Published in final edited form as:

J Early Adolesc. 2008 February ; 28(1): 51–69. doi:10.1177/0272431607308674.

South African-ness Among Adolescents: The Emergence of a Collective Identity within the Birth to Twenty Cohort Study

Shane A Norris¹, Robert W. Roeser², Linda M Richter³, Nina Lewin¹, Carren Ginsburg¹, Stella A Fleetwood¹, Elizabeth Taole¹, and Kees van der Wolf⁴

¹ Birth to Twenty Research Programme, Department of Paediatrics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa ² Department of Child Development, Tufts University, USA ³ Child, Youth, Family and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa. ⁴Utrecht University of Professional Education, The Netherlands

Abstract

We assessed the emergence of a South African identity among Black, Colored (mixed ancestral origin), White (predominantly English speaking), and Indian adolescents participating in a birth cohort study called “Birth to Twenty” in Johannesburg, South Africa. We examined young people's certainty of their self-categorization as South African, the centrality of their personal, racial and linguistic, and South African identities in their self-definition, and their perceptions of South African life and society today. These results reflect a historical opportunity for full citizenship and national enfranchisement that the end of *Apartheid* heralded for Black and Colored individuals. Black and Colored youth tend to be more certain about their South African-ness, have a more collective identity, and have a more positive perception around South Africa. In contrast, White and Indian youth are less certain about their South African-ness, have a more individualistic identity, and have a less positive perception about South Africa today.

Keywords

Adolescence; developing country; identity; nationalism; South Africa post-Apartheid

Introduction

The emancipation of South Africa from *Apartheid*, the racial segregation involving political, legal and economic discrimination against nonwhites, was one of the great social events of the late 20th century. Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 put in motion the transformation of South Africa towards a new political dispensation. That same year, a longitudinal birth cohort study began of individuals born in the greater metropolitan area of Johannesburg, now called “Birth to Twenty”, to map the physical and psychosocial development of an urban cohort of children across the first two decades of life (Richter, Norris, & De Wet, 2004). The Birth to Twenty cohort has been followed for 17 years now, and is colloquially called “Mandela's Children”, a first cohort of South Africans born on the eve of great social change and growing up in a democratizing South Africa.

Recent social changes in South Africa provide a unique set of circumstances in which to assess post-*Apartheid* aspects of group identity development, especially the emergence of a

new (or renewed) collective national identity among South African youth. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage for psychosocial identity formation (Côté, 1996; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 1993). Given that psychosocial identity development represents a dynamic melding process of internal psychological development with the realities of the social world (Erikson, 1968; Josselson, 1987), momentous social and political events such as the end of Apartheid in South Africa are likely to have a significant effects on the ways that adolescents explore and weave their psychosocial identities (Yoder, 2000). It is likely that in a racially¹ stratified society like South Africa, adolescent identity development is unlikely to be homogeneous, but will be determined by the way in which the legacy of *Apartheid* affected adolescents' racial group. For this reason, investigation of the emergence of a South-African national identity among those born into the post-*Apartheid* era and experiencing adolescence post-2000 is of particular interest (Gray, Delany, & Durrheim, 2005).

Adolescence and Political and Societal Transformation

Apartheid failed, but its ideology was fundamental in differentially structuring racial and political awareness in South Africa (Foster, 1994). Since the first democratic elections in 1994, many of the factors that influenced political socialization under *Apartheid* have changed significantly. For example, the government now stresses national unity and tolerance rather than separation, there is substantially less politically motivated violence in schools, and there are more opportunities for inter-group contact as schools and neighborhoods have become more racially integrated. However, historically disadvantaged Black schools and residential areas have not diversified at the same rate and still remain fairly homogeneous (Dawes & Finchilescu, 2002). Democratic governance and a Bill of Rights have radically improved the political freedoms and employment and educational opportunities that Black South African youth can expect to enjoy. These expanded opportunities for Black South Africans may relate to their optimistic views of contemporary South African society and may strengthen their commitment to and certainty of their membership in a wider South African nation (Dawes & Finchilescu, 2002).

