Stability and Change in Private and Public Ethnic Regard Among African American, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Chinese American Early Adolescents

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Over the past 20 years, researchers have demonstrated that ethnic identity in adolescence is multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing a number of aspects of content and self-definition. The present study examines *private regard* (i.e., youths' positive evaluations of their ethnic group) as well as *public regard*, which refers to their perceptions of others' evaluations of the group. The primary objective of the present study was to examine stability versus change in private and public regard among an ethnically diverse sample of early adolescents as they progressed through middle school. Using data from a longitudinal investigation of 6th graders, we found that private regard was stable over time and quite positive for all groups. In addition, while Chinese American youths' public regard tended to increase over time, African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican youths' public regard decreased across the middle school years. Implications for ethnic identity theory are discussed.

Over the past 20 years, cultural, ecological, and developmental theorists and researchers (Boykin, 1986; García Coll et al., 1996; Phinney, 1990; Quintana, 2007a, 2007b; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997) have argued that ethnic identity development is among the normative tasks for all ethnic minority youth, in part because they traverse multicultural worlds in which ethnicity and minority status is made salient to them. Drawing from classic social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and psycho-social development theories (Erikson, 1968), ethnic and racial identity researchers have demonstrated that ethnic identity is multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing a number of aspects of content and self-definition which together constitute how individuals make sense of their ethnic group membership. An important component of ethnic identity is ethnic regard, an evaluative dimension that developmental and social psychological perspectives each emphasize (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous 1998). Ethnic regard is thought to vary along a continuum from positive to negative, or favorable to unfavorable. Two conceptually distinct components of regard are emphasized in scholarly writings: (1) the extent to which one holds positive or negative feelings about their ethnic group (termed private regard) and (2) the extent to which one believes that others hold positive or negative views of one's ethnic group (termed public regard) (e.g., Ashmore et al., 2004; Luthanen & Crocker, 1992; Phinney, 1990; Sellers et al., 1998).

Adolescence is thought to be a formative period during which youth come to develop and integrate both private and public regard beliefs. Stage models of ethnic identity development highlight the salience of identity tasks during adolescence; that is, adolescents are intimately engaged in the process of exploring the meaning of multiple facets of the self, including the meaning of social categories such as ethnicity and race. Identity exploration, in turn, culminates in greater feelings of ethnic affirmation and belonging (Phinney, 1989, 1990). Social psychological approaches to ethnic identity development also pinpoint adolescence as a critical period for development of ethnic regard. Specifically, the onset of formal operational thought provides a gateway for the abstract reasoning and dialectical thinking skills that underlie adolescents' increased tendency to consider their own and others' views about their ethnic group. Moreover, as youth enter adolescence, they are more likely to be involved in interactions and settings outside of their family and local community that make their ethnicity and race salient to them. For instance, the greater ethnic heterogeneity found in middle- and high schools as compared with elementary school, practices such as homogeneous ability grouping (tracking), and the greater

likelihood that ethnic minority adolescents will experience discrimination are likely to result in adolescents' increased focus on ethnicity as a salient and potentially determinant social category (Hughes, McGill, Ford, & Tubbs, in press).

Relatively speaking, however, there is a dearth of empirically based knowledge regarding the development of ethnic regard during the adolescent years. Accordingly, the purpose of the present study is to examine public and private regard among an ethnically diverse sample of early adolescents. More specifically, we examine the extent to which private and public regard evidence reliable change over the course of middle school, and the extent to which such change varies as a function of adolescents' ethnic or racial group membership and gender.

