

Self-Attributes and Identity

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The fowl does not act like the goat.

—Ghanaian proverb

Learning Objectives

- To understand definitions of identity and related constructs
- To appreciate the ways in which our understanding and construction of “the self” have changed over time
- To appreciate the multiple dimensions of identity that are relevant to African Americans’ understandings of themselves
- To understand the ways in which African Americans develop identity and self
- To appreciate the associations between dimensions of self and identity constructs and well-being and adaptation among African Americans
- To develop familiarity with the measures used to assess self-identity and related identity constructs
- To consider the effectiveness of programs and interventions that support the positive development of racial, cultural, and ethnic identity and positive self-concepts

Introductions, Definitions, and Conceptual Framework

The study of self-esteem and self-concept has played an important role in the history of African Americans. Self-attributes such as self-esteem, self-concept, and racial identity have been studied more than any other topic in African American psychology. The popular notion that African Americans suffer from

low self-esteem because of a history of oppression has not been supported. Not only are these self-attributes interesting to study in their own right, but perhaps more important is to study the relations between these constructs and the well-being and functioning of African Americans across several domains (i.e., academic achievement, social relations, and mental and physical health).

We begin this chapter by considering conceptualizations and definitions of the self and identity, with attention to cultural differences therein. Historical and contemporary models of self-concept among African Americans are then discussed. Identity development and change are discussed next, because identity is not static across the life span. We also describe models of racial identity, and review the research on variables related to high and low levels of racial and ethnic identity. We discuss other forms of identity and self-attributes, including sexual identity and gender identity. We show that racial socialization and acculturation are cultural constructs that, like racial identity, influence functioning and well-being. Research and methodological issues related to measuring identity and related constructs are examined, followed by a discussion of best practices for increasing positive self-attributes. A critical analysis is provided, and the chapter ends with a summary.

DEFINING SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONCEPT

The self has been studied extensively in psychology. Many of the early studies in African American psychology were on the topics of self-concept and self-esteem (K. Clark & M. Clark, 1939). Self-concept involves beliefs and knowledge about the self. Our self-concept organizes and manages information about how we see ourselves (Baumeister, 1999). The self-concept is a component of our self-schema. A self-schema is a cognitive representation of the self. It organizes how we process information about the self and others (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). A question one may ask relevant to self-concept is, "Can I accomplish a particular task?" In contrast, self-esteem is one's affective or emotional reaction toward and feeling about oneself that is also evaluative. The question, "Do I like myself?" is relevant to self-esteem.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN SELF-CONCEPTUALIZATION

Conceptualization of the self depends on culture and socialization. Cultures can be categorized as collective, where people have an interdependent view of the self, or individualistic, where people hold an independent view of the self. Interdependent cultures include many from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Independent cultures include the cultures of Europe and the United States. Differences in self-attributes among members of interdependent and independent cultures have been observed (Markus & Kitayama, 1999). Many of these self-attributes are described throughout this book. People of African descent are

likely to have interdependent conceptualizations of the self, as are many women, and members of Latino, Asian, and Native American cultural groups.

In interdependent cultures, the self is seen as connected to and linked within the surrounding social context, and the self is considered in relation to others. This means that one's thoughts and behaviors are influenced by the relevant others in one's social context. For example, if I am a member of an interdependent culture, I cannot make a decision about employment without considering members of my family. Fitting in, attentiveness to others, and harmonious relationships are important.

Within individualistic cultures, emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of the self. If I am a member of an individualistic culture, my self-interest and well-being are more likely to direct my thoughts and actions than are the well-being of or my relationship with others. In addition, I will be less likely to care about the consequences of my actions for others. I will want to stand out as an individual and not be like other people. An example of cultural differences in self-attributes can be found in commercial advertisements in interdependent and individualistic cultures. In individualistic cultures, an ad might show how a product can be used to make a person "stand out from the crowd." This ad would appeal to one's need to be separate from others and to be unique. In interdependent cultures, an advertisement might emphasize that others use this product and that the use of this product would make one "fit in."

In interdependent cultures, relationships are important, and maintaining a connection to others means being constantly aware of others' needs, desires, and goals. The assumption here is that one needs to consider the goals of others in order to meet one's own goal.

In summary, one's beliefs and feelings about the self may be linked more to one's social group for those from interdependent cultures than for those from independent cultures.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identity is that part of an individual's self-concept that is derived from his or her membership in and adherence to the values associated with that culturally defined social group (Tajfel, 1981). Identity may be thought of as an adaptation to a social context (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). Identity focuses on self-ascribed definitions that include social roles, reputation, values, and possibilities. Social identity may include one's self-concept with relation to nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, health status, and racial and ethnic identity. The latter two types of identity have been studied extensively among African Americans because of the physical salience of race in the American context.

Conceptualization of identity focusing on race can be contrasted with conceptualization of identity among other salient personal attributes (e.g., gender). Racial identity models have most often emphasized that race is the key defining feature of one's social reference group. Salience models assume that race is only

one of several other types of referent factors that may determine salience of one's social identity group. Other factors might include ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. Whether one's identity is based on race or some other attribute is likely to be influenced by contextual factors. For example, race is likely to be salient for a lone African American in a White group, whereas gender is likely to be salient for a lone female in an all-male group.

There is a difference of opinion regarding the terminology that best describes the identity of African Americans. Some scholars prefer the term *racial identity* because race is seen as the single most important aspect of the person's social identity (Helms, 1990). Others prefer the term *ethnic identity* because of the lack of clarity regarding what constitutes a race. Ethnicity is culturally prescribed, whereas race is linked to biologically based characteristics.

RACIAL IDENTITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Racial identity is based on the perception of a shared racial history. Helms (1990) defines racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (p. 3). Racial group orientation is the psychological attachment to the social category that designates the racial group to which one is a member (Helms). Ethnic identity is defined by involvement in the cultural practices and activities of a particular ethnic group and by positive attitudes toward, attachment to, and feelings of belonging to that group (Phinney, 1995).

In this chapter, the usage of one term over the other (i.e., racial identity vs. ethnic identity) corresponds to that of the particular author and literature being cited.

OTHER FORMS OF IDENTITY AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS

Other aspects of identity include sexual identity, gender identity, and gender roles. Sexual identity is generally thought of as sexual orientation and one's beliefs and feelings about the individual or individuals to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted. Gender role beliefs are the expectations and beliefs that people hold as to how males and females are supposed to feel, think, and act (Bem, 1993). Gender identity involves the individual's sense of being psychologically male or female. Related constructs are acculturation, racial socialization, and Africentric values. Acculturation refers to both individual and group-level changes in behaviors, attitudes, and values that take place over time as two or more cultural groups come into contact (J. Berry, 1990). Racial socialization is a process involving messages and behaviors about race that parents or other members of a person's social context transmit to children and adolescents (Stevenson, 1995). Africentric values are the beliefs, attitudes, and worldview that come from people of African descent. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the Africentric worldview.)

Self-Concept Among African Americans

The self-concept of African Americans has been extensively discussed and researched. In fact, popular literature would implicate challenges with self-concept to be the root of many problems in the African American community. Self-concept is a multidimensional construct, and self-concept among African Americans is generally positive. The research and literature have suggested positive self-esteem among various African American populations including adolescents (Birndorf, Ryan, Auinger, & Aten, 2005), African American women (K. Patterson, 2004) and African American men (Phares, Fields, Watkins-Clay, Kamboukos, & Han, 2005). Some of these studies have been comparative, showing higher levels of self-esteem especially when African Americans are compared to Whites (Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Negy, Shreve, Jensen, & Uddin, 2003). Other studies, which have included only African American samples, have also found positive self-esteem and self-concept (Corneille & Belgrave, 2007; K. Patterson).

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BLACK SELF-CONCEPT

Historically, African Americans in the United States have been described as having a negative self-concept and a tendency to self-denigrate as a result of inferior status in this country. Kardiner and Ovesey (1951, 1962) wrote about the impact of oppression on the self-concept of Blacks. Their classic work, *The Mark of Oppression: A Psychosocial Study of the American Negro*, makes the point that Blacks have a negative self-concept because of oppression, discrimination, and inferior status. In another early book on the Negro self-concept, Jean Grambs (1965) explains why Negroes perceive themselves as inferior and have negative self-concepts: “The self-concept of the Negro is contaminated by the central fact that it is based on a color-caste complex” (p. 13); “The self-esteem of the Negro is damaged by the overwhelming fact that the world he lives in says, ‘White is right; Black is bad’” (p. 15). The author goes on to cite instances of the manifestation of low self-concept, including increased Black-on-Black crime, aggression, low levels of educational achievement, and unstable household and parenting practices.

A central premise in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case, which outlawed school segregation, was that Blacks who attended Black schools not only suffered educationally, but also socially and psychologically from low self-concept. The findings from the doll studies conducted by Mamie and Kenneth Clark were cited as evidence of this. K. Clark and M. Clark (1939) conducted studies with African American preschool children using dolls as stimulus materials. Children were asked to choose the doll that they would like to play with, the doll that was the prettiest, the doll that was the smartest, and the doll that most looked like them. Children were more likely to select the White doll as the one that they would most like to play with and the one that was the prettiest. A conclusion from

this study was that the historical context of separatism and racism had affected the self-esteem and racial identity of Black children.

There were several methodological concerns with the doll study that later replications have addressed, and these later studies have yielded different results concerning Black self-concept. One concern was that asking children to select a doll that is most like them did not take into account the diversity of complexion among African American children. Lighter-complexioned children may see themselves as more similar to the White doll than to the Black doll. Another problem was that the Black dolls were very similar in appearance to the White dolls and only differed in skin color. Additional research (e.g., Cross, 1991; Powell-Hopson & Hopson, 1992; M. Spencer, 1982) has further clarified the distinction between young children's feelings of self-worth and their racial self-awareness and knowledge of cultural biases. Although young children understand racial categories and biases by the time they are of school age, their self-esteem is not directly linked to this awareness, and they do not necessarily feel negatively toward themselves.