On the other hand, the fact that social realities have changed dramatically for Black youth may contribute to role confusion rather than identity cohesion (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997). It was partly due to a shared political consciousness in *Apartheid* South Africa that many Black adolescents developed a collective identity that resisted and challenged the pervasive racist ideology. Since the end of *Apartheid*, new role models, economic structures, and dominance of Western ideologies have been hypothesized to promote an ideological shift from collectivism to individualism among many Black youth. There is a claim of an emergence of what could be called a “Coca-cola” culture –a worldview informed by American individualism, competition, and individualistic aspirations (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997). Stevens and Lockhat (1997) argue that these shifts among Black adolescents (from political activists to “Coca-cola kids”) are not merely determined by the new socio-historical contexts. Rather, many Black adolescents are actively embracing this worldview as a way of achieving greater integration. In addition, there is an increasing presence of globalized American ideological symbols at all levels of the society - through language, dress codes, recreational activities, and so forth. Although many Black adolescents actively adopt aspects of globalized identities that allow them to be part of this new socio-historical period, this may also have the effect of marginalizing and alienating them from their and their families' social realities that are more traditionally African (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997).

¹The racial categories Black, Coloured (mixed ancestral origin), White, and Indian are carried over from South Africa's *Apartheid* past. While they no longer have legislative force, they have so influenced South African society, and in many ways continue to do so, that there is consensus on the importance of retaining these categories for social analyses. In this paper we have used these racial categories in our analyses as opposed to ethnic categories (Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Afrikaans, etc).

For Whites, the transformation has been from a political majority to a numerical and social minority relative to Black groups (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996). Previously, White South Africans were privileged with easy access to available jobs. Today, however, with affirmative action and Black empowerment policies in place, Whites have to compete with increasingly better educated Black people. These threats to the privileged position of the White community may strengthen racist orientations towards those perceived as benefiting at their expense (Black people), may relate to pessimistic views of contemporary South African society, and may engender ambivalence among White youth with respect to the certainty with which they claim their South African identity.

For Colored and Indian adolescents, the picture is likely to be more mixed. They have gained political rights, but they have lost other privileges relative to Black youth. As a result, they may experience resentments towards Blacks and, like Whites, their certainty of being South African may be weaker. In sum, the end of Apartheid era has brought different kinds of immediate consequences to different communities of racial groups in today's South Africa. Adolescents who are members of these different racial groups are confronted with making sense of these changes and finding their place in the ongoing cultural concern that is South Africa today.

South African-ness

Gray and colleagues (2005) note that the rhetoric of nation building is constantly reinforced by politicians and the media, and much has been made of the idea of the “rainbow nation” and of patriotic sentiments to build racial tolerance and support for democracy. In the context of nation building, South African-ness is seen as an umbrella identity, which may subsume other linguistic, religious and racial identities. For example, it has been found that South Africans identify themselves first by racial categories, followed by linguistic, religious, occupational and personal categories, but that they may also simultaneously articulate an overarching South African identity (Burgess, Harrison, & Mattes, 2002). Are youth from different racial backgrounds embracing a collective national South African identity? How important is national identity to them in comparison to their racial group memberships? How do adolescents of different racial groups perceive contemporary South Africa? It is these questions that we take up in this study.

In order to address these questions, we adopted a multidimensional, organizational framework that is useful for conceptualizing adolescents' emerging South African-ness as a “collective identity” (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Collective identities can be defined as systems of cognitive-affective self-representations derived from one's subjectively construed and psychologically claimed membership in a group that shares certain common characteristics. Ashmore and colleagues (2004) outline the major psychological dimensions that can be used to define “collective identities.” The dimensions of this framework that we have adopted for this study include: (a) self-categorization as a member of a collective; (b) the centrality of membership in a collective to one's self-definition; and (c) ideological beliefs about the experience and history of the collective over time.

Method

Participants

Birth to Twenty (BT20) was defined by the timing of a singleton birth within a 7-week period between late April and early June, 1990, as well as continued residence for at least six months after the birth of the child within the metropolitan area of Johannesburg-Soweto, South Africa. The cohort was recruited from antenatal and public health facilities and cross-

checked with all the Government birth notifications during the 7-week time period. This prospective birth cohort was an initiative at that time between the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and the South African Medical Research Council. The study area covered approximately 78 square miles at that time, and included close to 3.5 million people with about 400,000 informal housing units. With the democratization of South African society, areas that were previously separated on the basis of race have been combined into larger municipalities. The study currently follows up children and families in an area that includes not only greater Johannesburg and Soweto, but also the majority of the Gauteng province. The enrolled cohort consisted of 3,273 children and families, more than 72 percent of whom have been followed for 17 years at the time of this writing (Norris, Richter, & Fleetwood, 2007).

