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The Racial/Ethnic Identity Development of Tomorrow's Adolescent

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Adolescents across racial/ethnic group memberships often experience some degree of confusion and maladaptive symptoms as they sort through the potential components of their personal and ethnic identities (Luyckx et al., 2008; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Rodriguez, 2009). The similarities of this process do not end there; research indicates that the structures of both ethnic identity (Roberts et al., 1999) and personal identity (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005) are consistent across ethnic groups. Helms (1990) defined racial identity as a “sense of group or collective identity based on the perception that one shares a common racial heritage with a particular group” (as cited by Phelps, Taylor, & Gerard, 2001, p. 210). Ethnic identity, on the other hand, is conceptualized as “the study of attitudes about one’s own ethnicity” (Phinney, 1990, p. 499) and may include ethnic group membership self-identification, a sense of belonging, and attitudes one holds toward their ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). As our society becomes more global and welcoming of greater racial/ethnic diversity, the study of racial/ethnic identity devel-

opment becomes even more salient for adolescents (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2009). A major goal of this chapter is to address aspects of both racial and ethnic identity development among adolescents. This goal is accomplished in part by linking theories of adolescent identity development to the experiences of diverse youth.

The following paragraphs highlight the salience of racial/ethnic identity and its development for specific racial/ethnic adolescent groups. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the ethnicities represented in today’s American schools: several ethnic groups have been omitted or have been otherwise aggregated. This is also not meant to be an exhaustive list of every issue experienced by each racial/ethnic group. In addition, the authors present many strengths associated with each racial/ethnic group—understanding many more can be found in the literature. Our overall goal is to demonstrate the unique processes of racial/ethnic identity development among and within some of the larger ethnic groups in the United States (U.S). We also explore implications of racial/ethnic identity development for work with youth in school-based settings.

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American Indian Adolescents

The U.S. Census Bureau (2009) reported that approximately 0.8% of the U.S. population classifies itself as having American Indian or Alaska Native ethnic group membership. There

is a significant state by state range in the American Indian population; Alaska has the highest percentage (13.2%), while Pennsylvania has the fewest numbers of citizens who report American Indian descent (0.1%). This community is distinguished as the only ethnic group in the U.S. that either occupies land reservations or chooses to live in more mainstream living situations. These reservations are tribally owned acres of land reserved for American Indians in the wake of the U.S. manifest destiny (Wakeling, Jorgensen, Michaelson, & Begay, 2001).

The American Indian community is represented by over 40 tribal groups across the U.S. territories (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007), and thus, the heterogeneity of this ethnic group cannot be overstated. However, there are a few characteristics that can be found in many American Indian groups, including religiosity and spirituality as major driving forces of the community (Stilling, 1996; West & Newman, 2007). Stilling (1996) further suggested that American Indian adults tend to contribute toward celebratory ceremonies of success for their neighbors and often report considerable involvement in their children's education. The confluence of high participation at school, church, and community centers highlights the communal nature of American Indian racial/ethnic identity and demonstrates how family structure, spirituality, and tribal values are all-encompassing in this community (Red Horse, 1997).

Culture and ethnic identification are key factors in the American Indian's process of acculturation into mainstream society (West & Newman, 2007), quite possibly because of the distinctive risk factor of acculturative stress found in the recent history of this group (LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006). Within the American Indian community, this often presents itself as acculturation anxiety which has been characterized as the stressful outcome of blending American Indian beliefs with mainstream paradigms that are seemingly in direct conflict with traditional American Indian life (McNeil, Kee, & Zvolensky, 1999; McNeil, Porter, Zvolensky, Chaney, & Kee, 2000). Incidents and contexts that threaten to elicit acculturation anxiety (e.g., discrimination, racism) have been shown to hinder positive outcomes among

American Indian youth (LaFromboise & Medoff, 2004; LaFromboise et al., 2006).

The process of racial/ethnic identity development for American Indian adolescents is a balancing act of fulfilling parental and community expectations that may be contrary to what teachers and other mainstream agents require. Phinney (1989, 1992) asserted that ethnic identity development lies on a double-continuum of exploring the meaning of one's ethnicity and commitment to aspects of the individual's ethnicity, such as religious preferences. As Beauvais (2000) suggests, exploration and commitment for this group includes incorporating American Indian strength with the opportunities of the distal U.S. society. Exposure to inconsistent messages about the value of American Indians in our society, such as the imagery of Native people in the media, make it particularly challenging for American Indian youth to assimilate the cultural patterns they learn within their families into their interaction with the broader society (Newman, 2005). Yet these communities' adolescents are still expected to participate in ritual events as they mature, to demonstrate their acceptance of increased spiritual and community responsibility (Red Horse, 1997).