PRIVATE REGARD

Private ethnic regard is a type of positive ingroup affect that youth can hold; this affect along with other analogous manifestations (e.g., group pride, affirmation, private group esteem) have been reliably assessed and consistently related to positive youth outcomes across diverse populations and programs of research (e.g., Fuligni, Hughes, & Way, 2009). Though specific manifestations of positive ingroup beliefs (e.g., private regard, group pride, ethnic affirmation) vary, the basic sense of "feeling good" about one's group, a component of all three, is typically the first and most salient feature of children's emerging understanding of their ethnic identity (i.e., reporting more than ethnic group self-labels; Marks, Szalacha, Lamarre, Boyd, & García Coll, 2007) and numerous studies show that children are taught to value and feel proud of their ethnic heritage (Hughes et al., 2006). It is thus unsurprising that adolescents' private regard, on average, tends to be high (see, e.g., Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009a, 2009b). In addition, more positive private regard has been linked to more favorable outcomes among youth including lower perceived stress (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006), greater psychological well-being (Sellers et al., 2006; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), higher self-esteem (Greene et al., 2006; Martinez & Dukes, 1997), and greater academic investment (e. g., Fuligni, Witkow, & García, 2005; Wong et al., 2003).

As we have mentioned, the developmental course of private regard during early adolescence has been studied less often than has its correlates and therefore there is a lack of clarity in the literature regarding critical periods of change in private regard (see, e.g., Syed & Azmitia, 2009). In particular, the evidence that there is a uniform linear growth trajectory in private regard among youth during early adolescence (e.g., ages 10–14), as scholars have suggested, is mixed. French, Seidman, Allen, and Aber, 2006, in a study that included two groups of adolescents—one group transitioning from elementary to middle school and another group transitioning from middle to high school—found increases in group esteem (similar to private regard) among both groups of adolescents. However, the increase was most pronounced following the transition into middle school and into high school, respectively. The authors suggested, as we have, that school transitions may constitute an encounter experience that stimulates youth to feel more attached to their ethnic group and view group membership more favorably. In a second study among urban African American and Latino adolescents followed longitudinally between 10th grade and 1-year postgraduation, Greene et al. (2006) reported that there was no uniform growth in ethnic affirmation over the three years of the study. These authors suggested that development of positive affective views toward one's ethnic–racial group preceded the time period of the study, which would have been before 10th grade. However, Ho and Graham (2008) reported that private regard remained stable and high (>4.0) from 7th to 8th grade among Latino adolescents, and Seaton, Yip, and Sellers (2009) found stable and high private regard over 3 years among African American youth who were ages 12–14 on average at the first wave of data collection, roughly covering the period from 7th to 9th grade.

In this study, we examine trajectories of private regard beginning in the year following the transition to middle school. The youth in our sample are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, permitting us to examine whether youth from different ethnic groups have different private regard trajectories. In addition, an advantage of our sample is that all youth are within a limited age range (11–12 years of age during year 1 of the study) so that we are able to examine trajectories of regard in an age homogenous sample. Based on previous research we would expect most early adolescents to have a relatively stable or slightly increasing sense of positive private regard as they develop multiple aspects of their ethnic identity.

PUBLIC REGARD

The extent to which individuals believe their group is socially valued by others, or public regard, is a second important dimension of ethnic identity (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Quin-

tana, 2007b; Sellers et al., 1998). Notably, one's public regard beliefs are not necessarily consistent with one's personal evaluation of one's group, that is, with one's private regard: Prior studies have found moderate to weak associations between measures of the two constructs (Ashmore et al., 2004). Moreover, public regard beliefs have, not surprisingly, been found to vary for youth from different ethnic backgrounds (Rivas-Drake et al., 2009a). Crocker et al. (1994) found significant differences in public regard among White, Black, and Asian college students using the public dimension of their measure of Collective Self Esteem, with Whites having the highest score and Blacks having the lowest. Moreover, studies have highlighted the importance of public regard beliefs for youths' well-being and adjustment. Studies examining direct relationships between public regard and youth adjustment outcomes have generally found that beliefs that others hold more favorable views of one's ethnic group are positively associated with indicators of positive well-being including academic motivation and engagement (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake, 2010) as well-as higher self-esteem and fewer depressive symptoms and somatic symptoms (Rivas-Drake, 2010b; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2008; Rivas-Drake et al., 2009b). Qualifying this general pattern, studies have also found that ethnic minority youth who believe that others view their group more favorably are more vulnerable than are their counterparts in the face of discrimination (Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2004; Sellers et al., 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; and see Tajfel & Turner, 1979 for early theoretical discussion of this phenomenon including, for example, potentially protective reactive identities in the face of low status).