The pilot studies, research goals, and enrolment methods of BT20 have been documented in detail in several publications (Richter et al., 2004; Richter, Norris, Pettifor, Yach, & Cameron, 2007). At age 14, as part of one of the twice-yearly data collection cycles, BT20 participants completed an interviewer-based questionnaire on South African-ness in the participants' language of choice (e.g. seSotho, isiZulu, and English). This questionnaire was administered by full-time, trained research assistants on the project. All participants from whom complete data on this questionnaire was collected ($n = 2,082$) are included in the present analyses. The sample comprised 1,081 girls (51.6%) and 1,013 boys (48.4%). The racial group breakdown of the sample was 78.5% Black ($n=1,635$), 11.5% Colored ($n=239$), 7.3% White ($n=152$; predominantly English speaking), and 2.7% Indian ($n=56$). All participants and their parents provided written informed consent, and ethical approval was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Committee for Research on Human Subjects.

Questionnaire measures

The South African-ness questionnaire was inspired by the Centenary Project of the British Psychological Society called "Children's Views of Britain and Britishness" in 2001², designed for children 12-16 years of age. The Britishness questionnaire was based on literature exploring children's knowledge of national geographies (Bouchier, Barrett, & Lyons, 2002), how children categorize themselves as members of national groups (Barrett, Riazanova, & Volovikova, 2001), children's knowledge of national emblems (Moodie, 1980), and the contents of children's national stereotypes (Barrett & Short, 1992).

Three sub-sections of the "South African-ness" questionnaire are included in the current paper. The first sub-section examined adolescents' self-categorization and certainty of self-categorization as South African. To assess self categorization, we used a single quantitative question, based on the Britishness study, asking the participants how they feel about themselves using a four point scale – whether they were "very South African" (4) to "not at all South African" (1).

The second sub-section investigated the adolescents' centrality (relative importance) of various personal, racial and linguistic, and national (being South African) identities through ranking these five items from one (most important) to five (least important), for in South Africa, there are various ways in which one could describe oneself to another person - in terms of age, gender, being South African, being Zulu/English/Sotho/Afrikaans/Xhosa, being Black/White/Indian/Colored, and so on. We conceptualized individuals' rankings of the importance of their age and their gender as distal *personal identity dimensions* (about me), their language and race as *collective cultural identity dimensions* (about my in-groups),

²www.bps.org.ac

and their South African-ness as a *collective national identity dimension* (about all of us in South Africa beyond the in-groups). In addition, we also asked participants how connected they felt to groups of people who shared their native language, race, church, or school, using a four point scale from “very attached” (4) to “not at all” (1).

The last sub-section explored the participants' perception of South Africa across several domains, such as economic prosperity, employment opportunities, housing, crime, and racial tension. The participant rated each of the 13 items from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 5 (*Strongly Disagree*). A factor analysis on these 13 items was conducted. Results of the principal components, varimax-rotated factor solution retained for analysis is presented in Table 1. Factor analysis revealed four distinct dimensions. Although the reliabilities for the four separate scales (government effectiveness, racial harmony, economic problems, and increased crime and violence) were low (α 's ranged from .30 to .50), the factors had face validity and the virtue of parsimony.

Statistical analyses

Based upon our initial analyses that revealed no significant gender effect across the different identity measures examined in this report, only the inter-racial group differences in these identity indicators, using analysis of variance, are presented. Tukey's HSD post-hoc comparisons were used to assess racial group differences in these indicators.

Results

Self-categorization as “South African”

Our first analysis examined racial group differences in the certainty with which adolescents felt “South African.” Results showed that a greater majority of Black and Colored adolescents (82% and 75% reported) reported feeling “very South African”, as compared to the Indian and White adolescents (57% and 47% respectively). A very small number of White adolescents indicated that they did not feel South African at all and that they identified more with being Greek, British, Jewish, and so on. The remaining White respondents all indicated some affinity to a South African identity, from feeling “very South African” to “a little bit South African”. An analysis of variance with adolescents' racial group as between-subjects factors and certainty of being South African as the dependent measure, produced a significant racial group effect, $F(3, 2051) = 35.45, p < .001; \eta^2 = .05$. Post-hoc analysis revealed that both Black and Colored youth reported more certainty about their South African-ness than did Indian and White youth. These results are depicted in Figure 1.

