EXHIBIT

22

6

Racial Identity Development in African American Children

Cognitive and Experiential Antecedents

CAROLYN BENNETT MURRAY
JELANI MANDARA

Most research on African Americans focuses on self-concept and/or racial identity but too often ignores developmental readiness, parental racial socialization, and societal and historical traditions that stress racial membership as a determinant of group and individual treatment. Recent studies indicate that intraindividual variability correlates with abrupt changes in cognitive development (McAdoo, 1985). The findings reveal that both Black and White children between the ages of 3 and 6 display White-biased choice behavior, whereas older Black children (age 9) display Black preference, and their White counterparts remain Eurocentric. Only minimally has the role of the family and the societal context been integrated with this recent emphasis on the cognitive readiness of the child. It is paramount to examine racial identity development within a larger societal framework if we are to understand how children come to view themselves and their world. This chapter considers the cognitive maturation of the child within

the context of family racial socialization and of societal and historical traditions (e.g., media, education system, and language) that stress racial membership as a determinant of group and individual treatment.

Defining Race

To understand racial identity, one must first understand the concepts of race, ethnicity, and identity. In current usage, *racial group* designations refer mainly to a person's phenotype (such as skin color, hair texture, and facial shape), whereas *ethnic group* designations refer mainly to a person's sociocultural heritage (country of origin, religion, language, and manners). Although race has a genetic base, it is in part socially and politically defined due to the phenotype overlap between groups (Jones, 1998). People commonly think of races and sometimes ethnic groups as sharply distinguishable biological entities, but their boundaries are set by social agreement. Whatever sharpness racial boundaries may have springs in part from the fact that people react to the members of these socially recognized groups in quite different and important ways. Therefore, a person's legally recognized race may depend as much on the social context and political ramifications as on phenotype. Also, the race with which people identify may be more an issue of social context and wishes and desires than their phenotype.

Identity or self-concept is essentially an organized system of schemas or particular beliefs about the self (e.g., I am shy, I am tall, I am Black, I am good at sports) that characterize the individual's behavior in salient social settings (Markus & Kunda, 1986). *Racial identity* is a schema or mental representation of the racial aspect of the self, including perceived attributes and the feelings associated with them (e.g., I am Black, Black people do X, I like X). The issue here is how African American children decode and understand the complex and often abstract concept of race when they begin to form a racial identity.

How humans develop a social identity in general is a critical issue. Children do not enter the world with a conception of self. Rather, this cognitive notion develops as they mature (Bandura, 1986). Infants need to become aware that they are unique, independent, and separate from other individuals and can have an influence on their surroundings (Bandura, 1986; Bertenthal & Fisher, 1978). By age 2, children can recognize themselves in a mirror (Amsterdam, 1972; Harter, 1988; Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979).

Exhibit 22 - 2

By age 2½, children see themselves as separate and autonomous from others (Neisser, 1988).

Although many factors affect identity development, it occurs in two general ways. First, people begin to view themselves as seen by significant others (Cook & Douglas, 1998), who usually are family members, peers, and macrosystem forces (such as teachers and media images). Second, people gain increased self-knowledge or insight into their true beliefs and attributes. In racial identity development, individuals move toward higher states of understanding race, membership in a racial group, and the consequences of that membership. This chapter examines certain factors (cognitive readiness, family racial socialization, and societal and historical traditions) that affect the development of racial identity in African American children.

Cognitive Readiness

The content of the self-concept and the way children process and convey information about themselves is linked with cognitive maturation (Branch & Newcombe, 1986; Semaj, 1985; Spencer, 1985). According to Piaget (1952), cognitive development proceeds through a sequence of invariant stages for all human beings. The stages are innately determined by the biological sequence of growth. Each stage is qualitatively different from the others as the child's cognitive abilities become more sophisticated. Social knowledge is constructed by children from their interactions with other people. More specifically, social awareness development is shaped by children's adaptation to their environment. For Piaget, this adaptation involves two interlocking processes: assimilation and accommodation. *Assimilation* in a cognitive sense refers to the incorporation of environmental experiences (such as skin color) into a meaningful form to fit existing mental structures. Assimilation allows people to respond to new environmental experiences and situations with their present mental abilities. *Accommodation* is a reciprocal process in which changes occur in a person's mental structure to fit new experiences or stimuli.

In Piaget's theory, the cognitive level during the first 2 years of life is *sensorimotor;* children understand and deal with the world mainly through the sensory messages received and the motor behavior used to react to them. The *preoperational stage* starts about age 2 and ends about age 7. Thought processes begin to involve symbols (such as skin color) that repre-

Exhibit 22 - 3

sent objects in the environment. The *concrete operational stage* occurs between ages 7 and 11. Children are concerned only with objects that are concrete—present, tangible, or real (such as racial awareness)—and are not yet able to visualize ideal, hypothetical, or theoretical concepts or objects. The term *operation* refers to some action that is reversible and that can be internalized by the individual (e.g., racial constancy). Another characteristic of this stage is the ability to classify, owing to an understanding of part-whole relationships, which enables children to classify objects, people (e.g., racial groups), and so on. The *formal operational stage* is the last stage, occurring about age 11, and it involves abstract logical thinking (e.g., social and political ramifications of race). The literature indicates that not until adolescence does the individual become aware of the full complexity of human thoughts, feelings, and intentions or realize that behavior may vary with situations, internal states, or transitory factors (Marcia, 1983).

