ERI of minority youth. Finally, the findings are consistent with the integrative model, which proposed that social position variables created unique developmental contexts for minority and immigrant youth (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). The present findings regarding the influence of peers on minority boys' ERI highlight the need to consider how these variables subsequently result

in specific experiences for minority and immigrant youth. All of the theories offer a wealth of information for hypothesis testing regarding the dynamic relation between ERI and context. It is our fervent hope that this special section motivates future research that utilizes the theories to develop hypotheses and questions that elucidate the experiences of children, youth, and adults.

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