Contemporary Issues: What's in a Name? Identity and History

So does it mean the same thing to be "Black" today as it did 50 years ago?

Our theoretical perspectives on identity have been shaped by cultural changes within the African American and the broader American community and by the ways in which members of the community understand and name themselves. From the U.S. Constitution's "three-fifths of all other Persons" guidelines for enumeration for the U.S. Census to the various and changing terms used across the years since 1790, constructions of race have evolved. Free inhabitants. Slave inhabitants. Mulatto. Color "B." Negro. Colored. Black. Afro-American. African American. African Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean. Black alone. These varied terms reflect the changing sociocultural and political constructions of race and ethnicity within the United States.

For African Americans, there has been rich historical significance and power in choosing names for oneself as well as the name for one's group, but as these names and constructions of race and ethnicity have changed over time, there have been important tensions around our understandings of race and ethnicity as they have changed and shifted.

Whether tensions over the claiming and use of the "N" word in rap music, emerging considerations of the potential metabolic significance of race in ethnopharmacology, or differing constructions of the racial and ethnic identification of individuals of mixed or biracial heritage—the contemporary construction of race is ongoing. Is Halle Berry Black? Jordan Sparks? Barack Obama? Is Drake African American, because he says so or because the African American community does? What about Will Demp, Tony Parker, or Tim Duncan?

As many young African Americans grow up in communities different from those of their parents and grandparents, we can ask ourselves how the identities of African Americans might continue to evolve and change. In addition, as Americans of Hispanic origin, who may also be of African descent, become the largest ethnic

minority group in the United States, there will likely be continuing fluidity in our understanding of what it means to be African American. Perhaps we will need future editions of Baratunde Thurston's *How to Be Black* (2012) or perhaps, more accurately, *How to Be What Used to Be Black*.

CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF BLACK SELF-CONCEPT

Models that are more affirming of African American and Black self-concept do not assume that minority status results in negative self-concept. Wade Nobles's (1991) model of the extended self and Adelbert Jenkins's (1995) model of self as an agent of change are two such examples of more affirming models.

According to Nobles, people of African descent have an extended sense of self. The extended self-concept is derived through identification with people of African descent. This self-concept encompasses others who are significant to the individual. One's personal well-being is intricately linked to the well-being of others in the group. The saying, "I am because we are, and because we are I am" (Mbiti, 1991, p. 106) exemplifies this conceptualization of the self. For African Americans, one's self-concept is closely aligned with racial identity and one's sense of connection and identification with members of his or her racial group. Using Nobles's model of the self, self-concept will only be high if racial identity is high. In fact, some recent studies have shown this to be the case: high self-concept has been found to be associated with high racial identity among adolescents and adults (R. Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006; T. Townsend & Belgrave, 2000).

Adelbert Jenkins's (1995) model does not centrally consider others as being key to the self-concept, as does Nobles's (1991). A primary assumption of Jenkins's model is that the self is an active agent. By agent, he means we recognize ourselves as persons who can take action, initiate, and make decisions. The self is a way of talking about our ability to make choices and to shape the course of our lives. This view of the self is a humanistic and empowering view, as it considers the active role that the person plays in shaping and carrying out his or her own destiny. The humanistic model of the self conveys that even under conditions of oppression and discrimination, African Americans are active in shaping their own destiny.

It is possible to consider Jenkins's and Nobles's perspectives as complementary. For example, African Americans may have a sense of being collectively agentic, feeling positive about themselves as members of a group working actively on their own behalf. It is also possible that these perspectives may emphasize specific dimensional aspects of African American personality, with some individuals having a more collective orientation and some having a more agentic emphasis. It might also be possible for individuals to be high (or low) on both dimensions.

Identity: Development and Change

The development of identity is a process that involves personal insight and observation of oneself in a social context. The observation might make one realize that members of one's ethnic group are treated differently from members of other ethnic groups. The self-observation may also make salient how the behavior of one's ethnic group differs from the behavior of other ethnic groups. As we discuss next, ethnic identity is important and serves many functions. Ethnic identity is not static: It changes throughout the life span.

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Identity formation begins at birth and continues throughout the life course. Young children's understanding of ethnicity and race is mainly derived from the family and the community (M. Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). As children's social cognitive development progresses, they move from understanding and describing themselves based on individual external characteristics to increasingly emphasizing more internal, multidimensional, psychological, and situational factors (Damon & Hart, 1982). American children develop an understanding of racial categories, their group membership, and the broad cultural attributions and biases associated with race and ethnicity during their preschool years. This understanding appears to be shaped in part by their general social cognitive development (M. Spencer, 1982; D. Swanson, Spencer, Dell'Angelo, Harpalani, & Spencer, 2002).

It is during the adolescent years that identity formation is emphasized, as explained by the psychosocial stage theory of Erik Erikson (1963, 1968). With developmental increases in cognitive ability, dramatic physical changes, and the impending transition to adulthood, the question of "Who am I?" becomes increasingly important. Identity development is dependent on prior experiences, developmental context, and historical period.

Building on Erikson's perspective of adolescent identity exploration and commitment, Marcia (1966, 1980) articulated four identity statuses for adolescents: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. Moreover, African Americans' experiences of these statuses may differ from those of majority youth.

Identity *achievement* is the status reflecting the exploration of and commitment to an identity. At this stage, adolescents understand and accept who they are in terms of their racial and ethnic background. For example, individuals may refer to themselves as Black and be committed to being African American. Identity *moratorium* occurs when there has been or there is an ongoing exploration of identity, but no commitment has been made to a specific identity. Individuals may have some confusion about their ethnicity during this stage. They may know that they are African American but may not necessarily feel committed to this aspect of their identity and subsequently may not participate in activities of

their ethnic group. Identity *foreclosure* is when individuals have clarity about their ethnicity but have not explored this aspect of their self-concept. Feelings about their ethnicity may be positive or negative depending on the socialization process. Individuals in this status may be clear that they are African American, but do not think deeply about what it means to be African American. Identity *diffusion* is a status in which the individual has neither explored his or her identity nor developed a clear understanding of identity-related issues. An individual in this status has not significantly thought about or experienced aspects of being African American.

A considerable proportion of the research on identity development has been conducted with adolescents. These studies have generally involved administering identity scales to adolescents of different age groups to infer their identity status. Less research has been conducted on the process or the manner in which identity develops. French, Seidman, Allen, and Aber (2006) addressed this issue by conducting a longitudinal study of ethnic identity over two critical transitional periods during adolescence. They also investigated whether patterns of ethnic identity were similar to or different for African Americans, Latinos, and Whites. The authors used data collected from a large study called the Adolescent Pathways Project, a longitudinal study of youth attending urban public schools in the eastern part of the United States. Data at Time 1 were collected from students in elementary and junior high during the late spring. Time 2 data were collected 10 to 12 months later, after students' transition from elementary to junior high and junior high to high school. Time 3 data were collected one year later. Measures included students' self-identification of racial or ethnic label, group esteem, and an exploration (achievement) measure of ethnic identity. The authors reported that the group-esteem component of identity increased for both early and middle school adolescents. However, the exploration component of ethnic identity increased only for the middle school adolescent students. The authors also found that the increase in the exploration dimension of ethnic identity occurred more when students went from ethnically homogeneous middle schools to more ethnically diverse high schools. They noted that perhaps this transition served as an encounter that increased racial salience.

In other work on identity development, Yip, Seaton, and Sellers (2006) explored the four identity statuses among African Americans of different age groups (i.e., adolescents, college students, and adults). Their sample consisted of 940 African Americans distributed among the three groups. They found that the four identity statuses—diffused, foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved—existed among this sample. Individuals from all three age groups were in each of the four identity statuses. The authors noted that this finding is consistent with research that suggests recycling occurs. Recycling occurs when an individual in a later identity status returns to an earlier status and vice versa. The concept of recycling will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. There were some differences across age groups such that 27% of the adolescents, 47% of the college students, and 56% of the adults were classified as achieved, suggesting developmental differences. More of the adolescents were in the moratorium

status of exploration, which was consistent with where they were developmentally. Relatively few of the participants were classified as having diffused ethnic identities.

ETHNIC IDENTITY CHANGE

Situational and environmental factors have an impact on one's ethnic identity. Identity change may occur if an individual moves into a new situation or a new environment, or has a change in life circumstances such as relocation, marriage, new job, new school, and so on. When a new situation is encountered, the individual is prompted to search for a new source of support. The new support may move the individual into another context in which he involves himself in activities and organizations that support that new identity. For example, students in the Yip et al. (2006) study changed in one identity status when they went from an ethnically homogenous to an ethnically heterogeneous environment. Before students start college they may have support for their identity within their community or Church environment. However, once in college, they may have to find new sources of support for their identity through greater involvement in African American clubs and organizations. This may especially be the case if they attend a predominantly White college. In fact, research has shown that ethnic minority students' feelings of belonging to a group and commitment to their ethnic group increase when they go from a predominantly minority community to a predominantly White college (Saylor & Aries, 1999). We next turn to a discussion of two of the major models of racial identity.

Models of Racial Identity

Interest in racial and ethnic identity led some of the early researchers to develop models of racial identity. One of the earliest and most studied models of racial identity is the nigrescence model. The multidimensional model of racial identity is a more recent identity model and provides a framework for understanding the importance of race and the meaning of being a member of a racial group.

NIGRESCENCE MODELS OF RACIAL IDENTITY

The earlier racial identity models assumed that people progress through phases or stages of identity. Individuals in a particular stage have certain attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that are distinct from those that emerge within other stages. Nigrescence models of racial identity have been widely studied, and these models have more recently undergone refinement.

Nigrescence models take into account the process by which Blacks become aware of being Black in the United States. (Nigrescence, a word with Latin roots, means to become black.) Nigrescence models and measures have been developed by African American psychologists, including Charles Thomas, William Cross, Janet Helms, and Thomas Parham. These models provide a template of what happens during each of the stages that African Americans go through to reach racial awareness. Each of these stages is characterized by certain affective, cognitive, and behavioral features. A description of the stages as articulated by Helms (1990) follows.