As with feelings of private regard, theoretical perspectives on ethnic identity suggest that early adolescence may be a critical period during which youth solidify and integrate beliefs about the extent to which society at large holds favorable or unfavorable views of their ethnic group. Among youth from historically stigmatized groups in particular (such as African American and Latino youth in the United States), cognitive and ecological shifts that mark the onset of early adolescence may portend declines in positive public regard perceptions during early adolescence (Quintana & Segura-Herrera, 2003; Quintana, 2007b). For instance, from early adolescence onward, youth increasingly understand that ethnic prejudice is not only manifested in isolated experiences of discrimination but also in negative or ambivalent interethnic relations that occur at the societal level. Consistent with this argument, Killen, Henning, Kelly, Crystal, and Ruck (2007) found that,

with increasing age, ethnic minority youth (ages ranging from 9 to 15 years old) made finer distinctions than Whites in race- versus nonrace-related reasons for social exclusion in interracial situations. In Verkuyten and colleagues' work in the Netherlands (see, e.g., Verkuyten & Kinket, 2000; Verkuyten & Lay, 1998), early adolescents (i.e., 10–12 years old) correctly identified the status of different ethnic groups corresponding to the popularly accepted social hierarchy among adults.

Both sociocognitive and social identity theorists would predict, therefore, that ethnic minority adolescents from socially devalued ethnic groups (e.g., African American and Latinos) would become increasingly aware of societal devaluation of their ethnic group during early adolescence. Indeed, the few studies that have examined public regard and related constructs over time have yielded findings that are consistent with this view. Decreases in public regard during mid- to late-adolescence have been documented by Ho and Graham (2008) in a study of Latino adolescents between 7th and 8th grades. In addition, Seaton et al. (2009) found that public regard was stable for some youth but decreased for those who had experienced discrimination in a three-year longitudinal study of African American adolescents who were 12–14 years old at the first data collection. Altschul, Oyserman and Bybee (2006) found that African American adolescents' awareness of societal prejudice and racism against African Americans increased linearly between 9th and 11th grade. Nevertheless, it seems likely that for some there may be a decline in public regard in early adolescence as some youth internalize lower perceived status (e.g., Quintana & Segura-Herrera, 2003), whereas for others there may be no change in such perceptions. In this paper, we explore the extent to which private and public regard changes over the course of middle school. Given the state of the literature, the results of this study will provide valuable knowledge about the nature of both private and public regard in early adolescence.

METHOD

Description of the Study

Data for this study are drawn from the Early Adolescent Cohort Study, a three-year longitudinal study in which children participated annually over the course of their 6th through 8th-grade years in middle school. Schools were selected to be included in this study based on two criteria: (1) academic achievement status as measured by statewide achievement tests, and (2) the likelihood of providing adequate

samples of one or more of the targeted ethnic groups. In selecting schools, we excluded those in the top or bottom quintile of the city's distribution in terms of scores on city-wide math and language arts assessments, and we selected schools with mid-range achievement scores to lessen the likelihood that ethnicity and school achievement levels were confounded. We additionally sought schools in which at least three of the target ethnic groups for the larger study—Chinese, African American, Dominican—constituted 20% or more of the school population. Although only three of the five schools met this selection criterion, Black and Latino students in the sample were represented at all six schools, and Chinese students were represented at three of the six schools. From the pool of selected schools, individual schools were then approached and asked to participate in the study. The principal investigators of the study met with the district superintendent and school principal to gain entry into each school in which recruitment took place and attended teacher and Parent Teacher Association meetings to introduce the study and address any questions. Early adolescents were initially recruited in 6th-grade classrooms and followed each year for the three years of middle school.