Centrality of Personal, Racial and Linguistic, and National Identities

Next, we examined the relative importance of various domains of identity to the self-definitions of South African youth. Using Repeated Measures ANOVA with adolescents' racial group as the between-subjects factors and ranking of importance (age, gender, language group, ethnic group, being South African) as the within-subjects factors, a significant interaction between racial group and these various self-identifications emerged, $F(12, 8160) = 16.01, p < .001; \eta^2 = .02$. Table 2 and Figure 2 presents the means, expressed as standardized z-scores, for each identity rating by racial group. Post-hoc analyses revealed that White South Africans were distinct from all other racial groups in assigning high importance to age and gender, and low importance to race and to being South African, in their self-definitions. Blacks assigned more importance to language in defining themselves than did White South Africans, whereas Colored and Indian South Africans assigned an intermediate level of importance to language in their self-definitions compared to the two other groups. In sum, it appears that White South Africans assigned greater importance to

personal identities (age, gender) and relatively low importance to collective racial-cultural and national identities as compared to Blacks, Coloreds and Indians.

We also asked youth how connected they felt to groups of people who shared their native language, race, church, or school. The overall MANOVA showed significant main effects for race, $F(12, 5976) = 12.10, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed significant effects of racial group on adolescents' connection to those sharing their language, $F(3, 1993) = 8.88; p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.01$, their racial group, $F(3, 1993) = 43.08; p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$, and their church, $F(3, 1993) = 15.92; p < .001, \eta^2 = .02$. However, there were no racial differences in felt connection to those attending one's school, $F(3, 1993) = 1.84; p = .14, \eta^2 = 0.003$. White South Africans reported the lowest perceived connection to groups of people based on language, race or church membership. Black, Colored, and Indian South Africans all expressed higher levels of connection to people in their language group and church. Black South Africans reported the highest levels of perceived connection to people of their racial group, with Indian and Colored South Africans falling between White and African adolescents.

Perceptions of South African life and society today

In Table 3, we present the results of a MANOVA assessing group differences in perceptions of life and society in South Africa today with racial group as the between-group factor. The dependent measures included the factor scores generated earlier, plus two single item measures from the questionnaire. The single item measures included in this analysis were "satisfaction with life in South Africa generally" and "perceptions of racial disparities in social opportunities." The between-subjects factor was adolescents' racial group. Results of the MANOVA indicated a main effect by race, $F(18, 5985) = 11.31, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$. Next, univariate ANOVAs were conducted for each of the dependent measures. In general, Black adolescents reported the most faith in the government to succeed. Colored, Indian and White South Africans were more skeptical about the government's ability to succeed. Nonetheless, Black, Colored and Indian adolescents were more likely to indicate that they were happy with life in South Africa as compared with White youth. Interestingly, Black adolescents were least likely to report improvements in racial harmony in South African society, but more likely to perceive a decline in violence and crime. The opposite was true for White and, to a lesser degree, Indian and Colored adolescents (see Table 3).

Discussion

The present study is the first to investigate collective national identity among young adolescents in South Africa several years post-*Apartheid*. We focused on the ongoing psychosocial identity development of a cohort of 14 year-old South African adolescents who are uniquely positioned to embrace and/or struggle with and resist a collective national identity. We hypothesized that adolescents' appropriation of their identities as "South Africans" would differ based on their racial background. Such differences would reflect the historical, cultural and economic legacy associated with being a member of a dominant or non-dominant racial group in South Africa, as well as the perceived and real opportunities associated with racial group membership in a newly democratic South Africa (Dawes & Finchilescu, 2002). In essence, this hypothesis was substantiated by the study results across the identity dimensions that we investigated.

Certainty of self-categorization as "South African"

We found that the vast majority of youth, in all race groups in the BT20 cohort responded that they feel "quite a bit" or "very" South African, although the degree of identification varied across the race groups. At the same time, we documented racial differences in the

reported certainty with which youth embraced this national collective identity. Black and Colored youth reported more certainty about their South African-ness than did White or Indian youth. A nationally represented study conducted in 2000/2001 among South Africans 18 years old and older found highly significant ($p < .0001$) interracial differences with regard to the importance of national identity - Black South Africans attributed greater importance to a South African identity than White South Africans (Gibson, 2006). Similarly, in a 2003 national survey of South African adults' social attitudes Black South Africans had the strongest national identity and White South Africans the weakest, with Colored and Indian respondents scoring intermediately (Roefs, 2006).