If cognitive readiness were the only antecedent for racial awareness and identity at the preschool age, all children would have an egocentric racial identity, that is, they would view race from their own perspective. Given the variation within non-White racial groups (Holmes, 1995) and the Eurocentric tendency of many non-Whites, it is clear that children's experiences within the family and wider society have a significant influence. Direct learning from parents often accounts for racial preference, but the process is more complex. Children's assumptions are influenced by several mechanisms other than direct learning (Katz, 1975), including various reinforcements relevant to racial attitude formation. Within Western culture, the color white and White people are highly valued. Black children are placed in a conflictive situation because their human need to value their color and their group is negated by societal reinforcements and communications that inform them of white's value and black's negative character (Hodge, Struckmann, & Trost, 1975). Similarly with respect to gender, males are more valued than females, which results in most boys being egocentric about being boys, and a sizable number of girls being tomboys— they want to be like boys, prefer male playmates, and participate in such masculine activities as climbing trees and playing baseball (Hyde, 1983).

In sum, although cognitive readiness determines when children are capable of developing racial and/or ethnic identity, the social context determines the identity they acquire. Thus, a comprehensive model of identity development must take into consideration both the age of the child and the societal context.

Exhibit 22 - 4

Racial Awareness
and Identity Development

Racial awareness refers to a knowledge of the differences in racial categories. Children possess racial awareness when they can recognize, identify, and make distinctions among racial categories. In the preschool years, children describe themselves in terms of membership in certain groups as defined by physical characteristics: "I have brown skin" (Burns, 1979; Harter, 1983); possessions: "I have a fire truck" (Damon & Hart, 1982); and gender: "I am a boy" (Damon & Hart, 1988). Emphasis is placed on material (concrete) and salient qualities rather than symbolic or affective qualities. Children become aware of their skin color before they come to learn that skin color ultimately determines racial or ethnic membership (Semaj, 1985; Spencer, 1988). For instance, a young child's statement that she has "brown skin" is not linked with the fact that she will be socially labeled in our society as African American (Spencer, 1988).

The ability to apply a racial label correctly or to identify which person goes with what racial label is usually measured by showing children pictures of people or dolls of different hues and hair textures. Preschoolers are keenly aware of phenotypic qualities such as skin color, which serve as standards of comparison to differentiate themselves from others (Butler, 1989; Ramsey, 1987; Spencer, 1988). One mother recounted that her daughter, at age 3, despite the mother's objections, thought her mother was White even though her skin is light brown. The child did not have a category for light brown, the mother's skin color was closer to White than Black, so in her mind her mother was "White." Most cognitive theorists believe that children aged 3 to 7 rely on concrete information rather than abstract knowledge and possess no complex ideas about racial identity (see Wardle, 1992). It is proposed that by the middle school years children begin describing themselves in reference to others (Butler, 1989; Ruble, 1987), following the acquisition of racial constancy—the knowledge that race is a permanent part of the self or identity.

Other researchers expand developmental theory to include the role of the sociocultural context. This approach does not reject mainstream theories but argues for greater attention to collective, interpretive reproduction (Coarser, 1992). For instance, Vygotsky (1962) places children in a social world in which interactions are the source of mental functioning (Peterson & McCabe, 1994) and of meanings for social concepts.

Exhibit 22 - 5

Knowledge about self and others grows simultaneously (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979, Spencer, 1985). Neither can exist alone, because the two develop in response to social situations. Thus, the degree of contact or interaction that the child has with different racial groups is important to the development of racial identity (Amir, 1969).

The importance of both cognitive readiness and the societal context is revealed by research that finds White-based choice behavior in both Blacks and Whites between ages 3 and 6 but an abrupt change in racial attitudes and preferences after the preoperational stage only for Black children (Spencer, 1982). There appears to be a definite link between cognitive readiness and sociocultural messages and practices so that changes in group identity can be expected, given variations in the child's developing cognitive construction of the world. Although some of these sociocultural messages are consistent in the wider society, the immediate family and surrounding community often mediate their effect. Therefore, children show a variation in terms of the age at which racial awareness and identity occur, the evaluation of racial categories, and the degree to which they identify with their own racial group. We will focus on the most salient sociocultural racial socializers.

The Role of Symbols

Children in general are influenced by the language and symbols of a society. In our society, black is bad, and white is good. If a Black child gleans from fairy tales that only bad people and witches wear black and that heroes and princesses are always dressed in white, the child may reject other things that are black and dark (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). A girl of 7, who was so dark she was Black, was asked by Clark and Clark (1947) to take the coloring test generally given along with the doll test; she picked a flesh color, pink, to color herself. In an ethnographic study by Holmes (1995), Black children often used peach or pink to color themselves, although they stated that they knew they were not that color. One little girl with very dark skin said, "I am Black on the outside, but my heart is peach." It is clear that both the child's skin color and the skin color of people in the child's immediate sociocultural environment, including related language and symbols, must be considered in understanding a child's racial awareness and preference.

Misunderstanding of the use of color may threaten the developing self-conception of which racial identity and awareness are important

Exhibit 22 - 6

aspects (Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987; Semaj, 1985; Spencer, 1985). Specifically, when presented colors to select, children often do not like the color black, especially in terms of representing their skin color. Several parents in our longitudinal study reported that during the preschool and early elementary years, their children refused to be called Black: "I am brown, mommie." At this age, skin color is absolute, not symbolic of ethnicity or race. Skin color is not simply an overt and recognizable characteristic. It helps the child develop a sense of self and group identity (e.g., Cross, 1985; Semaj, 1985; Spencer, 1982, 1984, 1985).

Initial studies of racial awareness and identity asked Black and White children to choose between a very dark and very light doll. Black children identified the White doll as having positive traits, and they preferred to play with it significantly more often than White children selected the Black doll. Furthermore, a sizable number of the Black preschoolers selected the White doll as looking like them. Most of the children who chose the White doll had brown to light brown skin. Studies during the 1970s found that the addition of a tan doll eliminated the selection of the White doll by light-skinned Black children (Brand, Ruiz, & Padilla, 1974). When given a doll in a color category closer to their concrete perception of their skin color, they selected that doll and not the White one.