Sample

The total EAC sample comprises 1039 students recruited across six public middle schools in New York City. In the spring of their 6th-grade year, participants were on average 11.32 years old (range = 10–14). Of the whole sample, 712 were classified as African American, Puerto Rican, Dominican, or Chinese; of these, 477 began the study in 6th grade but one student was missing gender information. Thus, the present subsample (51% girls, 49% boys) comprises 476 ethnic minority youth (age $M = 11.35$, $SD = .59$ at Time 1) of African American ($n = 163$), Puerto Rican ($n = 74$), Dominican ($n = 108$), and Chinese ($n = 131$) backgrounds who began the study in 6th grade.

Procedure

To recruit participants, the study was introduced by an ethnically diverse group of trained research assistants in 6th-grade homeroom classes, and at parent–teacher conferences. Students were recruited from all 6th-grade classrooms within each of the participating schools, excluding self-contained and English as a Second Language classrooms. During recruitment, youth were informed about the study

and provided with a packet containing information sheets and parental consent forms to take home to their parents. Parental permission forms were also distributed to parents directly at parent–teacher conferences. The research staff distributed packets of materials that were available in English, Spanish, and Chinese to students to bring home to their parents. Field researchers visited classrooms multiple times for a 2–3-week period to collect consent and parent-interest forms and to answer questions regarding the study. Research assistants routinely collected the forms and handed out new ones as needed until a majority of students had returned forms. Positive incentives (e.g., pen or rubber bracelet) were used to reach acceptable return rates of consent forms (regardless of whether permission was given or denied), in addition to the offer of a small monetary incentive for survey completion.

Of the total number of recruited adolescents, there was a 77% total return rate, with 78% of returned consents agreeing to participate in the study. Once parental permission was obtained, students' assent was also obtained before filling out the survey. Only youth for whom there were signed consent forms from both a parent and themselves (i.e., assent) could participate in the study.

Data was collected in the spring of students' 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade year. Surveys were administered during two class periods deemed appropriate by the principal and teachers. During 6th-grade administration, survey questions were read out loud to the class while students answered them individually. In later years, students read the questions on their own and completed surveys at their own speed. The survey administration was supervised by four to five trained research assistants. Each participant received US$5 or a gift of that value after the completion of the survey. During the survey administration, non-consented students received activity packets with word games and crossword puzzles to ensure that they did not feel penalized.

Measures

Ethnic regard. Based on the work of Sellers and colleagues' Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997) and the MIBI-Teen (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyên, 2008), youth were asked to report their perceptions of private and public regard. Private regard was assessed with three items (e.g., "I feel good about people from my ethnic group"; Time 1–3 $\alpha = .75$, .78, and .69 for African American, $\alpha = .80$,

TABLE 1
Variable Means and Standard Deviations by Ethnic Group

Variable	Total	African American	Puerto Rican	Dominican	Chinese
1. 6th-grade private regard	4.41 (.76)	4.44[a] (.71)	4.49[b] (.86)	4.57[c] (.70)	4.19[abc] (.78)
2. 7th-grade private regard	4.25 (.89)	4.27 (.84)	4.32 (.88)	4.50[a] (.85)	3.95[a] (.93)
3. 8th-grade private regard	4.36 (.75)	4.29 (.70)	4.53 (.94)	4.51 (.69)	4.21 (.69)
4. 6th-grade public regard	3.75 (1.10)	3.41[abc] (1.21)	4.06[a] (1.00)	4.03[b] (.95)	3.76[c] (1.00)
5. 7th-grade public regard	3.73 (1.08)	3.38[ab] (1.18)	3.78 (1.02)	4.08[a] (1.04)	3.83[b] (.88)
6. 8th-grade public regard	3.71 (1.02)	3.30[abc] (1.05)	3.93[a] (1.08)	3.80[b] (1.01)	3.98[c] (.82)