National identity formation is a complex psychological process, including an extensive system of knowledge and beliefs about the national group and sub-groups, and emotions and evaluations concerning these groups. Furthermore, national identity is not a static psychological structure, but rather a dynamic construct that is highly context dependent (Barrett & Short, 1992). The findings from the current adolescent study and those from the adult studies are very similar. One interpretation of these results is that they reflect strong emotional aspects of national identity linked to the historical opportunity for full citizenship and national enfranchisement that the end of *Apartheid* heralded for Black individuals. As political dominance was reversed in the country and white South Africans became the non-dominant group, this may have led to greater feelings of "disenfranchisement" among members of this group. Emotions linked to changes in dominance and non-dominance may have removed or erected "barriers." In this context, barriers represent external influences associated with adolescent and young adult psychosocial identity exploration and commitment and that potentially limit or bolster developmental options, such as embracing a strong national identity (Yoder, 2000).

Centrality of various identities

With respect to the relative importance of various personal and collective identities to youth, we found that Black youth were more likely to define themselves as part of a cultural collective, either by language, religion, or ethnicity, coupled with a strong South African identity. On the other hand, we found that White youth were more likely to think of themselves as being part of a gender or age group and to report weaker ties to a national identity. Colored and Indian youth fell somewhere between these two poles on a continuum of individualistic and cultural or national collective identity. These results may indicate long-standing cultural differences in collectivistic versus individualistic orientations among Blacks and European-descent South Africans, respectively (Markus et al., 1997). These results may also indicate a greater sense of ambivalence among Whites to identify with being South African due to their historical colonial past, Western contemporary conditions, or both. If so, this may imply that various aspects of identity may be more in conflict with each other for White South African youth coming of age during this period, although more research is needed to explore this possibility. On the other hand, social psychologists have argued that, in addition to a superordinate identity, individuals are able to sustain significant bonds with social sub-groups, which affords the development of dual identities (Gibson, 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). As in our study, the 2003 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) confirmed that dual identities do exist among Black South Africans, who tended to exhibit a strong national and strong group identity. However, dual identities did not emerge among the White, Colored and Indian participants (Roefs, 2006). Why this is the case is an interesting topic for future research.

Perceptions of South African life and society today

Compared to White youth, Black, Colored, and Indian youth expressed both greater happiness with the affairs of the country and greater faith in government. Finchilescu and

Dawes (1998) reported similar findings among a 14-year-old group of children in 1996, two years after the first democratic election. White and Indian youth were negative towards the “new” government and saw their conditions of life as having deteriorated since 1994, whereas Colored and Black youth believed that they were better off since 1994. Interestingly, in the 1996 study, all the adolescents shared a concern about violence and crime and were worried about the nation's future. These findings would suggest that perceptions have not changed much among White youth between 1996 and 2004-2005, when our study took place.

In our study, the only dimension on which Black youth expressed reservations about South Africa was with respect to racial harmony and economic hardship, which many believe had not improved much in post-*Apartheid* South Africa. White youth, in contrast, thought that race relations were more harmonious in South Africa today than in the past, but that crime had significantly increased. These findings are in conflict with the South African Social Attitudes Survey, which found that the stronger one's national identity, the less one experienced racism and the more likely one was to perceive an improvement in race relations (Roefs, 2006). Gibson (2006) suggested, based on the 2000/2001 study, that in neither the Black majority nor the White minority do in-group identities activate significant out-group intolerance. These findings raise important questions about how group memberships and related psychosocial identities shape perceptions of one's social worlds, as well as the changing nature of social experiences that come with large scale political changes such as those engendered in South Africa's recent past. The disconnect between the perceptions of Black and White South Africans with respect to racial harmony in the country and violence points to the strong influence that such identities can have on individuals' beliefs about their social worlds and the kinds of social experiences members of different groups have against a backdrop of dramatic political change.

Limitations, implications, and conclusions

The results from this study should be considered in light of several limitations. First, the study sample is not nationally representative, but rather was gathered within a specific South African region and city. In addition, all adolescents were of a similar age (14 years), and not all racial groups were equally represented in the study sample. It is possible that the views expressed by the current study participants may be different from those of adolescents from other rural and urban areas within South Africa. Furthermore, the low internal consistency coefficients from the factor analysis of perceptions of South Africa suggest more work needs to be done to develop valid and reliable scales of changing social, political, and economic opportunities and difficulties in contemporary South Africa.

Furthermore, we measured collective identities and perceptions of South African life using abbreviated questionnaires. More longitudinal and qualitative research on how perceptions of life possibilities and constraints inform the psychosocial identity development of South African youth from different social, economic, ethnic and language backgrounds (e.g. Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans) would be immensely valuable, especially as inter-ethnic/language differences maybe as profound as inter-racial differences.