The Role of Skin Color

In American culture, racial and ethnic categories are immutable, and membership is determined by skin color or ethnic heritage. Young children acquire this knowledge at an early age. For African American children, the attribute of skin color may be a more important expression of their self-conceptions than are details about their personal experiences (Harter, 1983; Spencer, 1988). Social comparison emerges in the early school years, at which time children begin to describe themselves in reference to others (Butler, 1989; Ruble, 1987). They focus on salient characteristics, such as skin color, in making this comparison (Asher & Allen, 1969; Burns, 1979; Harter, 1983; Ramsey, 1987; Spencer, 1985) and in systematically classifying people into groups (Aboud, 1988; Tajfel, 1981; Wilder, 1986; Williams & Morland, 1976). Because a child's world is absolute, membership in a category is unconditional, and members are believed to be homogeneous; a person either belongs or does not belong to a particular category.

Exhibit 22 - 7

With regard to Black children's racial awareness, an often overlooked aspect is that skin color varies considerably within the African American population, from white to coal black and everything in between (Bianchi, 1998; Coard, 1997; Draper, 1999). We contend that children's skin color, as it contrasts to other members of their family, is an extremely important factor in determining their racial awareness (Jackson, McCullough, & Gurin, 1997). The degree of variation in a child's immediate family should affect the development of racial awareness. The greater the variation, the less likely is the child to see group differences, as opposed to individual differences, and the later racial awareness or identity will develop. This is exemplified by the personal experience of one of the authors (Carolyn B. Murray):

> In my preschool, skin color was like height or weight. People came in different colors just as they came in different sizes and weights and had different faces and gaits. My father was "dark as a hundred midnights," and my mother and her sister, although "Black," looked "White." People were a rainbow of different hues, all beautiful. I was especially fascinated by dark skin, perhaps because mine was light brown or perhaps because my dad, whom I loved beyond a fault, had dark skin.

If the child's family is homogeneous (e.g., dark) in skin color, but the surrounding community exhibits variation or a salient difference (e.g., White), the child is more likely to notice the contrast. For instance, Japanese preschoolers who live in Japan do not develop racial awareness, but those who live in the United States do (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). Phinney (1991) found that White adolescents do not normally think in terms of racial identity, but when they are in the minority, their racial identity is very salient for them. In sum, through maturation, children develop self-awareness and group awareness, but their personal characteristics and the surrounding environment give meaning to what is perceived.

The Role of the Media

The media are sociocultural agents and a source of stereotypical information about African Americans (Hamilton, Stroessner, Driscoll, & Denise, 1994). The media teach and reinforce negative attitudes about Blacks (Dixon, 2000). African Americans are disproportionately portrayed as

Exhibit 22 - 8

criminal, aggressive, less competent than Whites, "flashy," irresponsible, comic, and so on (Dixon, 2000; Oliver, 1994). Hamilton and Trolier (1986) argue that beliefs about Blacks develop from media exposure. This is especially relevant to discussions about racial identity because African American children are reported to view twice as much television as White children (Tangney & Feshbach, 1988), independent of parental level of education, child's sex or age, and family composition.

One reason for the disproportionate use of television by Black children is that Black families are comparatively poorer than Whites; less mobile and less able to afford alternative forms of entertainment and baby-sitters, they rely more heavily on television (Anderson & Williams, 1983). More important, a number of studies indicate that the usage of television by Blacks differs from that of Whites. For example, Blacks much more than Whites view television as a source of information and news (Anderson & Williams, 1983; Tan & Tan, 1979). African American adolescents report using television to learn dating behavior (Gerson, 1968) and occupations (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). When television is used as a baby-sitter and as a source of information and cheap entertainment, it has powerful potential as a socializer and an influencer on the self-esteem of Black children (Stroman, 1991).

Research also indicates that television viewing is negatively correlated with numerous indices of adjustment for Blacks and Whites (Tangney & Feshbach, 1988). Various writers (Graves, 1982; Janis, 1980; Rosser, 1978) have speculated about the effect of television on the self-concept of African American children, and the prevailing conclusion is that the influence is negative. Several studies point out that the absence of Blacks from prime-time programming is harmful to Black children's self-concept because it minimizes the importance of their existence (Anderson, 1982, cited in Anderson and Williams, 1983; Powell, 1982). Another effect may be children's overidentification with non-Black heroes. Others suggest that the television roles in which Blacks are cast communicate to Black children the negative value society places on them (Barnes, 1980). For some children, a growing awareness of the intensity and universality of such denigration can frustrate the formation of a positive racial identity (Comer, 1989).

The Role of the Public School Curriculum

After the family, the major socializing agent of Black children's identity is the schools.

Exhibit 22 - 9

> If an African American child attends two years of preschool, nine years of
> elementary, four years each at high-school and college, it will total nine-
> teen years. If we multiply this with the average six-hour day, thirty-hour
> week, or twelve-hundred-hour year, we derive a sum of 22,800 hours.
> (Kunjufu, 1984, p. 31)

Furthermore, the time spent in school is when children are most alert and
focused. The messages communicated there and the type of education of-
fered are designed to perpetuate the sociopolitical-economic context. In
American society, the curriculum, practices, and policies of the educational
system support racism, oppression, and domination of minority groups in
general and of Blacks in particular (Hilliard, 1997). Children are rewarded
tangibly (such as grades) and intangibly (such as being liked by the teacher)
for internalizing the lessons communicated. Moreover, those in charge of
indoctrinating children (teachers) are legitimized by parents (Do what your
teacher tells you; Education is the only way you're going to be successful;
The teacher is the authority) and the society-at-large.