Note. Standard deviations are provided in parentheses. Means that share superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

.77, and .94 for Puerto Rican, $\alpha = .77$, .80, and .79 for Dominican youth, and $\alpha = .81$, .88, and .79 for Chinese youth; $1 = Strongly\ Agree$, $5 = Strongly\ Disagree$). Youths' public regard for their ethnic group was assessed with three items such as, "A lot of people don't expect my ethnic group to do well in life" (Time 1–3 $\alpha = .77$, .85, and .85 for African American, $\alpha = .78$, .78, and .90 for Puerto Rican, $\alpha = .76$, .83, and .85 for Dominican youth, and $\alpha = .79$, .85, and .84 for Chinese youth; $1 = Strongly\ Disagree$, $5 = Strongly\ Agree$). All items were coded such that higher values indicate more favorable public and private regard.[1]

Ethnicity and gender. Adolescents were asked to identify the ethnic group with which they felt most a part of (e.g., African American, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Chinese) at each wave of data collection using forced choice items. A final race/ethnic code for all youth in the study was then created by comparing youths' answers across measures and over time. Youth who identified with more than one race or ethnicity on any one measure were also asked to specify the group with which they most strongly identified. When youth identified with different ethnic or racial groups across measures and over time, the final ethnicity code was based on the ethnic or racial group youth mentioned most frequently across measures. A dummy code was created for gender ($0 = girl$, $1 = boy$) and included in the analyses to account for potential differences in ethnic identity trajectories among boys versus girls (see e.g., Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008).

RESULTS

Means and standard deviations for all study variables for each ethnic group are presented in Table 1.

To explore the nature of ethnic regard trajectories, multilevel models were analyzed with private and public regard as the outcomes and time-nested within individual (see Table 2). These analyses were performed using a subsample of youth who had at least two data points for both private and public regard variables ($n = 363$ or 76%). Chi-square tests indicate that the distributions of youth of different ethnicities and genders among those with ≥ 2 waves of private and public regard data and those with < 2 waves are similar to what would be expected by chance, $\chi^2 = 4.31$, $df = 3$ for ethnicity and $\chi^2 = 1.79$, $df = 1$ for gender, respectively (both $ps < NS$). Time was centered at Wave 1 (6th grade). Intercepts were allowed to vary randomly, and time was entered as both a fixed effect and as a repeated measure with a first-order autoregressive (AR1) covariance

TABLE 2
Multilevel Models of Ethnic Regard Across Middle School

Parameter	Private Regard		Public Regard	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	4.31	.08***	3.46	.11***
Puerto Rican	0.02	.12	0.59	.17***
Dominican	0.17	.10	0.66	.14***
Chinese	−0.33	.10**	0.25	.14
Gender	0.20	.08*	−0.06	.11
Average linear change	−0.07	.06	−0.13	.08
Time × Puerto Rican	0.10	.08	−0.01	.11
Time × Dominican	0.05	.07	−0.04	.10
Time × Chinese	0.13	.07	0.23	.09*
Time × Gender	−0.05	.05	0.09	.07
Between-individual intercepts variance	0.16	.05***	0.12	.11
AIC unconditional growth model	2,314.83		2,855.81	
AIC hypothesized model	2,305.84		2,827.03	

Note. Reference group = African American youth.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

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[1]Information regarding measurement equivalence is available from the first author.

structure. Ethnic self-identification and gender were entered as level 2 covariates.