Stage 1: Pre-Encounter

In the pre-encounter stage, there is an orientation toward White culture and away from Black culture. People in this stage may feel ashamed and embarrassed about being African American and may hold the values of the White culture. These individuals may feel that Blacks are responsible for their own oppression and fate. Correspondingly, they may hold individualistic views about opportunities, seeing the individual and not the environment as responsible for what happens to people. Individuals in this stage may believe that Blacks who do not do well are responsible for their lack of success and that the historical background of slavery and discrimination are not relevant factors. Individuals in this stage are likely to engage in activities with Whites or activities that they assume are culturally White.

Emotional behaviors during this stage may be defensiveness, avoidance, and anxiety. The individual in this stage is looking for acceptance among Whites, which may or may not be available. Compliance and conformity to societal norms are also seen in this stage.

Individuals in this stage may hold beliefs and behaviors that are not overtly anti-Black and pro-White (especially if they want to be seen as politically correct) but that may be inferred from unobtrusive and indirect indicators. This may be seen, for example, when individuals prefer to buy from White merchants over Black merchants, and rationalize that White merchants provide better products, service, or both.

Stage 2: Dissonance

During the dissonance or encounter stage, individuals encounter an event or series of events that shatter the perception of themselves or the perception of the conditions of Blacks in America. This experience, described as “pulling the rug from under one’s feet” (Cross et al., 1998, p. 9), makes salient the consequences of being Black. An example might be when a person realizes that he was charged a higher price for an automobile because of his race. Dissonance may also be experienced when an individual is transitioning from one environment to another. This might occur when a person leaves a predominantly African American high school to attend a predominantly White school. In the transition process, his race becomes salient to him and to others.

During the dissonance stage, the person begins to wonder what it might be like to have an identity as a Black person. This person may begin reading and seeking out information about Blacks and may begin to question what she had previously believed to be true about Blacks and Whites. The emotional state associated with this stage is one of vigilance and anxiety. The person in this stage is motivated to learn about Blacks and actively seeks out information about being Black. For example, she may begin to read magazines and watch Black-oriented television shows.

Stage 3: Immersion and Emersion

The immersion and emersion stage is characterized by a new way of thinking and a new identity that incorporates being Black. Immersion is the beginning phase and emersion the end phase of this stage. Individuals in this stage may have overvalued beliefs about the goodness of being Black. Dichotomous thinking is used, and Black is good and White is bad. Persons in this stage want to affiliate only with other Blacks. Individuals in this stage attend events and participate in activities that affirm and support their African American identity. The first part of this stage has been described as total immersion into Blackness, with individuals experiencing the emotions of energy and elation. During the second part of this stage, called emersion, there is some leveling off of energy and elation.

Stage 4: Internalization

During this stage, the individual has internalized a new identity. The conflicts between the old and the new identity have been resolved and the anxiety, emotionality, and defensiveness of the prior stages are gone. The individual feels more calm and secure. This person knows who he is, and he does not have to display his Blackness in order to prove that he is Black. Blacks are still seen as the primary reference group, but friendships and interactions with Whites are possible. Furthermore, persons in the internalization stage do not participate in Black organizations exclusively. Their thinking is more flexible, and they are more tolerant of people from other cultural groups.

Stage 5: Internalization-Commitment

At the fifth stage, called internalization-commitment, the individual possesses all of the characteristics of the internalization stage. However, not only does she have a firm self-identity about what it means to be Black, but also she is likely to work for the liberation of all oppressed people. For example, a person in the internalization-commitment stage might work to support the civil rights of other oppressed groups (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer [LGBTQs]).

The Racial Attitude Identity Scale (RAIS) has been the most widely used scale to measure racial identity attitudes (Parham & Helms, 1981). This scale is discussed in more detail in the research and methodological section of this chapter.

ADAPTATIONS AND REFINEMENTS OF NIGRESCENCE THEORY

The nigrescence theory of racial identity has been modified since its original conceptualization over a quarter of a century ago. These modifications more accurately reflect identity among contemporary African Americans.

Parham (1992a) modified the nigrescence theory to include a life-span perspective on racial identity. His adaptation addresses how the stages of racial identity are manifested in three phases of life: (a) late adolescence/early adulthood, (b) midlife, and (c) late adulthood. Each of these phases has a central theme that relates to a particular stage of racial identity. Parham's adaptation of the model accounts for how one would experience nigrescence during the three developmental periods.

During childhood and late adolescence, parents and the immediate environmental context (e.g., schools, neighborhoods, churches, and so on) have greater influence than during later developmental stages. This means that individuals might be more likely to progress through stages during adolescence and early adulthood. For example, leaving home during late adolescence and going to a new school environment might trigger the dissonance stage. One's immediate sociocultural environment, and close contact and collaborations with other African Americans, might also encourage the immersion-emersion stage.

A life-span approach to identity also recognizes that recycling occurs. In recycling, the individual goes back to an earlier completed stage. Parham (1992a) defines recycling as the reinstatement of the racial identity struggle and resolution after having achieved it at an earlier time in one's life.

During midlife, changes and transitions might cause one to reevaluate racial attitudes and return to an earlier stage and/or move forward to another stage. Events such as child rearing, marriage, and new or changing jobs may serve as catalysts for a particular attitude.

The life-span perspective also assumes that a person's initial identity can be at any of the stages and that it does not always have to begin at the pre-encounter stage. For example, if a child is immersed in a culture of pro-Black activities and beliefs based on his parents and other socialization influences, he may never hold pre-encounter attitudes.

The life-span perspective on nigrescence holds that identity resolution can occur in one of three ways: (a) stagnation or failure to move beyond one's initial identity stage, (b) through the sequential linear stage progression described previously, and (c) by recycling.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL OF RACIAL IDENTITY

In contrast to stage or developmental models, R. Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous (1998) have developed a model that emphasizes the multidimensional nature of racial identity. The multidimensional model of racial

identity (MMRI) builds on symbolic interactionism and outlines four primary dimensions of racial identity: salience, centrality, ideology, and regard.

Salience involves the extent to which individuals emphasize race as an important dimension of their self-concept at a specific point in time. R. Sellers et al. (1998) note that the salience of racial identity may vary over time and from situation to situation. Centrality refers to the extent that race is core to an individual's self-concept and how she normally defines herself. Ideology is the third dimension of the MMRI and describes four different sets of beliefs and attitudes: (a) nationalist, (b) oppressed minority, (c) assimilationist, and (d) humanist. The nationalist perspective emphasizes "the importance and uniqueness of being of African descent." The oppressed minority ideology focuses on oppression and commonalities with other oppressed groups. The assimilationist perspective emphasizes "commonalities between African Americans and the rest of American society," and, finally, the humanist perspective underlines "the commonalities of all humans" (R. Sellers et al., p. 28). The fourth dimension of identity, regard, involves both the individuals' feelings about group membership (private regard) and their sense of others' evaluations and feelings about their group (public regard). This model seeks to address a variety of research and conceptual issues on racial identity. We discuss the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which is based on the MMRI, later in the chapter.

The extensive research on racial and ethnic identity has led to numerous studies that have investigated the correlates or consequences of high and low racial and ethnic identity. Other self-attributes have been investigated along with ethnic identity.

CORRELATES OF RACIAL IDENTITY AND SELF-CONCEPT

There are causes and effects of having high and low self-concept and racial identity. We discuss next the relationship between racial identity and demographic variables, and then the relationship between racial and ethnic identity and other variables.

Racial Identity Status and Demographic Variables

Several studies have examined the nigrescence stages of racial identity (described previously) and their correlations with demographic variables. One question is whether certain demographic characteristics are more likely to be found among persons in a specific racial identity status. A study that used data from the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA) and the National Election Panel Study (NEPS) addressed this question (Hyers, 2001). The authors found that some demographic variables correlated with different identity stages. Respondents were classified into one of three racial identity types—pre-encounter, immersion, or internalization—based on their responses to questions on the NSBA and the NEPS. Persons were classified into the pre-encounter stage if they

answered yes to a question such as, “Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?” An immersion-type question was, “How much say or power do you think Black people have in American life and in politics?” A question aimed at internalization was, “How close do you feel in your ideals and feelings to White people in this country?” The study found that most of the respondents (80% in the NEPS and 84% in the NSBA) could be classified into the pre-encounter, immersion, and internalization stages. The percentage categorized as pre-encounter in the NEPS survey was 44% and in the NSBA survey 35%. Immersion types represented 16% of the NEPS sample and 21% of the NSBA sample. Internalization types represented 40% of the NEPS sample and 28% of the NSBA sample.

The findings indicated that socioeconomic status is a predictor of identity status. Less-educated and lower-income respondents were more likely to be in the pre-encounter than the immersion stage. In addition, respondents in the NEPS from urban areas were more likely to be in the pre-encounter than in the immersion stage. Data from the NEPS showed that men and older participants were more likely to be in the internalization than in the immersion stage.

Individuals classified in the pre-encounter stage were the least likely to blame the system for the problems Black people had, were most likely to have White friends, and were least likely to self-label as Black. Those in the pre-encounter stage, compared with those in the immersion and internalization stages, were least likely to report experiencing racism or having a family member who had experienced racism, and were least likely to report feeling discriminated against in hiring and other situations. Regarding psychological well-being, individuals in the pre-encounter stage were the most satisfied, those in the internalization stage were the second most satisfied, and individuals classified within the immersion stage were the least satisfied with their lives. Although pre-encounter types reported high psychological well-being, they had the lowest level of global self-esteem. This may be because self-esteem has been linked to high ethnic identity. Internalization types had the highest level of global self-esteem.