Despite these limitations, the present study has highlighted the multifaceted nature of national identity formation, as well as perceptions of everyday life in a racially diverse group of young adolescents within a complex society such as South Africa. Because of its *Apartheid* past, contemporary South Africans continue to place race, racism, and redress at the foreground through daily media reporting, political debates, Black empowerment initiatives, affirmative action, and so forth. This may facilitate exploration of racial identity in early adolescence. Indeed, Phinney (1989) suggests that significant experiences that force awareness of one's race may result in a deeper understanding and appreciation of one's racial

group – perhaps leading to a more rapid transition to racial identity achievement and internalization. This in turn, may significantly impact national identity formation. Indeed, such a pattern is evident in our results. The post-apartheid generation seems to be characterized by growing confidence on the part of groups that were previously victimized and discriminated against (Black, Colored, and Indian youth). It may also be characterized by growing insecurity among White youth as they find themselves intensively examining and internalizing their racial identity while also becoming unsure of their national identity (i.e. where they belong and what they consider to be South African).

The present results may be somewhat consistent with studies conducted in other countries. In the United States, a longitudinal study (1962-1967) conducted by Hauser (1972) demonstrated that African American adolescent boys' views of themselves remained largely unchanged over time, and their pattern of identity formation corresponded to what Marcia (1966) has called identity foreclosure (i.e. a premature formation of identity without resolving the conflicts usually inherent in resolving an identity crises). In contrast, the pattern of identity development of Caucasian American boys was characterized by a changing view of self that became increasingly integrated. Hauser (1972) suggested that the reason why African American boys foreclosed was due to their experience of social restrictions in comparison to the majority racial group. From Erikson's (1968) developmental perspective, the tendency for African Americans to foreclose their identities is precipitated by the difficulty of developing a sense of mutuality with the broader American society because they belong to a socially devalued group. This perspective may suggest that White South African youth are foreclosing their identities and not developing mutuality with the broader South African society. They are inhibited from adopting a stronger South African identity because they are numerically a minority group and feel socially devalued through instruments of redress such as affirmative action and Black empowerment initiatives.

The present results may also be consistent with other recent results reported on Whites in South Africa. In a national study of 2142 second year psychology students in South Africa, Thom and Coetzee (2004) showed that Black adolescents were significantly surer of their identity than White adolescents. The lower surety of identity development among the White participants was attributed to their identity being threatened as a consequence of the change from social dominance to a newly defined minority group, and the decreased visibility of White role models (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Based on their findings, Thom and Coetzee (2004) proposed that it is possible that the period during which White adolescents examine and experiment with personal and cultural values, norms and roles, referred to by Erikson (1977) as the psychosocial moratorium, and may now last longer than was previously the case because of the insecurity of their identification with a South African national identity.

The importance of the present findings, as well as those from studies yielding similar conclusions, may be in supporting and extending Yoder's (2000) contention that there exists a universal process of identity formation in minority groups experiencing social restrictions, irrespective of race or geographical location in the world. Furthermore, the findings underscore the need for South Africans to be concerned about and address inequality. Such efforts will not only increase satisfaction associated with a decreased sense of deprivation, but will also increase trust in government, social cohesiveness, and optimism for the future. Further inter-racial understanding and inclusion of minority groups will need to occur through social change if a truly "rainbow nation" in South Africa is to be realized.

Acknowledgments

The Birth to Twenty Research Programme is financially supported by the Wellcome Trust (United Kingdom), Medical Research Council of South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This study was funded by a grant to Dr Norris from the South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development. Dr Norris holds a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Fellowship. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Birth to Twenty study team and the participants that enable this research to continue.