Private Regard

The results of the unconditional growth model suggest that on average across the combined sample, private regard remained stable over middle school ($\gamma = -.03$, $SE = .03$, $p < ns$). The subsequent model, which examined the extent to which private regard trajectories may vary by ethnicity and gender, represents an improvement over the unconditional growth model as evidenced by the AIC decrease of 8.99 (see Table 2). Chinese youth reported significantly lower private regard in 6th grade as compared with their African American counterparts ($p < .01$), and girls reported higher private regard than boys as 6th graders ($p = .01$). The time and Time × Ethnicity interactions show that Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Chinese youths' average change in private regard did not differ from that of African American youths (all $ps < ns$). The predicted values are plotted in Figure 1.

Public Regard

As with private regard, the results of the unconditional growth model suggest that on average across the combined sample, public regard remained stable over middle school ($\gamma = -.03$, $SE = .04$, $p < ns$). The hypothesized model represents an improvement over the unconditional growth model as evidenced

by the AIC decrease of 28.78 (see Table 2). In the hypothesized model, Puerto Rican and Dominican youth reported significantly higher levels of public regard relative to their African American peers (both $ps < .01$). African American youths' initial level of public regard was not significantly different from that of Chinese American youth. Gender was not significantly associated with initial levels of public regard. As summarized in Figure 2, while Chinese American youths' public regard tended to increase over time, African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican youths' public regard decreased across the middle school years. In the hypothesized model, African American youths' coefficient for change was significantly different from that of Chinese American youth ($p < .05$), but not from Puerto Rican and Dominican youth.

Post Hoc Group Comparisons

By rotating the omitted group, we were able to explore additional group differences in private and public regard. For private regard, Chinese youth reported lower initial levels of private regard than Puerto Rican and Dominican youth (both $p < .01$) in addition to the aforementioned difference relative to African American youth. No additional group differences were found for private regard. In addition to the previously described differences between groups as compared with African American youth for public regard, we found that Chinese youth reported lower initial levels of public regard than Puerto Rican and Dominican youth (both $p < .05$) and
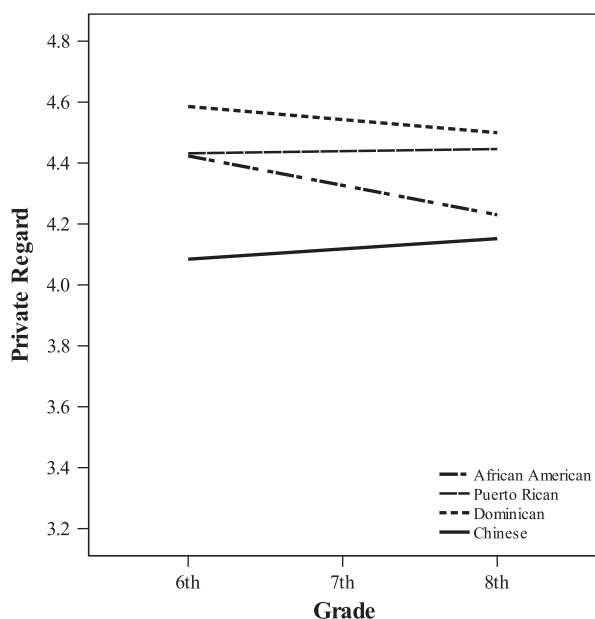

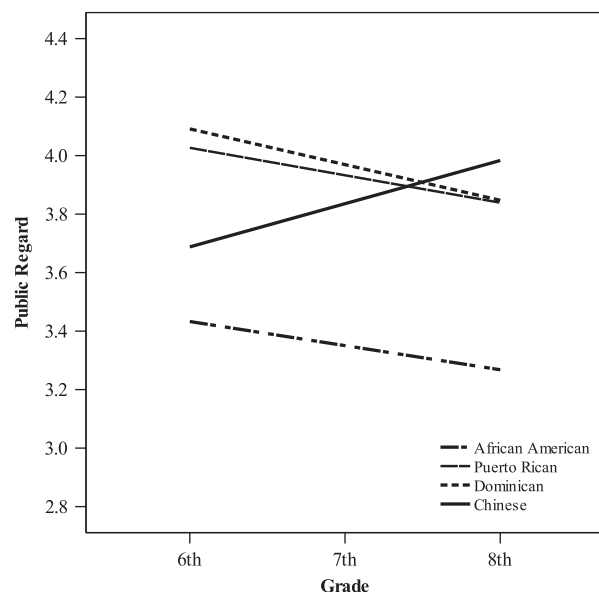FIGURE 1   Trajectories of private regard across early adolescence.