School performance is a by-product of self-esteem and stems from ex-
pectations. Most Black children, from the time they enter school until they
leave, receive overt and covert messages that they and all African Ameri-
cans are intellectually deficient (Murray & Fairchild, 1989). Teachers eval-
uate the probability of future academic success by the degree to which chil-
dren are similar in essential characteristics to their parent population. For
African Americans, this biased cognitive process is extremely detrimental
because of the plethora of stereotypes—both lay and "pseudo-scientific"
(for instance, Herrnstein & Murray, 1994)—regarding skin color. A large
segment of society uses these stereotypes to explain and predict African
American behavior (Murray & Jackson, 1999). Consequently, teachers
hold significantly lower expectations for Blacks than for Whites (Murray
& Jackson, 1999). The teacher's biased beliefs negatively influence the
child's self-concept and group identity. Teachers' fulfill their own expecta-
tions by labeling children with words such as *slow, deficit,* and so on and by
assigning them to the low ability track, where an inadequate curriculum
limits their scholastic achievement. Ultimately, too many children internal-
ize these racist beliefs about themselves and their group (Murray &
Fairchild, 1989; Murray & Jackson, 1999), as illustrated by the experience
of one of the authors (Carolyn B. Murray) and her husband:

Exhibit 22 - 10

> All our daughter's life, my husband and I communicated to her that she was smart and beautiful. At the beginning of each year, from first grade though eighth grade, I visited her school and asked to have her moved from the lower ability to the upper ability track. Each teacher arbitrarily made the decision to put her in the lower ability track despite the fact that the previous year she had been assigned to the upper track, her grades were As and Bs, and her achievement test scores were above average. When she was 14, she shared with me that all those years, she believed all the other Black children who remained in the lower academic track were dumb, that she also was dumb, and that the only reason she was in the upper track was because of me. She said, "Mother, now I see it's by design, and not due to the unfortunate circumstance of being born Black."

Before they acquire abstract thinking, children evaluate their environment based on concrete reality. Thus, if Black children are in low ability tracks, it must be because they are dumb. If more Blacks go to jail, it must be because they are more criminal; and so on. Teachers do not overtly say that Blacks are dumb; children know who is in the slow track. Moreover, the curriculum communicates that Whites are honest (George Washington could not tell a lie), emancipators (Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves), and people who civilized and Christianized the world (European conquests). God gave them the right to other people's land and labor (manifest destiny). White people must be smarter, their privilege must be legitimate, and therefore, teachers must be right in their placement decisions. Adolescents have the cognitive maturity to understand the political and other motivations for differential status between Blacks and Whites as well as the mythology surrounding White domination, but if parents or significant others do not communicate positive countermessages, children will continue to assume Blacks are dumb, or criminal, or somehow less than Whites.

Racial Socialization

Racial socialization is the process by which the family shapes attitudes and beliefs about race and explains how the child fits within this context. It is the "processes by which children acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group, and come to see themselves and other members of such groups" (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987, p. 11). Although

Exhibit 22 - 11

the family is the origin of the child's awareness (McAdoo, 1997; see Stevenson, 1999), it is often ignored in studies of racial identity (Murray, Strokes, & Peacock, 1999). Recent literature suggests, however, that racial socialization within the family takes many forms. When children overhear parents talking about race, observe their reactions to people of other races, or receive direct instructions from them regarding other races, their racial awareness and identity are being developed. As children mature and are influenced by external agents, such as peers and school curriculum (Murray et al., 1999), they begin to learn and internalize notions of group stereotypes and prejudices (Devine, 1989; Miller, 1982; Quattrone, 1986), but the family maintains an interpretive role (Jackson et al., 1997).

The African American family is directly and indirectly affected by negative conceptions and treatment of Blacks (Thornton, 1997). Messages are received through the media; the political, economic, educational systems; even the church (e.g., White Jesus) and other value-laden institutions and subsystems within American society (Allen & Hatchett, 1986). The family serves at least two important functions in the African American child's early development. First, it fosters the development of a personal frame of reference for self-identity, self-worth, achievement, group identity, and other behaviors in society. Second, it provides comfort and affection, which lessen the negative and often deleterious consequences of racism (Murray & Mandara, in press; Murray et al., 1999).

A review of the literature indicates that about two thirds of African American parents consciously race-socialize their children, and the remainder do not (Marshall, 1995; see Murray et al., 1999 for a review; Parham & Williams, 1993; Spencer, 1983; Whitty, 1994). A void still remains in terms of empirical research on the relationship between race socialization and racial identity development, but the theoretical link is the subject of ongoing debate. There is confusion due to differences between the two predominant theories. The most noted is the Nigrescene model, which posits that racial identity is individualistic or intrapersonal, based primarily on the individual's perception of, attitude toward, or response to racial treatment (Cross, 1991). It assumes that racial identity is formed in reaction to racism. In contrast, Nobles (1973) and Semaj (1985) propose an African-centered view, that the maturing identity includes a sense of self in terms of *we* or the extended self, which "is dependent on the corporate definition of one's people" (p. 300). This interpersonal view of self-identity necessitates an inves-

Exhibit 22 - 12

tigation of key socializing institutions or situations likely to shape, damage, and/or protect people's identity. This theory proposes a more interactive understanding of racial identity development (Burke, 1980). Specifically, identity development can be buttressed, supported, and/or alienated by messages and interactions that children experience in the first socializing agency, the family, and that are either confirmed or disconfirmed by other surrounding socializing agencies (such as peers, clergy, the media, and teachers).