References

- Appelgryn A, Bornman E. Relative deprivation in contemporary South Africa. *Journal of Social Psychology*. 1996; 136:381–397.
- Arnett JJ. The psychology of globalization. *American Psychologist*. 2002; 57:774–783. [PubMed: 12369500]
- Ashmore RD, Deaux K, McLaughlin-Volpe T. An organising framework for collective identity: articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin*. 2004; 130:80–114. [PubMed: 14717651]
- Barrett, M. Children's views of Britain and Britishness in 2001. Some findings from the developmental psychology section centenary project; Keynote address presented to the Annual Conference of the Developmental Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society, University of Sussex; 2002. <http://devpsy.lboro.ac.uk/bps/project>
- Barrett M, Short J. Images of European people in a group of 5-10 year old English school children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*. 1992; 10:339–363.
- Barrett, M.; Riazanova, T.; Volovikova, M., editors. Development of National, Ethnolinguistic and Religious Identities in Children and Adolescents. Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences (IPRAS); Moscow: 2001.
- Bengston, VL.; Troll, L. Youth and their parents: Feedback and intergenerational influence in socialization. In: Lerner, RM.; Spanner, GB., editors. *Child influences on marital and family interaction*. Academic Press; New York: 1978. p. 215–240.
- Bhavnani, K. Talking politics: A psychological framing of views from youth in Britain. Cambridge: 1991.
- Braungart RG, Braungart MM. Black and White South African University Students' Perceptions of Self and Country: an Exploratory Study. *South African Journal of Sociology*. 1995; 26:77–86.
- Bourchier A, Barrett M, Lyons E. The predictors of children's geographical knowledge of other countries. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. 2002; 22:79–94.
- Branscombe, NR.; Ellemers, N.; Spears, R.; Doosje, B. The context and content of social identity threat. In: Ellemers, N.; Spears, R.; Doosje, B., editors. *Social Identity*. Blackwell; Oxford: 1999. p. 35–58.
- Burgess, S.; Harris, M.; Mattes, R. SA Tribes: Who we are, how we live and what we want from life?. David Phillip; Cape Town: 2002.
- Cote, JE. Identity: a multidimensional analysis. In: Adams, GR.; Montmayer, R.; Gullotta, TP., editors. *Psychosocial Development during Adolescence: progress in developmental contextualism*. Sage; CA: 1996. p. 130–180.
- Dawes A, Finchilescu G. What's changed? The racial orientations of South African adolescents during rapid political change. *Childhood*. 2002; 9:147–165.
- Erikson, EH. *Insight and Responsibility*. Norton; New York: 1964.
- Erikson, EH. *Identity: youth and crisis*. Norton; New York: 1968.
- Erikson, EH. *Childhood and society*. Norton; New York: 1977.
- Epstein S. The implications of cognitive-experiential self-theory for research in social psychology and personality. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*. 1985; 15:283–310.
- Finchilescu G, Dawes A. Catapulted into democracy: South African adolescent's sociopolitical orientations following rapid social change. *Journal of Social Issues*. 1998; 54:563–583.

- Foster, D. Racism and Minority Group Children. In: Dawes, A.; Donald, D., editors. *Childhood and adversity: psychological perspectives from South African research*. David Philip; Cape Town: 1994. p. 220-239.
- Gibson JL. Do strong group identities fuel intolerance? Evidence from the South African case. *Political Psychology*. 2006; 27:665–705.
- Gray D, Delany A, Durrheim K. Talking to 'real' South Africans: An investigation of the dilemmatic nature of nationalism. *South African Journal of Psychology*. 2005; 35:127–146.
- Hauser ST. Black and white identity development: aspects and perspectives. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 1972; 1:113–130.
- Hornsey MJ, Hogg MA. Subgroup relations: a comparison of mutual intergroup differentiation and common ingroup identity models of prejudice reduction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 2000; 26:242–256.
- Josselson, R. *Finding herself: pathways in identity development in women*. Jossey-Bass; San Francisco: 1987.
- Marcia, JE. The status of the statuses: research review. In: Marcia, et al., editors. *Ego Identity: a handbook for psychological research*. Springer-Verlag; New York: 1993. p. 22-41.
- Marcia JE. Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1966; 3:551–558. [PubMed: 5939604]
- Markus, HR.; Mullally, PR.; Kitayama, S. Selfways: Diversity in modes of cultural participation. In: Neisser, U.; Jopling, DA., editors. *Conceptual self in context: Culture, experience, self-understanding*. Cambridge University Press; New York: 1997. p. 13-61.
- Moodie MA. The development of national identity in white South African schoolchildren. *Journal of Social Psychology*. 1980; 111:169–180.
- Norris SA, Richter LM, Fleetwood SA. Panel studies in developing countries: case analysis of sample attrition over the past 16 years within the Birth to Twenty cohort in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Journal of International Development*. 2007; 19:1–8.
- Phinney J. Stages of ethnic identity in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*. 1989; 9:34–49.
- Richter LM, Norris SA, De Wet T. Transition from Birth to Ten to Birth to Twenty: The South African cohort reaches 13 years of age'. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*. 2004; 18:290–301. [PubMed: 15255883]
- Richter LM, Norris SA, Pettifor JM, Yach D, Cameron N. Mandela's children: The 1990 Birth to Twenty study in South Africa. *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 2007; 36:1–8.
- Roefs, M. Identity and race relations. In: Pillay; Udesch; Roberts, et al., editors. *South African social attitudes: changing times, diverse voices*. HSRC Press; Pretoria: 2006. p. 77-97.
- Stevens G, Lockhart R. 'Coca-Cola Kids' - Reflections on Black Adolescent Identity Development in Post- Apartheid South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*. 1997; 27:200–210.
- Tajfel, H.; Turner, JC. The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In: Worchel, S.; Austin, WG., editors. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. 2nd edition. Nelson-Hall; Chicago: 1986. p. 7-24.
- Thom DP, Coetzee CH. Identity development of South African adolescents in a democratic society. *Society in Transition*. 2004; 35:183–193.
- Yoder AE. Barriers to ego identity status formation: a contextual qualification of Marcia's identity status paradigm. *Journal of Adolescence*. 2000; 23:95–106. [PubMed: 10700375]