FIGURE 2   Trajectories of public regard across early adolescence.

that Chinese youths' public regard slope is also significantly different from those of Puerto Rican and Dominican youth (both $p < .05$). In addition, the public regard slope for Dominican youth is significantly different from zero ($p < .05$); no other slopes differed significantly from zero. In sum, private regard remained stable over time, while African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican youths' decreasing slopes for public regard over time differed from Chinese youths' but not each other.

DISCUSSION

Drawing from a longitudinal study of early adolescence, we explored the nature of private and public ethnic regard during the middle school years. Our findings with respect to private regard indicated that Chinese American youth reported lower levels than their non-Chinese American peers. In addition, girls reported higher levels of private regard than boys. These findings are consistent with previous findings that indicate that Chinese American students have poorer self-perception than their peers and that boys may not perceive their ethnic identities as positively as girls. The reasons for these ethnic differences are likely due to a context that provides less support for the development of ethnic pride of Chinese American students than for Black and Latino students. For example, in Way, Santor, Niwa, and Kim-Gervey (2008), they found that the Latino students reported numerous public events (e.g., The Puerto Rican Parade, The Dominican Day Parade) that supported their sense of ethnic pride while the Chinese American students did not report such public events. Similarly, the Black students in that study explained that the inclusion of their history in the school curriculum enhanced their sense of pride whereas the Chinese American students did not report experiencing such inclusion. These contextual factors likely play an important role in shaping how students feel about their ethnic groups. With respect to gender, girls have been repeatedly found to feel more closely identified with their ethnic group than boys (e.g., Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, & Guimond, 2009; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010). Research on experiences of discrimination indicates that boys report more discrimination than girls, and that such discrimination likely has a negative impact on boys' sense of ethnic pride (Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010).

With respect to the trajectory of private regard, we found that, unexpectedly, there was no change in levels of private regard over time. Previous work suggests that early adolescents' private regard increases over the transition into middle school (e.g., French et al., 2006), but less so between 6th and 7th grades. While the transition to middle school might raise ethnic consciousness and thus increase reported levels of private regard, private regard appears to remain stable during the middle school years. Relatedly, from a theoretical perspective, one would expect increases in private ethnic group affect to follow increases in exploration. However, it may be the case that there is less active ethnic exploration occurring during this period as compared with middle and late adolescence—the periods that have been the foci of ethnic identity development theory.

With respect to public regard, we found that the Chinese American students initially reported similar levels of public regard as African American youth and lower levels than their Latino peers. This finding is consistent with research which has repeatedly suggested that Chinese American adolescents have particularly low levels of ethnic pride (Way et al., 2008). Strikingly, however, the trajectories of public regard for the Chinese American students tended to increase over time while the trajectories for the Black and Latino students tended to decrease over time. To understand these patterns, it is necessary to consider, once again, the context. A primary context for youth is the stereotypes and expectations that others hold of them (García Coll et al., 1996). For Chinese American students, the model minority myth likely grows in intensity as they enter middle school and are tracked in advanced level classes (formal tracking typically begins in middle school). In contrast, Black and Latino students are increasingly tracked into lower level courses during the middle school years (i.e., within-school segregation or what sociologists refer to as "second-generation segregation"; Mickelson, 2001).