Racial and Ethnic Identity and Psychological Well-Being

High racial and ethnic identity has been found to be associated with more positive psychosocial well-being. The positive effects of racial identity on psychological well-being are both direct and indirect and are seen across diverse groups. For example, Pierre and Mahalik (2005) examined psychological well-being among African American male college students and community members. They found that pre-encounter and immersion racial identity attitudes were associated with higher psychological distress (as measured by a psychological distress checklist) and lower self-esteem. On the other hand, internalization racial identity attitudes were associated with higher self-esteem.

R. Sellers et al. (2006) reported that different components of racial identity had direct and indirect effects on psychological functioning and well-being in a

sample of 314 African American adolescents. Participants who reported attitudes that are more positive (labeled positive regard beliefs) about African Americans reported higher psychological well-being (i.e., self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, and so on). They also found an indirect effect such that the belief that other groups had negative attitudes toward African Americans (labeled the low public regard component of racial identity) lessened the impact of perceived racial discrimination on psychological well-being.

In another study showing indirect effects of racial identity, H. L. Jones, Cross, and DeFour (2007) studied racial identity among 144 Caribbean women. They found that racial identity attitudes had a protective effect on racial stress appraisal and events regarding depression. That is, when racist events were appraised as high, women with higher racial identity were not as depressed as those with lower racial identity.

Similarly, ethnic identity has also been shown to be a protective factor against online discrimination-related stress. A contemporary source of stress for African American adolescents involves online discrimination (e.g., race-based exclusion in social networking settings, overt racial attacks or exchanges, or exposure to text or imagery reflecting prejudice). Tynes, Umaña-Taylor, Rose, Lin, and Anderson (2012) found that higher levels of self-esteem and ethnic identity buffered the effects of online discrimination on self-reported anxiety in a sample of 125 African American high school students with a mean age of 16.1.

Neighborhood context may also make a difference when considering the impact of racial identity and well-being. Hurd, Sellers, Cogburn, Butler-Barnes and Zimmerman (2012) found that African American adolescents and young adults with more positive feeling about Blacks had lower symptoms of depression, but that this relationship was stronger in neighborhoods with fewer Black residents. In neighborhoods with fewer Black residents, believing others held less-positive view of Blacks was associated with less depression, while in neighborhoods with greater presence of Blacks, believing others held less-positive view of Blacks was associated with greater depression.

Racial and Ethnic Identity and Academic Achievement

Findings regarding the relationship between ethnic identity and school achievement are mixed. On the one hand, high ethnic identity should foster achievement-related activities, such as studying and affiliating with peers who have high academic success. On the other hand, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) note that high achievement among African American youth may be viewed as “acting White” by their peers. For some, high achievement may be seen as selling out the Black culture. This occurs when students do not see academic achievement as a core-defining attribute for themselves and their peers; consequently, high academic achievement is not a positive accomplishment. Beyond the linkage between ethnic identity and academic achievement, accusations of “acting

White” may carry their own toll for African American youth. In a study of 101 African American high school students with a mean age of 15.9, M. Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings, and Stadulis (2012) reported that those who were indirectly accused of acting White (e.g., “Because of my friends, my peers don’t think I’m Black enough” or “The kids around me say I talk proper”) as well as directly accused of acting White ($n = 52$) reported higher levels of anxiety than those who only experienced the indirect accusation ($n = 45$). Only four participants indicated that they had experienced neither direct nor indirect accusations.

The devaluing of educational achievement has a historical context. Historically, White America has doubted African Americans’ capabilities to perform well, and some African Americans subsequently bought into this belief, doubting their own capabilities. In order to maintain self-esteem, African Americans have thereby defined success for Whites as based on school achievement and defined success for African Americans as based on other attributes. From this perspective, students who are strongly connected to their culture and who have high racial identity may not be successful in school. In a study, Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) found results that were consistent with this hypothesis. The authors studied 548 students in Grades 7 through 10 and found that racial pride messages were correlated with lower grades and less academic curiosity.

In contrast, studies have more frequently identified ethnic or racial identity as a positive factor for academic success. For example, M. Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, and Harpalani (2001) found African American youth who scored high on Eurocentric identity to have lower academic achievement and those who scored higher in Africentric identity to have higher achievement. They challenge the “acting White” hypothesis, and discuss several problems with it. They note, for example, important individual differences among African Americans in their conceptions of identity. Another challenge to the acting White hypothesis is that many African Americans are bicultural and can code-switch while negotiating American culture. Finally, many African American youth and parents have positive values regarding education.

In another study with similar findings, Adela (2008) studied ethnic identity and grade point average (GPA) in a sample of 661 African American adolescents in Grades 7–12. The findings showed that ethnic identity was positively correlated with GPA within the total sample. The effect was more pronounced for females than for males in the sample.

Ethnic identity may affect academic achievement such as grades through its impact on other attributes such as academic expectations and orientation. Kerpelman, Eryigit, and Stephens (2008) examined ethnic identity and future education orientation. Their study included 374 African American adolescents who were in Grades 7–12. Ethnic identity was a significant factor in future education orientation for both male and female students.

Building on both case studies of seven students and survey data, Nasir, McLaughlin, and Jones (2009) examined youth constructions of ethnic identity and their links to academic achievement in an urban public high school located in East Bay, California. The authors describe two main configurations of

identity. The first is described as a “Street-Savvy African American Identity” that is associated with being “gangsta” and “street,” where school is primarily a social as opposed to an academic setting. This identity was associated with a range of challenges and difficulties associated with life in challenged urban communities (e.g., engaging in or association with drug sales, court involvement, skipping class). In contrast, there was also a “school-oriented and socially conscious African American identity” characterized by a commitment to community and social change and identifying as a student. Both groups used Ebonics and were described as wearing popular fashions (although the more socially conscious group more often wore African-centered clothing). Youth were described as having, or moving between, the characteristics of these two identities and that the boundaries between the two identities seemed somewhat permeable.

Racial and Ethnic Identity and Problem Behaviors

Several studies have examined ethnic identity in relation to problem behaviors including drug use, risky sexual activity, juvenile delinquency, and violence. Much of this research has been conducted with adolescents. These studies have generally found ethnic identity to be a protective factor for youth. Ethnic identity provides an alternative to poor behaviors and a more appropriate way of resisting negative forces that lead to problem behaviors.

There are several other ways in which positive ethnic identity protects against problem behaviors (J. S. Brook, Balka, Brook, Win, & Gursen, 1998). One way is that a positive ethnic identity may support adolescents’ identification with their parents. Identification with parents, in turn, may lead to better problem-solving skills. Rather than seeking approval from deviant peers, adolescents seek and receive support from parents. This support may include socialization in culturally sanctioned, prosocial coping strategies. Another way that high ethnic identity protects against problem behaviors is that high ethnic identity buffers against poor self-esteem, which could be a risk factor for drug use and other problem behaviors. Youth with high ethnic identity are not likely to have poor self-esteem and feelings of incompetence, which lead to problem behaviors.

Corneille and Belgrave (2007) examined the impact of ethnic identity on drug and sex attitudes and intentions in a sample of 175 African American girls in middle school. Attitudes and intentions were targeted rather than behaviors because the sample was young and largely not using drugs or engaging in sex. The researchers examined both direct and indirect effects of ethnic identity. They were also interested in whether ethnic identity was a protective factor under conditions of neighborhood risk. The authors found that higher ethnic identity was correlated with higher sexual refusal efficacy, higher disapproval of drug use, and less intention to use drugs. They also found a protective effort of ethnic identity under conditions of neighborhood risk. Adolescents who lived in high-risk neighborhoods reported fewer intentions to use drugs when they had high rather than low ethnic identity.

Stevens-Watkins, Perry, Harp, and Oser (2012) examined the role of ethnic identity in the drug use of 206 African American women with a mean age of 36.39, living in urban communities in Kentucky. Participants were in the Black Women in a Study of Epidemics (B-WISE) study. Reported experiences of racist life events were predictive of greater risk of illicit drug use. Higher levels of ethnic identity achievement, greater engagement in cultural practices and ethnic affirmation appeared to buffer the effects of racism on drug use. In addition, self-esteem and engagement with a religious community were associated with lower risk of drug use, although racism interacted with religious connection such that those lower in both experienced racism and religious connections were at greater risk of drug use.

In overview, the majority of the research suggests that racial and ethnic identity is a positive attribute. Ethnic and racial identity is generally associated with increased self-esteem, psychological well-being, academic performance, and reduced problem behaviors.

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY INFLUENCE ON SELF AND IDENTITY

Much has been written on the influence of the media on self and identity. Most of this research has been conducted outside of psychology in fields such as sociology and communication. Overall, research suggests a negative impact of the media on self and identity. This negative impact is partly attributed to the fact that images of African Americans portrayed in the media, especially television, are based on negative stereotypes that perpetuate society's pejorative view of African Americans (A. Martin, 2008). The impact of the television media may be especially damaging during childhood and adolescence, the period in which identity is developing. Contributing to this is the fact that African Americans watch more television than other Americans. Studies show that African American adolescents spend more than 5 hours a day, and White adolescents spend less than 4 hours a day, watching television (D. Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005).

A. Martin (2008) describes some contemporary images that, although subtle, are still damaging portrayals of African Americans in the media. These include television characterization as perfect entertainers and athletes, delinquents and criminals, devoted sidekicks, and/or individuals who need saving by White counterparts. These stereotypical images are generally identifiable by African American males and females.

Music videos especially have been implicated as a negative force for positive self and identity. Stephens and Phillips (2003) provide a thoughtful discussion of how music television, specifically hip-hop music, along with other media forces have contributed to negative sexual scripts (roles and beliefs about behavior) for African American adolescents. They identify eight sexual scripts that can be seen in television and hip-hop music depictions. These scripts include the diva, the gold digger, the freak, the dyke, the gangsta's bitch, the sister savior,

the Earth mother, and the baby mama. They propose that adolescent identification with these scripts is universal and likely influences their behaviors. Sexually explicit videos may be especially problematic: they have shown negative effects on sexual risk-taking behaviors such as increases in number of partners and reductions in contraceptive use (G. M. Wingood et al., 2003).