The ability of American Indian youth to develop resilience and maintain cultural affiliation has been shown to hold constant as long as patterns of interaction with their family and tribal culture that American Indian values demand are sustained (LaFromboise & Medoff, 2004; LaFromboise et al., 2006). The American Indian community can provide resources that support ethnic identification such as peer group and family relations, engagement in culturally relevant activities, and encouraged socialization among one's ethnic group members (Newman, 2005).

Implications for working with American Indian adolescents in school settings. American Indian adolescents face unique struggles in combining their native culture with mainstream American culture. As mentioned above, the inconsistent messages that American Indian adolescents experience can have an impact on their daily social experiences, especially in a school setting. American Indian adolescents may receive

negative stereotypical messages about their culture from authoritative figures such as teachers who lack cultural competence and awareness (Newman, 2005). Since adolescents spend much of their time in school, the risk is that these messages will be internalized by American Indian adolescents. LaFromboise et al. (2006) found that reports of discrimination and exposure to racist attitudes and behaviors had a negative relationship to resilience and cultural group pride among the American Indian adolescents who participated in their research.

Mental health professionals working with American Indian adolescents in a school setting may help facilitate the process of racial/ethnic identity development by encouraging them to explore societal messages in comparison with messages received from members within their culture and what this means to them. Newman (2005) identified family support and relationships with community members, such as church leaders, as factors that contribute to resilience among American Indian adolescents. It is important for school counselors to be aware of these potential methods of support within the community when working with American Indian youth.

Arab American Adolescents

There are approximately 17 countries that are considered ancestral Arab homelands (Haboush, 2007) that are clustered in the Middle East and Northern Africa. Arab families with varying levels of socioeconomic status and traumatic experience have migrated to the U.S. in several waves, the last involving the years between the Gulf and Iraq Wars (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001). This community established several thriving enclaves across the U.S.; for example, Dearborn, Michigan, is known as one of the largest Arab American populations outside the Middle Eastern region (Goodstein, 2001).

The Arab American Institute, the U.S. Census Bureau's primary information source for this population, estimates that there are approximately 3.5 million individuals of Arab descent living in the U.S. It is important to note that the term *Arab* did not appear on the 2010 U.S. Census form,

suggesting that those who identify as Arab American were subsumed under the *White* category (Padgett, 2010). This suggests that a significant number of those classified as White American may in fact represent an ethnic group that has a set of beliefs, values, and customs distinct from traditional White American culture.

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) proposed a list of promoting factors for Arab American acculturation, including having lived more years in the U.S., positive diplomatic relations between their country of origin and the U.S., younger age during immigration, and religious affiliation with Christian beliefs. For example, some Arab American activists note that it is sometimes easier for Arab Americans to acculturate into mainstream U.S. society if they were affiliated with Christianity, choosing to anglicize their last names or assume Christian first names (Nagel & Staeheli, 2005). Several ethnic organizations, including the Arab American Institute and the Council on American-Islamic Relations have initiated several campaigns to improve the political climate for all Arab Americans regardless of their religious affiliations. Additionally, education and family income among Arab American immigrants often help to ease the acculturative process (Kulczycki & Lobo, 2002). Presumably native-born Arab American youth with more personal and family resources will have an easier acculturative experience than their foreign-born counterparts; this circumstance, however, is not always the case.

The strong backlash against Arab Americans in the years following September 11, 2001 may have influenced many Arab American adolescents to incorporate Arab culture and values into their identity or risk suffering role confusion with little social support (Erikson, 1968). Even though stereotypes that depict Arab Americans as terrorists existed in the Western media beforehand (Shaheen, 2001), they have proliferated in the decade since and continue to fuel negative perceptions about Arabs and Arab Americans.

Islam is the most commonly endorsed expression of spirituality among Arab American families (Hall & Livingston, 2006) and exerts considerable influence on the family structure of its youth. While Phinney (1992) suggested that

all adolescents undertake a process of exploration; Arab American parents might have a different view that does not encourage such explorations if it ventures outside of Islamic values. These views might include high religiosity, collectivism, and emotion concealment (Ajrouch, 2000; Haboush, 2007). These traditional values contrast with predominant Western values, e.g., individualism, liberalism, and self-determination (Chirkov, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Inter-generational conflict may occur when Arab American parents believe their children are forsaking family expectations in favor of developing their own coping strategies and are showing other signs of independence (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000).