Taken together, the results for private and public regard leave us with several additional questions. Although it has been shown repeatedly that positive private regard is linked to indicators of health and well-being, the meaning of public regard is decidedly less clear. Sellers et al. (2006) recently revealed that having a sense of lower public regard can be protective for Black youth when they encounter interpersonal discrimination. Rivas-Drake et al. (2008), however, found that Chinese American adolescents who experienced peer discrimination but reported more positive public regard reported less depression than those who perceived more negative public regard. In addition, Rivas-Drake (2010a) found that positive public regard in school predicts better academic adjustment among Latino adolescents. Understanding the correlates and meaning of public regard for adolescents from different contexts is an

important next step. It may be that public regard is linked to mental health only in contexts in which there is little support for ethnic pride (e.g., parades, curriculum, etc). Furthermore, there is a need to understand the mechanisms by which public regard (whether more or less positive) might facilitate psychological health.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present study contributes to the literature on ethnic identity in adolescence—particularly given the focus on early adolescence—there are nonetheless important limitations that merit further consideration. First, it is important to note that the present results may not generalize to more youth of other socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds or who reside in areas with less ethnic diversity. Youth in less ethnically diverse settings may have qualitatively different experiences that may uniquely influence their ethnic identity development (e.g., Umaña-Taylor, 2004). In addition, consistent with the MMRI's measures (e.g., Sellers et al., 1998), the measure of public regard employed in this research refers to society's general public regard (i.e., by "others in general"). Youth may filter societal views through their sense of public regard in specific contexts or institutions (e.g., community, school). The extent to which youth differentiate sources of such regard remains an empirical question (see, e.g., Rivas-Drake, 2010a). Finally, the changes observed in public regard hint at youths' emergent understandings of societal evaluations of their group (whether more or less positive) during the middle school years, and the coefficients suggest these changes are by no means drastic. Yet, the patterns identified suggest that youths' emergent understandings of public regard are consistent with the social statuses of the groups studied in broader society and researchers may wish to explore whether changes in middle and late adolescence are more substantial than in early adolescence.

Conclusions and Implications

Notwithstanding the aforementioned limitations, we believe our findings draw attention to the importance of examining levels and trajectories of private and public regard over time and examining how the context may shape these patterns. Scholars and practitioners have sought to understand ethnic identity to better explain how individuals navigate socially diverse situations, environments, and institutions (Ashmore et al., 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Developmental research, more specifically, has tended to focus on positive ingroup affect; these efforts have been theoretically driven by the notion that an achieved and positive ethnic identity correlates with optimal psychological health (e.g., Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Quintana, 2007a). However, this emphasis on private regard (and the closely related construct of ethnic affirmation) has obscured, to some extent, other facets of identity belief systems that underlie the ways adolescents productively negotiate ethnicity in their daily lives. Although private regard is a critical component of ethnic identity, and it is a well-established correlate of other self-beliefs, public regard is informative in ways that private regard is not. Public regard beliefs lie at the nexus of the individual and the contexts in which, as numerous theorists have noted, ethnicity and race are made salient to them. One would not expect negative experiences around race and ethnic group membership to cause youth to devalue their own group (i.e., lower private regard), but one would expect that youth who have such experiences may develop a sense that their group is devalued by broader society (i.e., more negative public regard).

If we are ultimately interested in how youth of immigrant and native ethnic minority backgrounds mutually adapt to increasingly diverse settings, we will need to attend as closely to their public regard perceptions as their private regard to identify ethnically affirming situations and contexts (e.g., racially supportive school climates, teacher-student interactions, and peer interactions around ethnic and racial issues) in which adolescents of color feel they are valued and held to high expectations. For example, our results suggest that interventions to promote the development of positive ethnic identity and/or interethnic relations may not necessarily improve early adolescents' private regard, which is quite high and stable, but they could result in more favorable public regard (though the latter is not usually taken into consideration). Such understanding can therefore help promote not only the formation of positive internal ethnic identities in adolescence but also the kinds of contexts in which such youth positively adapt to a continually evolving multicultural society.

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