All television media, however, are not negative with regard to portrayals of African Americans. In one study, Ward (2004) showed that the association between media exposure and self-attributes among African American adolescents depended on the type of programming watched. Participants in Ward's study included 156 African American high school students. They were administered measures that included the number of hours that they watched prime-time comedies and dramas. A list of all comedies and dramas on the six major networks were provided for students to rate on a scale that ranged from "never" to "every week." From this list the researchers were also able to extract the number of hours participants viewed programs with predominantly African American casts (e.g., *The Hughleys*, *The Parkers*, *City of Angels*, and so on). Students were also asked the extent to which they identified with 10 popular African American and White male and female characters. Measures of different components of self-esteem and collective self-esteem were also obtained.

Ward (2004) found differences in the significance of television viewing on self-esteem with regard to type of self-esteem and type of programming. She found that regular exposure to sports programming and music videos were consistently and negatively related to all components of self-esteem (i.e., performance self-esteem, social self, total self-esteem, and racial self-esteem). However, regular viewing of mainstream programs and African American prime-time television programs were not as strongly correlated with self-esteem. Other findings related to students' identification with popular television characters. Identification with African American characters such as Darryl, who was on *The Hughleys*, was associated with higher performance, appearance, and total self-esteem. Identification with White characters such as Chandler on *Friends* was associated with lower total self-esteem. The author noted that these findings suggest the importance of thinking about the frame of reference with respect to television and self-attributes. In summary, media may not be universally negative. The study by Ward clarified conditions under which television viewing might be favorable or unfavorable.

Research suggested that individuals are not passive recipients of media influences. In a qualitative study of three African American female adolescents, H. R. Hall and Smith (2012) note that these young women perceive negative sexist and racist images that depict African American females. However, they also possessed critical awareness and were able to separate themselves from and voice explicit opposition to these media images.

As media and technology evolve, considerations of interactive technology and media, including Facebook and Twitter, are becoming important venues that can expand our examination of media and technology in influencing identity. For example, E. B. Lee (2012) and Grasmuck, Martin, and Zhao (2009)

report that within their Facebook profiles African Americans and Latinos shared information that reflected aspects of their cultural selves (e.g., a quote, favorite songs, or artists) more frequently than did their White or Vietnamese counterparts. Lee reports, however, that ethnic identity and self-esteem were not related to time spent on Facebook in a sample of students at a historically Black college.

Sexual Identity

There has been limited research in psychology on sexual identity among African Americans. Most of the research describing the identity process has been conducted on White LGBTQ women and men (C. Parks, Hughes, & Matthews, 2004). A stage process somewhat similar to the ethnic identity process has been used to describe identity development among LGBTQ persons. Persons at the first stage may have beliefs about the superiority of heterosexuality (akin to pre-encounter), and persons at the internalization stage may have acceptance and support for all types of diversity. The committed state of sexual identity development seems to be the most favorable stage or status with respect to psychological well-being (Troiden, 1993). This stage, akin to the internalization stage, has been described as a blending of sexuality and emotionality into a significant whole, believing and feeling that a gay identity is valid and not inferior to a heterosexual identity, initiating and maintaining relationships with same-sex partners, and disclosure to the public.

Perspectives used to examine identity among African American LGBTQ individuals have generally not considered the multiple contexts in which they live and work. Although some historical changes to more tolerant and accepting attitudes have occurred, there remain variations in different cultural groups. African Americans who are LGBTQ must contend with the values and expectations of the communities in which they live and work. Family and religious institutions can be both supportive and nonsupportive systems for African Americans. In fact, some researchers have suggested that the combined effects of racism in lesbian and gay communities and homophobia in racial or ethnic communities may limit the internalization of a sexual identity and also the disclosure of sexual identity (B. Greene, 1997; C. Parks et al., 2004).

McLean (2003) also reports that there are sometimes conflicting identities and LGBTQ African Americans might be discriminated against because they have two stigmatized identities. African American gay males may experience prejudice in the majority gay community and the African American community. The resolution of the dual identity status, as both African American and LGBTQ, may be a factor in identity development. For example, Patton (2011) in a qualitative study of six men at a historically Black college, found that sexual orientation was not explicitly underlined as a central dimension of participants' self-descriptions. The majority of interviewees held a more "fluid" view of their sexuality that

explicitly included either identification as bisexual or the potential for a future relationship with a woman. The students that participated generally held positive perspectives on their college environment, but felt the need to be “low key” relative to disclosing their identities. They also expressed a sense of selectivity in deciding when and to whom to disclose their sexuality, and considered the future consequences of disclosing their sexual identities into these decisions.

It is also important to note that there is variability among LGBTQs in the identity development process, and most individuals work to resolve identity issues. Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, and Soto (2002) suggest that having both strong racial identity and a positive sexual identity is correlated with the best psychological well-being. The authors engaged 174 African American gay and bisexual men in a study on racial and sexual identity and psychological well-being. A key finding was that African American males who had both positive self-identification as being African American and were gay reported higher self-esteem, strong social support networks, higher levels of overall life satisfaction, and less psychological distress than men who had other types of self-identifications. Men who reported negative self-identification as being African American and gay reported higher psychosocial distress and lower levels of self-esteem, social support, and life satisfaction.

In a web-based survey of 106 LGBTQ male and female African Americans with a mean age of 31.17, both internalized racism and internalized heterosexism predicted self-esteem, but only the latter predicted psychological distress (Szymanski & Gupta, 2009). These studies are important because they point to the need to consider multiple identities with regard to psychosocial well-being among LGBTQ persons.

Acculturation, Racial Socialization, and Gender Roles

Concepts related to identity include acculturation and racial socialization. These processes, like racial identity, are affected by family and other sociocultural and environmental processes. Other aspects of identity include what it means to be a man or a woman in this society, or gender roles.

ACCULTURATION

Acculturation refers to the extent to which ethnic minorities participate in the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and practices of their own culture versus the mainstream White culture (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996a). Ethnic minorities function on an acculturation continuum, with traditional on one end and acculturated on the other end. In the middle are those who are bicultural. Traditional individuals retain the values, beliefs, and practices of their indigenous cultural group. Individuals who are highly acculturated have assimilated the beliefs and

behaviors of the majority White culture. Bicultural individuals hold the beliefs and practice the behaviors of their traditional culture but have also assimilated the beliefs and practices of the dominant culture.

In a series of studies, Landrine and Klonoff (1996a) investigated the relationship between acculturation and mental health, physical health, and other variables among African Americans. They report that acculturation is associated with the amount of racism experienced, with more traditional African Americans experiencing more racism than more acculturated African Americans. Experiencing racism, in turn, predicts health-related problems such as smoking and hypertension.

In examining the relationship between acculturation and mental health problems, Landrine and Klonoff (1996a) found that predictors of poor mental health (i.e., depression, anxiety, obsession-compulsive symptoms) differed for acculturated individuals as compared to individuals who were more traditional in their cultural orientation. Acculturated persons tended to blame themselves and to take responsibility for their problems, whereas traditional people tended to deny and avoid their problems. Acculturated persons also tended to appraise their everyday stress at higher levels. In general, mental health symptoms among acculturated African Americans are related to self-blaming and ordinary stressors, whereas symptoms among traditional African Americans are associated with denial of problems.

Other studies have looked at the impact of acculturation on problem behaviors such as substance use. Nasim, Belgrave, et al. (2007) examined components of acculturation in relation to tobacco and marijuana use among 145 African American college females. Their findings showed that traditional religious beliefs and practice were protective factors against tobacco smoking. Also, traditional family-related and religious beliefs and practices were protective factors against marijuana smoking. However, in the same study the authors found that traditional health beliefs were associated with more, not less, smoking of cigarettes and marijuana. The authors speculated that perhaps acculturated individuals who used traditional health practices were less likely to believe mainstream information on the harmful effects of smoking.

In overview, the research suggests that some aspects of acculturation (e.g., traditional family and religious practices and beliefs) are linked to positive health and psychological outcomes, whereas other components of acculturation are linked to more negative outcomes.

RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

One process that supports ethnic identity development is racial socialization. Racial socialization involves messages and practices that provide information concerning one's race as it relates to (a) personal and group identity, (b) intergroup and interindividual relationships, and (c) position in the social hierarchy (S. Hill, 1999; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Racial socialization is

the process by which messages are communicated to children to bolster their sense of identity in light of the fact that their life experiences may include racially hostile encounters (Stevenson, 1995). Racial socialization messages are more likely communicated by mothers than by fathers. In addition, older and more-educated parents provide more racial socialization messages than do younger and less-educated parents. Those who live in more racially mixed neighborhoods are more likely to provide racial socialization messages than those who live in predominantly African American neighborhoods (D. Hughes et al., 2006). Finally, racial socialization messages are more likely to be provided to older than to younger children and youth.

What are the types of socialization that parents provide? Parents socialize their children in several ways. Parents may socialize their children into the mainstream of American society, they might socialize them as to their minority status in the country, and they can socialize them in orientation to their Black culture (Thornton, 1997). Different types of socialization experiences promote different messages. When parents socialize their children regarding minority status, they may socialize them to, for example, "Accept your color." Mainstream socialization messages might be something like, "Hard work will pay off in a good life." Parents who provide socialization messages related to the Black experience might convey to their children, "It is important to study Black culture and history."

Gaylord-Harden, Burrows, and Cunningham (2012) describe racial socialization in addition to ethnic identity and cultural-based coping as assets available to African Americans youth to promote positive adaptation when they face stress. Within this framework, racial socialization is described as the pathway through which youth gain resources for the development of their racial identities as well as coping strategies that may be specific to African Americans in handling unique stressors such as racial discrimination. In addition, socialization may support youths' understanding of the availability of adult support.