Because of historical within-group variance among African Americans in United States, there are individual differences in the experiences with and perceptions of opportunity. Moreover, the variability in parents' life experiences influences perceptions of their racial group and of the broader society (Thornton, 1997). Thus, measures of group identity should reflect significant differences in family "backgrounds, economic and social situations, and degree of acculturation to mainstream norms" (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990, p. 293). The available evidence indicates that marital status, age, gender, socioeconomic status (Spencer, 1983), and geographic factors (Jackson et al., 1997; Tatum, 1987; Thornton, 1997) relate to variations in racial socialization (Spencer, 1983; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990).

Concern about variations in socialization strategies was voiced by Greene (1992), who argues,

> African American parents must find ways of warning their children about racial dangers and disappointments without overwhelming them or being overly protective. Either extreme will facilitate the development of defensive styles that leave the child inadequately prepared to negotiate the world with a realistic perspective. (p. 64)

To a great extent, racial socialization by African American parents ultimately prepares children to function either effectively or ineffectively in the world in which they live.

Ideally, parental socialization values should reflect and complement those of other major socializing agents (e.g., teachers, clergy, and police) and vice versa (Thornton et al., 1990). For African American families, however, "socialization occurs within a broader societal environment that is frequently incompatible with attaining positive mental health"

Exhibit 22 - 13

(Thornton et al., 1990, p. 401). The process of racial socialization is one means by which African American parents address this problem.

Types and Effects of Race Socialization Messages

Black parents communicate a range of race socialization messages to their children: (a) mainstream prescriptions (e.g., individualism) or ethnic group values (e.g., "we-ness"), (b) participation in mainstream institutions or in ethnic group activities, and/or (c) a group blame perspective or a system blame perspective (see Murray et al., 1999, for a review). These and others can be readily identified. There is no monolithic African American experience (Boykin & Toms, 1985). Empirical evidence also suggests that certain identified behaviors (e.g., treat everyone with respect, no matter what their race) tend to be overtly and consistently displayed and taught to Black children (Boykin & Toms, 1985). Furthermore, it has been documented that parents communicate specific racial socialization messages designed to instill an understanding of children's racial group (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Smith, Fogle, & Jacobs, in press).

The literature indicates that African American parents may behave proactively (teach their children strategies to deal with race issues), actively (openly discuss race and discrimination), reactively (take a defensive stance on racial issues), or passively (never talk about racial issues) (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Murray & Mandara, in press; Parham & Williams, 1993; Spencer, 1983; Stevenson, 1994, 1995). The latter strategy provides little or no active socialization regarding racial issues (see Stevenson, 1998, for a discussion; Spencer, 1983). A logical assumption is that a more positive self-concept and higher self-esteem will be acquired through a recognition of unity and responsibility toward African American communities. Yet, consistently across studies, at least a third of Black parents believe race is not important and that opportunities in America are open to all. Clearly, without knowledge of the race messages children receive within the primary rearing unit (the family), one cannot understand racial identity development.

For years, many researchers maintained that African Americans suffered from poorer self-concepts and consequently lower self-esteem compared to majority group members (Coopersmith, 1967; Gordon, 1980; Porter & Washington, 1979). Aside from easily biased clinical studies (Kardiner & Oversey, 1951), however, no significant self-concept studies

Exhibit 22 - 14

were conducted between 1939 and 1960 (Cross, 1991). During this period, findings were based almost entirely on racial group orientation (Banks, 1976). A number of recent works provide evidence to the contrary, indicating that both the personal and the racial self-images of African Americans are often positive, especially their self-concepts (Holmes, 1995; Porter & Washington, 1989; Spencer, 1999). The conclusions from earlier research about the negative nature of personal identity were based on myth, not empirical documentation (Cross, 1991). The apparent inconsistency between the earlier and current findings can be more clearly understood if one considers how race socialization affects the group identity and self-esteem of African Americans.

Recent studies indicate that youth who are socialized to be cognizant of racial barriers and cautioned about interracial protocol (Murray & Mandara, in press; Thornton et al., 1990) show more positive behavioral and psychological outcomes than youth who are taught nothing about race or who receive negative in-group messages (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Rotheram-Borus, 1990). It also has been reported that African American children who are racially socialized appear to be farther along in identity development than those who are not (Marshall, 1995). In particular, youth who receive proactive in-group messages (i.e., ethnic pride and strategies to deal with the broader society), in contrast to those who do not, attain higher grades (Sanders, 1998; Whitty, 1994) and have more personal efficacy (Bowman & Howard, 1985), fewer behavior problems (Rotheram-Borus, 1990), and higher in-group racial preference (Spencer, 1983).

A few researchers reported that a strong inculcation of Black pride and a sense of common fate with other Blacks negatively relate to self-esteem (Rasheed, 1981) and grades (Marshall, 1995). These inconsistent findings are difficult to interpret, given that the studies did not investigate thoroughly the content of the messages communicated or whether youth who received certain socialization internalized those messages, resulting in predictable behavioral outcomes (e.g., grades) and/or psychological outcomes (e.g., self-esteem). This situation is especially disconcerting given that for African American youth, the societal (e.g., media, education institution, and so on) racial socialization messages are often counter to those of the parent (Thornton et al., 1990).

A study by Murray and Mandara (in press) suggests that both ethnic pride and strategies to deal with the broader society's messages (i.e., a proactive strategy) are necessary. The longitudinal/cross-sectional study investigated socialization and personality development among 116 Afri-

Exhibit 22 - 15

can American youth (54.3% of them female) ranging in age from 14 to 16 years. The socialization strategies investigated were racial empowerment, racial awareness, race defensiveness, and race naivete. *Racial empowerment* reflects a proactive approach that stresses racial identity and the ability to overcome obstacles in life despite racial barriers (e.g., the power to change things at school). *Racial awareness* reflects an active strategy in teaching children to be proud of their racial group. *Race-defensiveness* teaches a dislike for other racial groups but the usefulness of imitating European American behavior (e.g., think it is best to act like Whites). Race naivete is a strategy that minimizes modern race issues (e.g., racism is a thing of the past).