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Table 1
Factor loadings for four-factor solution of youth perceptions of contemporary South African society: Principal-Components Analysis

Survey Items	Factor 1: Effectiveness of government	Factor 2: Racial harmony	Factor 3: Economic problems	Factor 4: Crime and violence
(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)				
Family would like to leave SA because of government (R)	0.68			
Standard of education is dropping (R)	0.67			
Things will improve under this government	0.55			
Pupils of different races get along in school		0.72		
People of different races get along in neighborhoods		0.63		
South Africans are free and have many human rights		0.52		
It is harder to find affordable housing			0.71	
There are more worries about unemployment			0.68	
There are more money troubles			0.62	
More crime than 2 years ago				0.75
Less violence than 2 years ago (R)				0.62

Note. Loadings < 0.4 are not shown.

Table 2
ANOVA Results for R/E Group Differences in Centrality of Different Identities to Self

Importance to Self	Blacks (n = 1601)	Coloured (n = 235)	Asians (n = 56)	Whites (n = 152)	F-Value (Significance)	η^2
<i>Personal Identities</i>						
Age	-.08 ^b	.13 ^b	.14 ^b	.60 ^a	24.47 **	.04
Gender	-.07 ^b	.06 ^b	.07 ^b	.57 ^a	19.38 **	.03
<i>Collective Ethnic-Cultural Identities</i>						
Racial / Ethnic Group	.08 ^a	-.16 ^a	-.18 ^a	-.53 ^b	20.16 **	.02
Language Group	.05 ^a	-.12 ^{ab}	-.16 ^{ab}	-.37 ^b	10.27 **	.03
<i>Collective National Identity</i>						
South African	.02 ^a	.08 ^a	.12 ^a	-.30 ^b	5.47 **	.01

Means are expressed in standardized (z-score) units.

Tukey's HSD tests are used to determine between group differences. Means not sharing a superscript are different at the .05 level. Degrees of freedom for F-values = DF (3, 2036).

NS = non-significant

*
p < .05

**
p < .01

Table 3
ANOVA Results for R/E Group Differences in Perceptions of South African Society and Government

Scales and Items	Blacks (n = 1565)	Coloured (n = 232)	Asians (n = 55)	Whites (n = 150)	F-Value (Significance)	η^2
Satisfaction with Life in South Africa Generally	.03 ^{ab}	-.15 ^{ab}	.06 ^a	-.25 ^b	5.31 **	.01
Faith in Government	.10 ^a	-.25 ^b	-.25 ^b	-.50 ^b	23.71 **	.04
Economic Problems Worsening	.04 ^a	.07 ^a	-.34 ^b	-.43 ^b	13.10 **	.02
Racial Inequality	.00	.03	-.23	-.07	1.45 ns	.00
Racial Harmony	-.08 ^s	.21 ^{ab}	.50 ^b	.31 ^b	16.53 **	.02
Violence and Crime Increasing	-.06 ^b	.07 ^b	.13 ^{ab}	.43 ^a	11.85 **	.02

Means are expressed in standardized (z-score) units.

Tukey's HSD tests are used to determine between group differences. Means not sharing a superscript are different at the .05 level. Degrees of freedom for F-values = DF (3, 1994).

NS = non-significant

*
p < .05

**
p < .01