Racial socialization is generally associated with better functioning among African American children. Racial socialization teaches problem-solving skills so that children can solve racial-related problems. It tends to increase racial identity and competence (D. Brown, 2008; Coard & Sellers, 2005). Neblett et al. (2008) examined how patterns of racial socialization were linked to psychological adjustment among 361 African American adolescents. They found that adolescents who reported high positive types of racial socialization reported the most positive psychological adjustment. Moreover, high positive racial socialization had a buffering effect. It protected adolescents who had experienced racial discrimination, lowering their perceived stress. Adolescents who reported low and negative racial socialization reported the worse psychological adjustment.

Racial socialization is also linked to academic achievement, either directly or indirectly, through its association with ethnic identity (M. Bennett Jr., 2006). In a review of racial socialization and academic achievement, D. Hughes et al. (2006) reported that racial socialization may contain messages about opportunity that may influence youth's academic motivation and efforts. Further messages about

preparation for racial bias may reduce youth's susceptibility to stereotypes about lower academic performance among African Americans, resulting in higher academic performance. Racial socialization messages may also highlight significant African Americans who have achieved and make salient to youth that academic achievement is necessary for success. The impact of racial socialization remains when adolescents leave home. Anglin and Wade (2007) found that racial socialization was positively linked to academic adjustment among African American students attending a predominantly White university.

M. Wang and Huguley (2012) found that cultural socialization by parents acted to buffer the effects of perceived discrimination by peers and teachers on GPAs in a sample of 630 African American adolescents with a mean age of 14.5. When there were low levels of cultural socialization by parents, teacher discrimination was more strongly associated with lower GPA. Parental cultural socialization also served to protect youth from the negative impact of perceived teacher discrimination on educational aspirations.

DeCuir-Gunby, Martin, and Cooper (2012) present qualitative data on the racial socialization experiences of six African American students attending a predominantly White (8% African American) private elite school in the South. Students noted that parents play a central role in their construction of their sense of ethnic identity, including providing access to cultural resources such as Black Churches and historically Black colleges. In addition, students noted a collectivist orientation, including their Black peers at school as well as their sense of connection to their social, cultural, and political histories; they also indicated that their minority status and negative experiences at the school played a role in shaping their sense of self.

Mothers may give certain racial socialization messages to their daughters; their messages may consider both race and gender. A. Thomas and King (2007) interviewed 36 mother-daughter pairs and administered a racial socialization scale. Daughters were asked, "What are the specific messages that your mother gives you on being an African American woman or girl?" Mothers were asked, "What are the specific messages that you teach your daughter on race and gender?" Thomas and King found that daughters and mothers reported similar messages, especially concerning the importance of self-determination and self-pride. Mothers did not want the race and gender of their daughters to be a barrier for success. There was a negative correlation between racial socialization messages that embraced the mainstream culture and self-esteem, suggesting that messages that deny racial heritage may have a negative influence on self-esteem.

GENDER ROLES

Gender roles and beliefs shape our identity in many ways. Gender roles are the expectations of roles and positions that males and females hold in this society (Stockard & Johnson, 1980). Gender roles can be categorized as masculine or independent, feminine or expressive, undifferentiated (i.e., neither feminine

nor masculine), or androgynous (high on both feminine and masculine) (Bem, 1993). Feminine gender roles are linked to more traditional feminine behaviors such as taking care of others, showing concern for others, and careers such as teaching, social work, and nursing. Masculine gender roles are linked to behaviors such as leadership, independence, and careers such as construction and engineering. In general, females score higher on feminine gender roles and males score higher on masculine gender roles. However, this is not the case with African Americans. African American females (and to a lesser extent males) tend to have androgynous gender roles, meaning they possess beliefs and behaviors that are typically assertive and nurturing and also independent and assertive (Cornelle, Ashcraft, & Belgrave, 2005; A. Harris, 1996). Androgynous gender role beliefs have been useful for African American women, given their need to take care of self and family under the historical context of racism and oppression. As employment opportunities have often not been as plentiful for African American men as for African American women, and African American women have been more likely than African American men to complete high school and attend and graduate from college, androgynous gender roles may support success in these contexts.

Varner and Mandara (2013) report that African American mothers may have greater concerns about gender discrimination for their daughters and greater concerns about racial discrimination for their sons. Greater concerns about racial discrimination were associated with lower expectations for academic and career success and future behavior problems. Higher academic expectations were associated with lower conflict as well as more parental monitoring, responsiveness, and rule enforcement.

Research suggests that the gender roles that women hold affect the causes of their stress and how they respond to stress. M. Littlefield (2003) investigated the relationship between gender role identity and stress in African American women. Data collected from 481 women in the Norfolk (Virginia) Area Health Study were used. Littlefield found that about 17% (16.6%) of the women could be classified as masculine, 17.2% as feminine, 33.1% as androgynous, and 33.1% as undifferentiated. She found that women who were classified as androgynous reported the lowest stress level. Undifferentiated women had the highest level of stress. Her findings suggest that programs and activities that promote androgynous gender roles could potentially buffer African American girls and women against stressful life conditions.

Feminism and womanism are also discussed as aspects of identity among African American women. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster, 2003) defines feminism as "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes" (p. 461). Women's feminist identity and its meaning may vary depending on race and ethnicity (Harnois, 2005). Harnois conducted a study using data from a national survey to examine the meaning of feminism among ethnically diverse women. The sample included 1,619 women, 270 of whom self-identified as African American and 1,272 who self-identified as White. The author found that African American women embraced feminism.

However, African American women's self-identification as feminists did not reflect the importance of feminism in their lives to the extent that it did for White women. For example, paying attention to women's issues was related to self-identification of feminism but it was more significant for White than African American women. The authors also found that African American and White women followed different paths to feminism. Education, marital status, and religiosity significantly predicted the extent to which White women embraced feminism. However, none of these factors predicted whether African American women embraced feminism. The author noted that the path to feminism might be shaped more by labor or work and family relationships for African American women than it was for White women. Finally, Harnois found feminism meant something different for African American and White women. The importance of feminism for White women was associated with their support for gay and lesbian issues along with nontraditional gender ideology. On the other hand, African American women's gender beliefs and support for gay and lesbian issues was unassociated with the importance of feminism in their lives. African American feminism may be associated more with social and economic justice issues such as educational equality and economic equalities than it is with attitudes or beliefs about sexual orientation.

There have been a few studies on feminism among African American men. A. M. White (2006) conducted research on feminism among African American males, calling these beliefs and attitudes "feminist Black masculinities" (p. 256). Scholars who study feminist masculinities examine the representation of male power and privilege with the goal to promote equalitarianism. The assumption is that men are harmed themselves when they hold patriarchal and heterosexual views. These scholars study how alternative feminist ideas and practices can benefit both men and women. White conducted interviews with 25 African American men who fit the criteria for being a feminist (i.e., they had participated in a feminist activity) and had provided the name of an African American feminist woman who would judge him as feminist. White reported that the narratives from these men helped to understand how key life events helped to shape their feminist ideology. Some of these included events such as (a) attendance at a conference on gender relationships, (b) involvement with a feminist nonprofit agency that works with men who batter women, (c) becoming aware of sexual exploitation of women through friendship with a sex worker, and (d) strengthening of the relationship with a feminist daughter who went through a divorce.

A related aspect of identity is womanism. Womanism is "a form of feminism focused esp. on the conditions and concerns of black women" (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1440). Womanism emphasizes the importance of gender role in African American women's psychosocial adaptation, and assumes that gender roles for African American women incorporates both nurturing and economic providing functions (M. Littlefield, 2003). Models of womanist identity have proposed that the development of identity occurs in sequential stages similar to that of racial identity. For example, Helms's

four-stage model of healthy identity development in women involves movement from external to internal standards of gender identity (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992).

Measures of womanism follow the general structure of status measures of racial identity (i.e., womanist pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization) (Ossana et al., 1992). Womanism has been found to be correlated with racial identity (S. Wyatt, 2006). In addition, context may impact womanist identity. In one study, Wyatt found that women at a historically Black coeducational college scored higher on the emersion womanist identity status than those at a single-sex college. This is the status similar to the emersion racial identity status in which women begin to idealize women and reject male supremacist ideals of womanhood. It is also the status in which women affirm themselves as women. Women at single-sex colleges (compared to coeducational colleges) may have more opportunities to see and discuss what it means to be a woman and subsequently have more resolved feelings about being a woman. Women at the coeducational campus may have to more actively look for opportunities for identity resolution.

Among African American men, research has been mixed on whether African American men hold more traditional or stereotypic views of masculinity than their White peers (J. Wade and Rochlen, 2012). Popular constructions of hypermasculinity and “cool pose” among African American men may reflect tendencies to approach the African American community as a monolith, and to minimize the potential within-group variations among African American men. Norwalk, Vandiver, White, and Englar-Carlson (2011) report higher levels of gender-role stress among African American male college students compared to their White peers. In a qualitative study of masculine identity development among African American young adults, Roberts-Douglass and Curtis-Boles (2012) indicate that respondents reported that they were exposed to multiple images of Black masculinity during their adolescence. Beyond expectations of hypermasculinity presented in media and images of toughness reinforced by peers, study participants described fathers, community members, and teachers as influences, models and resources for the construction and understanding of Black male identity. Athletic as well as academic success and taking responsibility (i.e., “taking care of business”) were also described as pathways and markers of masculinity. Recent work has suggested that masculine identity along with ethnic identity among African American men may influence both attitudes about relationships and sexual behavior. Corneille, Fife, Belgrave, and Sims (2012) studied the relationship between these constructs in a sample of 92 Black male college students with a mean age of 19.83. Higher ethnic identity and less traditional masculine ideology were predictive of higher relationship mutuality. In addition, less-traditional attitudes about masculinity were associated with fewer sexual partners.

In summary, research on gender roles, feminism, and womanism highlight that there are differences in these identity attributes and the meaning of these for African Americans and for members of other ethnic groups.

Methodological and Research Issues

Research and methodological issues include the measurement of racial and ethnic identity and related constructs. Although the terms “racial identity” and “ethnic identity” are often used interchangeably, they are different constructs and require different measures. In this section, we review measures of both racial identity and ethnic identity, along with measures of other cultural constructs, including racial socialization.