The findings revealed that African Americans exposed to race empowerment strategies were significantly higher in racial identity and self-concept, whereas the reverse was found for those exposed to a race-defensive strategy. A logical conclusion is that positive self-esteem is acquired through a recognition of Black achievements, strategies to deal effectively with racism, and responsibility toward African American communities. The racial awareness and race naivete approaches were not found to be significant predictors of self-esteem, and they only moderately predicted racial identity. These findings emphasize that message content is as important as whether a parent race-socializes or not. The study also helps explain why some research does not find a positive relationship between race socialization and child outcomes.

There are many views in the African American community about how children should be educated about race and racism, if at all. Moreover, some parents are ill-equipped to instill a positive racial identity in their children. They do not give their children the needed protection from the deleterious influences that hamper the development of constructive group identity and positive mental health (Semaj, 1985). In sum, the absence or ineffectiveness of racial socialization agendas in a substantial number of African American families underscores the need to understand the effects of various strategies, including a lack of strategy, as well as the need to educate parents about the most effective approach.

Conclusion

An examination of racial identity development out of context (i.e., American society) is like studying plant growth without considering carbon

Exhibit 22 - 16

dioxide. Clearly, children's racial identity is intimately tied to their social knowledge, which is influenced by their minority group status. Some researchers conclude that although awareness of race as a sociobiological phenomenon is related to developing cognitive structures, knowledge of racial stereotypes is not related to social cognition. Instead, children's Eurocentric values concerning race appear to reflect unchallenged exposure to racial epithets or stereotypes (Spencer, 1999). Therefore, the socialization of African Americans in a Europeanized context and its implications for identity development are important issues. Thus, a proactive racial socialization agenda buffers and prepares African American children to face the challenges of racial discrimination. Whitty (1994) notes, however, that such a strategy is "the exception rather than the rule" (p. 13).

References

Aboud, F. (1988). *Children and prejudice.* Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Allen, R., & Hatchett, S. (1986). The media and social reality effects: Self and system orientations of Blacks. *Communications Research, 13*(1), 97-113.

Amir, Y. (1969). Contact hypothesis in ethnic relations. *Psychological Bulletin, 11,* 319-342.

Amsterdam, B. (1972). Mirror self-image reactions before age two. *Developmental Psychology, 5,* 297-305.

Anderson, W. H., & Williams, B. M. (1983). TV and the Black child: What Black children say about the shows they watch. *Journal of Black Psychology, 9*(2), 27-42.

Asher, S. C., & Allen, V. L. (1969). Racial preference and social comparison processes. *Journal of Social Issues, 25,* 157-165.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundation of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Banks, W. C. (1976). White preference in Blacks: A paradigm in search of a phenomenon. *Psychological Bulletin, 83*(6), 1179-1186.

Barnes, E. J. (1980). The Black community as the source of positive self-concept for Black children: A theoretical perspective. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (pp. 106-130). New York: Harper & Row.

Bertenthal, B., & Fisher, K. (1978). Development of self recognition in the infant. *Developmental Psychology, 14,* 44-50.

Bianchi, F. T. (1998). The relationships among racial identity attitudes, collective self-esteem, awareness of racism, individual self-esteem, and optimism among

Exhibit 22 - 17

Afro-Brazilian males. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Science and Engineering, 58*(8-B), 4437.

Bowman, P., & Howard, C. (1985). Race-related socialization, motivation, and academic achievement: A study of Black youth in three-generational families. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychology, 24,* 134-141.

Boykin, A. W., & Toms, F. D. (1985). Black child socialization: A conceptual framework. In H. P. McAdoo & J. L. McAdoo (Eds.), *Black children: Social, educational, and parental environments* (pp. 33-51). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Branch, C. W., & Newcombe, N. (1986). Racial attitude development among young Black children as a function of parental attitudes: A longitudinal and cross-sectional study. *Child Development, 57*(3), 712-721.

Brand, E., Ruiz, R., & Padilla, A. (1974). Ethnic identification and preferences: A review. *Psychological Bulletin, 81,* 860-890.

Burke, P. J. (1980). The self: Measurement requirements from an interactionist perspective. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 43,* 18-29.

Burns, R. (1979). *The self-concept: Theory, measurement, development, and behavior.* New York: Longman.

Butler, R. (1989). Mastery versus ability appraisal: A developmental study of children's observations of peer's work. *Child Development, 60,* 1350-1361.

Clark, K. B., & Clark, M. B. (1947). Racial identification of Negro preschool children. In K. Russell, M. Wilson, & R. Hall (Eds.), *The color complex: The politics of skin color among African Americans.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Coard, S. I. (1997). Perceptions of and preferences for skin color, Black racial identity, and self-esteem among African Americans. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Science and Engineering, 58*(3-B), p. 1523.

Coarser, W. A. (1992). Interpretive reproduction in children's peer cultures. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 55*(2), 160-177.

Comer, J. P. (1989). Racism and the education of the young children. *Teachers College Record, 90*(3), 352-361.

Cook, W., & Douglas, E. (1998). A looking-glass self in family context: A social analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology, 12*(3), 299-309.

Coopersmith, S. (1967). *The antecedents of self-esteem.* San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Cross, W. (1985). Black identity: Rediscovering the distinction between personal identity and reference group orientation. In M. Spencer, G. Brookins, & W. Allen (Eds.), *Beginnings: The social and affective development of Black children* (pp. 155-171). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cross, W. E. (1991). *Shades of Blacks: Diversity on African American identity.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Exhibit 22 - 18

Damon, W., & Hart, D. (1982). The development of self-understanding from infancy through adolescence. *Child Development, 52,* 841-864.

Damon W., & Hart, D. (1988). *Self-understanding on childhood and adolescence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Devine, P. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56,* 5-18.

Dixon, T. L. (2000). A social cognitive approach to studying racial stereotyping in the mass media. *African American Research Perspectives, 6*(1), 60-68.

Draper, C. V. (1999). Intrafamilial skin color socialization, racial identity attitude, and psychological well-being in African American women. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Science and Engineering, 60*(1-B), p. 0363.

Gerson, W. M. (1968). Mass media socialization behavior: Negro-White differences. *Social Forces, 45,* 40-50.

Gordon, V. V. (1980). *The self-concept of Black Americans.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Graves, S. B. (1982). The impact of television on the cognitive and affective development of minority children. In G. L. Berry & C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.), *Television and the socialization of the minority child* (pp. 37-67). New York: Academic Press.

Greenberg, B. S., & Atkin, C. K. (1982). Learning about minorities from television: A research agenda. In G. L. Berry & C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.), *Television and the socialization of the minority child* (pp. 215-243). New York: Academic Press.

Greene, B. A. (1992). Racial socialization as a tool in psychotherapy with African American children. In L. A. Vargas & J. D. Koss-Chioino (Eds.), *Working with culture: Psychotherapeutic intervention with ethnic minority children and adolescents* (pp. 63-81). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hamilton, D. L., Stroessner, S. J., Driscoll, D. M., & Denise, M. (1994). Social cognition and the study of stereotyping. In P. G. Devine & D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), *Social cognition: Impact on social psychology* (pp. 291-321). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Hamilton, D. L., & Trolier, T. K. (1986). Stereotypes and stereotyping: An overview of the cognitive approach. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism.* Orlando FL: Academic Press.

Harter, S. (1983). Development perspectives on the self-system. In P. Mussen & E. Hetherington (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development* (pp. 275-385). New York: John Wiley.

Harter, S. (1988). Development processes in the construction of the self. In T. D. Yawkey & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), *Integrative processes and socialization: Early to middle childhood* (pp. 45-78). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Exhibit 22 - 19

Herrnstein, R. J., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve: Intelligence and class structure in America.* New York: Free Press.

Hilliard, A. G. (1997). *SBA: The reawakening of the African mind.* Gainesville, FL: Makare.

Hodge, J. L., Struckmann, D. K., & Trost, L. D. (1975). *Cultural bases of racism and group oppression.* Berkeley, CA: Two Rider Press.

Holmes, R. M. (1995). *How young children perceive race* (Race and Ethnic Relations, Vol. 12). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hyde, J. S. (1983). *Half the human experience: The psychology of women* (4th ed.). Lexington, MA: D. C. Health.

Jackson, J. S., McCullough, W. R., & Gurin, G. (1997). Family, socialization environment, and identity development in Black Americans. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Janis, I. (1980). The influence of television on personal decision-making. In S. B. Withey & R. P. Abeles (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Beyond violence and children* (pp. 161-189). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Jones, J. (1998). Psychological knowledge and the new American dilemma of race. *Journal of Social Issues, 54*(4), 641-662.

Kardiner, A., & Oversey, L. (1951). *The mark of oppression.* New York: Norton.

Katz, P. (1975). *Toward the elimination of racism.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.

Kunjufu, J. (1984). *Developing positive self-images and discipline in Black children.* Chicago: African American Images.

Lewis, M., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1979). *Social cognition and the acquisition of self.* New York: Plenum.

Marcia, J. E. (1983). Some directions for the investigation of ego development in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 3*(3), 215-223.

Markus, H., & Kunda, Z. (1986). Stability and malleability of the self-concept. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(4), 858-866.

Marshall, S. (1995). Ethnic socialization of African American children: Implications for parenting, identity development, and academic achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 24*(4), 377-396.

McAdoo, H. P. (1985). Racial attitudes and self-concept of young Black children over time. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McAdoo, J. L. (1997). The roles of African American fathers in the socialization of their children. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McGuire, W. J., McGuire, C. V., Child, P., & Fujioka, T. (1978). Salence of ethnicity in the spontaneous self concept as a function of one's ethnic distinctions in the social environment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36*(5), 511-529.

Exhibit 22 - 20

Miller, A. (1982). *In the eye of the beholder: Contemporary issues in stereotyping.* New York: Praeger.

Murray, C. B., & Fairchild, H. H. (1989). Models of Black adolescent academic underachievement. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *Black adolescents.* Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley.

Murray, C. B., & Jackson, J. S. (1999). The conditioned failure model revisited. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *African American children, youth, and parenting.* Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

Murray, C. B., & Mandara, J. (2001). An assessment of racial socialization and ethnic identity as predictors of self-esteem. Unpublished manuscript.

Murray, C. B., Strokes, J. E., & Peacock, M. J. (1999). Racial socialization of African American children: A review. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *African American children, youth, and parenting* (pp. 209-229). Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

Neisser, U. (1988). Five kinds of self knowledge. *Philosophical Psychology, 1,* 35-59.

Nobles, W. W. (1973). Psychological research and the Black self-concept: A critical review. *Journal Social Issues, 29*(1), 11-31.

Oliver, M. B. (1994). Portrayals of crime race and aggression in "reality-based" police shows: A content analysis. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 38*(2), 179-192.

Parham, T. A., & Williams, P. T. (1993). The relationship of demographic and background factors to racial identity attitudes. *Journal of Black Psychology, 19*(1), 7-24.

Peterson, C., & McCabe, A. (1994). A social interactionist account of developing decontextualized narrative skill. *Developmental Psychology, 30*(6), 937-948.

Phinney, J. S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 9,* 34-49.