MEASURES OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Several good measures of racial and ethnic identity exist for both adolescent and adult populations. The RAIS, developed by Janet E. Helms (1990), is the most widely used racial identity scale for adults. There are four subscales of the RAIS that correspond to the racial identity attitudes described previously. An example of a pre-encounter item is, “I feel very uncomfortable around Black people.” A dissonance item is, “I find myself reading a lot of Black literature and thinking about being Black.” An immersion item is, “I believe that everything Black is good, and consequently, limit myself to Black activities.” An internalization item is, “People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations.” The 50-item scale uses a Likert-like format whereby respondents indicate the degree of agreement from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.”

The Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) is a measure of ethnic identity and not of racial identity. The MEIM was developed to measure ethnic identity in ethnically diverse populations. It has been extensively used with several ethnic minority adolescent populations. The measure assesses young people’s identification with unique characteristics of their ethnic group (Phinney, 1992).

The three subscales of the MEIM are (a) affirmation and belonging, (b) ethnic identity achievement, and (c) ethnic behaviors. There are 14 items on a 4-point scale that goes from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” An example of an item that measures affirmation and belonging is, “I am happy to be a member of the group I belong to.” An item that measures ethnic identity achievement is, “In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.” An ethnic behavioral item is, “I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.” Respondents are also asked to indicate their ethnicity and the ethnicity of their mother and father.

E. Smith and Brookins (1997) developed a measure of ethnic identity specifically for African American youth. The Multi-Construct African American Identity Questionnaire (MCAIQ) is used with youth from 11 to 18 years of age. Four components of ethnic identity are included in the measure. The social orientation subscale assesses the youths’ affinity toward socializing with members of their own or other racial and ethnic groups. An item from this subscale

is, "I prefer White friends." The appearance orientation subscale assesses values regarding physical characteristics ("Black is beautiful"). The attitudinal subscale assesses the degree to which respondents accept or reject stereotypical portrayals of African Americans ("Blacks can do anything if they try"). The other group orientation subscale assesses preferences for working with people other than Blacks ("I like working with other people better").

The MIBI is based on the MMRI and has 56 items assessing three stable dimensions of racial identity: centrality, ideology, and regard (R. Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Centrality is measured with 8 items (e.g., "Being Black is important to my self-image"). Regard is measured using two subscales: a 6-item scale for Private Regard (e.g., "I feel good about Black people") and a 6-item scale measuring Public Regard (e.g., "Overall, Blacks are considered good by others"). There are four 9-item scales examining ideology. These subscales include Assimilation (e.g., "Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals"), Humanism (e.g., "Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with problems facing all people than just focusing on Black people"), Minority (e.g., "The same forces that have led to the oppression of Blacks have led to the oppression of other groups"), and Nationalism (e.g., "White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned").

The measures of racial and ethnic identity described here are valid and reliable and have been used in many studies. For example, in a longitudinal study of ethnic identity, Seaton, Yip, and Sellers (2009) found relative stability in identity centrality and private regard within a sample of 219 African American adolescent followed for three years (with a mean age of 13.84 at Time 1 and 15.81 at Time 3.) There were declines in public regard across time. In addition, perceived racial discrimination at Time 1 predicted lower public regard at Time 3, which in turn was predictive of higher perception of discrimination at Time 3.

MEASURES OF OTHER CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS

Measures of racial socialization are important insofar as racial socialization has been linked to positive functioning across several domains among African American youth. Racial socialization has been studied by asking adolescents what messages they have received from parents and grandparents. Stevenson (1995) developed a 45-item Racial Socialization Scale that measures these processes. The scale is used with adolescents and has four components. The spiritual and religious coping component includes items about messages that recognize spirituality and religion as helpful to surviving life's experiences. A second component is extended family care. These items express attitudes and interactions that promote the role of the extended and immediate family in child rearing and caretaking. A third component is teaching children African American history, culture, and pride. This component is called cultural pride reinforcement. The fourth component is racism awareness teaching. These items focus on messages and attitudes that promote cautious and preparatory views

regarding the presence of racism in society. In addition to the adolescent scale, there is a recently developed parental racial socialization scale.

T. Brown and Krishnakumar (2007) developed a measure of racial and ethnic socialization for African American families. They included 218 African American adolescents in their sample. Making the argument that racial and ethnic socialization are two distinct processes, their measure assesses both racial and ethnic socialization. The authors note that messages related to intergroup protocol are racial socialization, whereas messages related to intragroup protocol are ethnic socialization. These differ not only in the content, but also in the nature of the message, with ethnic socialization messages transmitted through both direct and indirect means and messages regarding racism transmitted primarily through direct means. The 17 racial socialization items assess the dimensions of (a) racial barrier awareness, (b) coping with racism and discrimination, and (c) the promotion of cross-racial relationships. The 25 ethnic socialization items have five subscales: (a) African American cultural values, (b) African American cultural embeddedness, (c) African American history, (d) celebration of African American heritage, and (e) promotion of ethnic pride. The scale is both reliable and valid. Moreover, racial and ethnic socialization were predictive of positive function including higher levels of academic achievement. The authors noted that the measure can be practically used with African American families, practitioners, and researchers.

White-Johnson, Ford, and Sellers (2010) report three groups or profiles of parents using the Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Parent Version (RSQ-P) in a sample of 212 African American mothers. These three racial socialization parenting profiles include (a) Multifaceted, (b) Low Race Salience, and (c) Unengaged. Those in the multifaceted group had scores above the sample mean for all subscales except negative messages. Those in the Low Race Salience group reported engaging in socialization behaviors involving self-worth and egalitarian messages but were below the mean on racial pride, barriers, and behavioral socialization subscales. Those in the Unengaged parenting group reported scores below the mean on all subscales, but had above-average scores on negative messages.

Promising and Empirically Supported Practices for Increasing Positive Self-Attributes

Ethnic identity serves many functions. Identity (a) provides a sense of group belonging and affiliation; (b) acts as a buffer against stress that may arise from prejudice, racism, and discrimination; and (c) serves as a link to a larger social group. Being part of a group that shares one's history, perspectives, and values is important in developing a positive sense of self-worth. Because of the benefits of having a positive ethnic identity, there has been a growing movement for programs to improve ethnic identity among ethnic minority youth. These programs seek to increase or improve ethnic identity using culturally appropriate methods and topics.

rites-of-passage programs

Rites-of-passage programs have been used as a vehicle for promoting positive identity. Rites of passage have been used in both historical and contemporary times as a mechanism for encouraging youth to develop the attitudes and behaviors necessary for productive citizenship. Many of the rites-of-passage programs for African Americans are modeled after those in Africa. For example, in some traditional African cultures, male youth are taken away from the village to learn skills that contribute to the survival of the village (e.g., hunting and food gathering). Contemporary rites-of-passage programs do this symbolically by asking parents for permission to take their youth away from their community environment. Generally this is done in a weekend or overnight retreat. Often the youth participants are taken to naturalistic environments outside of their home environment (e.g., farm settings, peaceful retreat settings, and so on).

In contemporary times, rites-of-passage programs have been used to provide the structure to promote a change in the lives of participants. Rites-of-passage programs may help African American youth to clearly define their gender roles, and they may be used to initiate males and females into adult social roles and responsibilities. Rites of passage can be viewed as a developmental progression that separates individuals from their previous identity and facilitates their transition into a new identity that incorporates their new role, responsibilities, and status.

Brookins (1996) describes four stages in a rites-of-passage program called the adolescent developmental pathway paradigm (ADPP). The first stage is one of preparation and awareness, in which individuals are encouraged to become aware of their personal and ethnic characteristics. There is an initial ceremony that provides information on what is involved in the rites-of-passage process. During this stage, the beginner is introduced to community members who will serve as adult role models and be responsible for guiding the youth through the process.

The second stage is one of separation, in which individuals are provided with opportunities to increase their awareness of the need to develop a new identity. The formal beginning of the transition process begins during this stage. Youth are urged to evaluate their previous beliefs, roles, and responsibilities. There may be some anxiety during this stage, as youth are encountering new values and behaviors that may be foreign to them. There are activities designed to help them understand their fears and to begin the official training in the roles and responsibilities of adulthood. Genealogical and ancestral information may be discussed in terms of how it relates to the youth's current situation and their hopes and possibilities for the future. Life-management training sessions may focus on skills, knowledge, and values associated with responsible adulthood, such as careers and social success. Group-based community service projects may be carried out in order to help individuals develop an understanding of the social and political factors within their environment.

The third stage is one of transition. It is during this stage that adolescents may begin to adapt to new ways of thinking and behaving. They begin to

understand their abilities and future possibilities in the vocational, academic, and personal realms. Attitudes and feelings toward their own and other ethnic groups become more salient. During this stage, adolescents begin to develop psychological resistance strategies. These strategies are developed through an understanding of the historical struggle of African people and the culturally derived means by which African people have counteracted oppression. These strategies are useful to help African American youth deal with experiences of prejudice and discrimination.

Reincorporation is the final stage, in which the individual and the community acknowledge that the old identity and peer group have been abandoned, and a new identity has developed along with a new support group. During this stage, the community is recognized formally as important and influential to the adolescent.

In summary, rites-of-passage programs can be used to enhance identity and other positive values and beliefs among African American youth.