Phinney, J. S. (1991). Ethnic identity and self-esteem: A review and integration. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science, 13,* 193-208.

Phinney, J. S., & Rotheram, M. (1987). *Children's ethnic socialization.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Piaget, J. S. (1952). *The child's conception of the world.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Porter, J. R., & Washington, R. E. (1979). Black identity and self-esteem: A review of studies of Black self-concept. *Annual Review of Sociology, 5,* 53-74.

Porter, J. R., & Washington, R. E. (1989). Developments in research on Black identity and self-esteem: 1979-1988. *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale, 2*(3), 339-353.

Powell, G. J. (1982). The impact of television on the self-concept development of minority group children. In G. L. Berry & C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.), *Tele-*

Exhibit 22 - 21

vision and the socialization of the minority child (pp. 105-131). New York: Academic Press.

Quattrone, G. (1986). On the perception of a group's variability. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 25-48). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Ramsey, P. (1987). Young children and thinking about ethnic difference. In J. S. Phinney & M. Rotheram (Eds.), *Children's ethnic socialization* (pp. 56-72). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rasheed, S. Y. (1981). Self-esteem and ethic identity in African American third grade children (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 42*(6B), 2604.

Rosser, P. L. (1978). The child: Young, gifted, and Black. In L. E. Gary (Ed.), *Mental health: A challenge to the Black community* (pp. 95-113). Philadelphia: Dorrance.

Rotheram-Borus, M. J. (1990). Adolescent's reference-group choices, self-esteem, and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*(5), 1075-1081.

Ruble, D. (1987). The acquisition of self-knowledge: A self-socialization process. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Contemporary topics in developmental psychology* (pp. 243-270). New York: John Wiley.

Russell, K., Wilson, M., & Hall, R. (1992). *The color complex: The politics of skin color among African Americans*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Sanders, M. (1998). Overcoming obstacles: Academic achievement as a response to racism and discrimination. *Journal of Negro Education, 66*(1), 83-93.

Semaj, L. T. (1985). Afrikananity, cognition, and external self-identity. In M. Spencer, G. Brookin, & W. Allen (Eds.), *Beginnings: The social and affective development* (pp. 59-72). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Smith, E. P., Fogle, V., & Jacobs, J. (in press). Assessing parental ethnic socialization: Issues and implementation. In D. Johnson (Ed.), *Racial socialization*. Hampton VA: Cobb & Henry.

Spencer, M. B. (1982). Personal and group identity of Black children: An alternative synthesis. *Genetic Psychology Monographs, 183,* 59-84.

Spencer, M. B. (1983). Children's cultural values and parental child rearing strategies. *Developmental Review, 3*(4), 351-370.

Spencer, M. B. (1984). Black children's race awareness, racial attitudes, and self-concept. An interpretation. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 25,* 433-441.

Spencer, M. B. (1985). Cultural cognition and social cognition as identity factors in Black children's personal growth. In M. Spencer, G. Brookins, & W. Allen (Eds.), *Beginnings: The social and affective development of Black children* (pp. 215-230). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Exhibit 22 - 22

Spencer, M. B. (1988). Self-concept development. *New Directions for Child Development, 42,* 59-72.

Spencer, M. B. (1999). Social and cultural influences on school adjustment: The application of an identity-focused cultural ecological perspective. *Educational Psychologist, 34*(1), 43-57.

Spencer, M. B., & Markstrom-Adams, C. (1990). Identity processes among racial and ethnic minority children in America. *Developmental Review, 61*(2), 290-310.

Stevenson, H. C. (1994). Validation of the Scale of Racial Socialization for African American adolescents: Steps toward multidimensionality. *Journal of Black Psychology 20*(4), 445-468.

Stevenson, H. C. (1995). Relationship of adolescent perceptions of racial socialization to racial identity. *Journal of Black Psychology, 21*(1), 49-70.

Stevenson, H.C. (1998). Theoretical considerations in measuring racial identity and socialization: Extending the self further. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *African American identity development* (pp. 217-255). Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

Stevenson, H. C. (1999). Theoretical considerations in measuring racial identity and socialization: Extending the self further. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *African American identity development* (pp. 217-255). Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

Stroman, C. A. (1991). Television's role in the socialization of African American children and adolescents. *Journal of Negro Education, 60*(3), 314-327.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tan, A. S., & Tan, G. (1979). Television use and self-esteem of Blacks. *Journal of Communication, 29,* 129-135.

Tangney, J. P., & Feshbach, S. (1988). Children's television-viewing frequency: Individual differences and demographic correlates. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 14*(1), 145-158.

Tatum, B. (1987). *Assimilation blues.* Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Thornton, M. C. (1997). Strategies of racial socialization among Black parents: Mainstream, minority, and cultural messages. In R. J. Taylor, J. S. Jackson, & L. M. Chatters (Eds.), *Family life in Black America* (pp. 216-248). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thornton, M. C., Chatters, L. M., Taylor, R. J., & Allen, W. R. (1990). Sociodemographic and environmental correlates of racial socialization by Black parents. *Child Development, 61,* 401-409.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and speech.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wardle, F. (1992). Supporting biracial children in the school setting. *Education and Treatment of children, 15*(2), 163-172.

Whitty, J. P. (1994). "Ethnic socialization: The case of African American adolescent males." At *The significance of ethnic identity and socialization for African*

Exhibit 22 - 23

American youth: Findings from pre-to-late adolescence, a symposium conducted at the Fifth Biennial Meeting of the Society of Research on Adolescence, California.

Wilder, D. (1986). Social categorization: Implications for creation and reduction of intergroup bias. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances on experimental social psychology* (Vol. 19, pp. 293-255). New York: Academic Press.

Williams, J., & Morland, J. (1976). *Race, color, and the young child.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Exhibit 22 - 24