STRONG AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES PROGRAM

Although the literature strongly supports the positive benefits of racial identity among African American youth, fewer studies have provided step-by-step instruction for how this can be accomplished. The Strong African American Families Program has demonstrated effectiveness in the development of racial pride, self-esteem, and sexual identity (Murry et al., 2005). This intervention program, based on the competence model of family resilience, was developed following several years of work with rural African American families. The four parenting processes that the program targets include (a) parental involvement and monitoring, nurturance, and discipline; (b) clearly stated expectations for alcohol and other drug use; (c) communications about sex; and (d) racial socialization. Of interest here is the effect the program has on racial identity. Murry et al. report on a study that involved rural African American mothers and their 11-year-old children. Three hundred thirty-two families were involved in the study and were assigned to the intervention or control group. Sessions were held in community facilities. The program consisted of seven separate sessions with parents and children. These sessions were held concurrently, and then parents and children were brought together. Mothers were taught skills and practices that included nurturing parenting, monitoring, and consistent discipline. They were also taught how to make clear their expectations about nonuse of alcohol, how to communicate strategies about sex, and how to support adaptive racial socialization. Children were taught the importance of adhering to family rules, drug and alcohol refusal strategies, and how to adaptively respond to racism. Mothers and children together practiced communication skills and engaged in activities to increase family bonding. The study found that there were improvements in parenting behaviors among intervention parents from pre- to posttest. Moreover, changes from pretest to posttest among youth in self-pride and sexual self-concepts were associated with the changes in parenting behaviors.

INCREASING RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

Parents, along with other less-proximal sources, can influence children's identity development. Rowley, Cooper, and Clinton (2005) discuss ways in which parents, schools, and communities can promote positive racial identity development in African American youth through racial socialization. Parents can support racial socialization by having discussions about the achievements of African Americans and engaging in activities that support these messages. These activities may involve visiting African American cultural exhibits, having dinner in an African American restaurant, celebrating Kwanzaa, and purchasing books by and about African American authors. The authors note that when socializing their children about their African American heritage, parents should also discuss respect and tolerance for all.

Schools can also contribute to positive identity and well-being among African American children. Rowley et al. (2005) note that some of the ways in which schools can achieve this are structural, such as by emphasizing equity and access, and by offering programs that promote positive school climate and healthy relationships. Other strategies include increasing the visibility of high-achieving students of color. Schools also should recognize that a standardized test in which African American children's ability may be underrepresented may lead to omission of African American children in programs for the gifted and talented. Cooperative learning environments in which students of different ethnic groups work together may decrease stereotypes. Multicultural curriculums that are truly integrated and include people of color in everyday lessons should also be used to promote racial pride. Schools should go beyond the obligatory discussion of African Americans during Black History month. Finally, Rowley et al. note that schools that attempt to adopt a colorblind policy may inadvertently accept low expectations for African American students (A. Lewis, 2001). School and community-based programming to support ethnic identity development has also been promising (e.g., Belgrave, Cherry, Butler, & Townsend, 2008), but continued attention in this area of work is warranted because not all school-based efforts have resulted in desired outcomes (e.g., J. Hill, Mance, Anderson, & Smith, 2012; K. Lewis et al., 2012).

Critical Analysis

Self-concept and racial and ethnic identity have been studied more than any topic in African American psychology. The long tradition of studying these topics began with the early doll studies (K. Clark & M. Clark, 1939, 1947) and continues today. The search terms "Racial Identity and African American" and "Ethnic Identity and African American" in *Psych-INFO* resulted in 590 citations for racial identity and 1,199 for ethnic identity. Perhaps scholars study and report on what is most salient to them. Much of the research has been conducted by

African American psychologists who are on the faculty at predominantly White institutions. Given this widespread interest, the study of racial and ethnic identity will likely continue.

Fortunately, there has also been more attention devoted to understanding the complexities of racial and ethnic identity, including research that has focused on components of racial identity (notably the more recent work by Sellers et al. [2006]). Other studies have sought to determine the processes or mechanisms through which high or low ethnic identity leads to positive (or negative) psychological, social, academic, and health outcomes. In spite of the voluminous amount of research on racial and ethnic identity, the amount of translational and intervention work lags. There have been few evidenced-based programs that show us how to improve and increase ethnic and racial identity.

Within the past 10 years, we also have seen an emerging literature on racial socialization, which is believed to precede racial identity. This body of research on how families socialize their children about being an African American in this country is important because this research highlights the family's role in the identity and socialization process. One of the methodological limitations of studies on racial socialization is that racial socialization is often assessed from the youth's perspective and not the parents'. D. Hughes et al.'s (2006) work on racial socialization suggests that racial socialization is dependent on the context in which African American families live and work. More research on the process and outcomes of racial socialization for families who reside in different community contexts (i.e., urban vs. rural, South vs. North, poor vs. affluent, and so on) would allow us to understand more about the conditions under which racial socialization occurs. Finally, similar to research on ethnic identity, it would be nice to move research on racial socialization from theory to practice. Family and parenting programs that teach and reinforce best racial socialization practices would be a great contribution to raising healthy and competent African American children.

In contrast to research on racial and ethnic identity, research on other aspects of the self and identity is sparse. Fewer studies have looked at African American sexual identity, gender roles, and feminist and womanist identity. Even fewer studies have simultaneously considered multiple identities among LGBTQ African Americans. The study by Crawford et al. (2002) is a notable exception: this study looked at both sexual and racial identities.

In overview, an understanding and examination of self and identity is likely to dominate the field of African American psychology. It is our hope that additional study be given, joining theory and practice.

Summary

The study of self-attributes such as self-esteem, self-concept, racial identity, and ethnic identity has a long-standing history in African American psychology. Aspects of the self relate to well-being and functioning across several domains.

Conceptualization of the self depends on culture and socialization experiences. Historically, Blacks in this country were described as having a negative self-concept and were believed to engage in self-denigration as a result of inferior status in this country. However, more-contemporary models of Black self-concept are affirming and indicate that the self-concept of African Americans is not negative. Both Nobles's (1991) model of the extended self and A. Jenkins's (1995) model of the self as an agent of change convey positive conceptualizations of the self-concept of African Americans. The development of identity is a process that involves personal insight and observation of oneself in a social context. Nigrescence models are the most common models of racial identity. Nigrescence models account for what happens during each of the stages African Americans go through to reach racial awareness. New models emphasize that there are multiple dimensions important to understanding racial identity. In general, studies have found that high ethnic identity is associated with better self-concept, better mental health, higher achievement, and fewer problem behaviors.

Research has pointed to a negative impact of the media, especially television, on self and identity. However, more-recent research suggests that the media are not universally negative and the type of media should be considered.

Identity development among African American LGBTQ individuals is a complex process that is affected by the family and community systems. African Americans who have both positive racial and sexual identities tend to function better psychologically.

Acculturation, racial socialization, and gender role beliefs are other aspects related to identity. Research regarding the positive and negative impacts of acculturation on variables such as substance use and health is mixed, and the specific type of acculturation should be considered. Racial socialization is the process by which African American parents socialize their children to what it means to be African American in the United States.

Gender roles are the beliefs and expectations about how men and women should act. African American women (and to a lesser extent African American men) tend to have gender role beliefs that are androgynous and not exclusively feminine or masculine. Feminism and womanism have also been discussed as aspects of identity among African American women.

Several good measures of racial and ethnic identity and racial socialization exist. Strategies to increase racial and ethnic identity and racial socialization include rites-of-passage programs, along with empirical interventions such as the Strong African American Families Program.

In conclusion, the Ghanaian proverb, "The fowl does not act like the goat," implies important lessons about what it means to be African American in our commonality, in our uniqueness, and with our individual differences.



Quiet bias: The racism of 2013

Straight up: Let's get real—and start talking—about the anti-black prejudice that infects the U.S.

by Lawrence D. Bobo

There are few things as sickening as the ongoing, well-known practice of stop-and-frisk policing in New York. Absent a deep-rooted culture of anti-black bias, which is racism, the practice would not be tolerated, given the radically disproportionate intrusion by state police power that it involves in identifiable minority communities.

Records for 2011 show almost 700,000 such incidents, with almost nine out of 10 incidents involving African Americans or Hispanics. In a city where blacks make up just under a quarter of the population, blacks constitute more than half of those so detained by police. Citywide polls show an enormous gap between blacks and whites in approval of the stop-and-frisk practice, with a substantial number of blacks, at 80 percent (and even a plurality of New York's whites: 48 percent), saying that the police are biased in favor of whites.

It is unclear whether the tactic has any meaningful impact on crime, but it is screamingly plain that it adds to racial tension and misunderstanding while deepening minority cynicism about the police. And so we get today's quiet bias of a major-city mayor and police commissioner defending a dubious practice of aggressive state intrusion into the lives of black and Hispanic youths on an astonishing scale.

This quiet bias is a routine feature of our national politics as well. We are all aware of how constrained President Obama is in terms of what he can say or do regarding race. I believe that the culture of racism still alive in the U.S. remains potent enough that Obama must, in fact, routinely accomplish a complex, three-part balancing act.

He must consistently rise above prevalent stereotypes of blacks as less capable and

intelligent, thus always standing as the exception to the assumed rule. He must never be seen as openly advocating policies that run against the third rail of resentment against blacks as a sort of untouchable special-interest category in the body politic, who lack legitimate claims on the nation's resources. And he must do all this while somehow keeping African Americans and other people of color highly politically mobilized segments of his constituency.

But make no mistake, racism remains a living and highly adaptive thing in our times. Yes, Jim Crow racism has effectively been defeated. An insidious quiet bias remains today, however. And in this guise, racism is still distorting American life. The late Stanford University historian George Fredrickson wrote in *Racism: A Short History*, "The legacy of past racism directed at blacks in the United States is more like a bacillus that we have failed to destroy, a live germ that not only continues to make some of us ill but retains the capacity to generate new strains of a disease for which we have no certain cure."

We will make little or no progress against this underlying illness by becoming complicit in ignoring the deep-rooted character of anti-black bias in our culture and in so many everyday practices and habits. Racism is a powerful word. Using it can quickly shut down a conversation. But such sensitivity cannot excuse silence in the face of a real problem and ongoing injustice.

For me, a key element of the continued quest for racial justice in America is the outing of today's "quiet bias." Like a patient told to take the full regimen of antibiotics or run the risk of the ailment coming back even more strongly in the future, we must remain ready to challenge racism no matter how discreetly or politely it presents.

SOURCE: Lawrence D. Bobo, March 13, 2013, the Root, <http://www.theroot.com/views/quiet-bias-racism-2013?page=0,1>