Arab American youth are also likely to feel pressure in school. Sirin and Fine (2007) contend that many Arab American youth are likely to have experienced ethnic- or religious-based discrimination in multiple settings including school. Arab American male youth with high levels of participation in both home and school social activities were less likely to report perceptions of discrimination (Sirin & Fine, 2007). In contrast, Arab American female adolescents were more likely than their male counterparts to have more positive acculturative experiences. One possible explanation is that Arab American young women are more likely to report more fluid movement between their dual identities of being Arab and American in comparison with young men of Arab descent. Thus, the process of racial/ethnic identity development among Arab American youth might be seen as careful exploration (so as to avoid discrimination and other stressors related to acculturation) as the adolescent chooses among any combination of Islamic and Western values to which they may commit (Ajrouch, 2004).

Implications for working with Arab American adolescents in school settings. "I am a Muslim woman wearing a veil and many times in stores and restaurants people will ridicule the way I look," shared a 16-year-old Arab American adolescent (Flanagan, Syvertsen, Gill, Gallay, & Cumsille, 2009, p. 510). In their study on ethnic awareness and experiences of prejudice of Arab American, Latino/a, African American, and

European American youth, Flanagan et al. found that Arab American adolescents reported being discriminated against based on group stereotypes of terrorism. It is likely that today's Arab American adolescents have experienced a heightened amount of prejudicial treatment in school.

In addition to experiences of discrimination, Arab American adolescents may experience a conflict between family values and peer relationships. Typically, Arab American parents encourage their children to maintain family honor and cohesiveness; these values may conflict with peer relationships that emphasize the American cultural values of independence and autonomy (Haboush, 2007). It is imperative that mental health practitioners working with Arab American adolescents in school settings examine their own biases about Arab culture and educate themselves on the socialization of this group as well as the cultural clashes that they may encounter in the U.S. in relation to war and terrorist attacks. Researchers found that after September 11, prayer was a method for many Muslims to seek emotional comfort. Incorporating faith may be a beneficial therapeutic intervention for Muslims dealing with turmoil and depression (Ali, Liu, & Humedian, 2004; Inayat, 2002). School counselors can create a safe space for Arab American adolescents by implementing culturally relevant practices that include family values and spirituality.

Asian American Adolescents

According to Barringer, Gardner, and Levin (1993), the term Asian American broadly defines an ethnic group comprised of 28 distinct nationalities with shared Asian origins, physical appearance, and cultural mores. Asian Americans comprise a racial/ethnic group that demonstrates considerable diversity in language, socioeconomic status, religion, occupational skills, and immigration experience (Barringer et al.; Chan, 1991; Ishii-Kuntz, 2000). There are more than 17 million Asian Americans who live in the U.S. (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011), including individuals with heritage from countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.

Since their arrival over 160 years ago and culminating with the World War II Japanese internment camps, Asian Americans were “portrayed as uncivilized, sinister, heathen, yellow hordes” (Wing, 2007, p. 457) that threatened to defile the White American bloodline (Lee, 1999). However, much of that negative attention was dissipated and transformed by the 1960s Civil Rights era as Asian Americans were finally welcomed into the fabric of American society. This happened in stages: first, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed, making it easier for Chinese immigrants to migrate to and live in the U.S. Next, as more U.S. soldiers married Japanese, South Korean, and Filipino women, the number of Asian immigrants increased in the U.S. Finally, the U.S. government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, abolishing Asian exclusion and allowing Asian immigrants to more easily become permanent residents (Min, 2006).

Some researchers suggest that acculturation might be a key concept in understanding family life within Asian American communities (Fang, McDowell, Goldfarb, Perumbilly, & Gonzalez-Kruger, 2008) as research has linked this construct to topics like parenting style and identity development within this culture. Asian American fathers may strive to be the primary breadwinner and disciplinarian in their families, while mothers may be expected to facilitate the emotional wellness of their children (Lee & Cynn, 1991). Parental socialization in Asian American families may emphasize familial duty and obligation, and these practices may lead Asian American adolescents to value self-sacrifice in the name of family more than their White American counterparts (Fulgini, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Vo-Jutabha, Dinh, McHale, & Valsiner, 2009).

The gulf between Asian and American identities can contribute to family obstacles for Asian American youth, such as having to watch younger children despite academic obligations and feeling competing pressures between family obligations and being responsive to the peer group.

Despite these pressures, Umana-Taylor, Bhanot, and Shin (2006) discuss how many Asian American families socialize their children in ways that positively influence racial/ethnic identity

achievement for many adolescents. Examples of this family ethnic socialization include consistent exposure to extended family members, attendance at cultural events, and concerted efforts to educate youth about the practices of the family’s native culture (Lu, 2001; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). Conflicts may arise between Asian American adolescents and their elders when youth do not demonstrate the attitudes and beliefs this ethnic socialization is supposed to provide. Examples of this may include possible isolation of children for behavior that brings perceived shame to the family or when Asian American youth reject the perceived rigid traditional beliefs of their immigrant parents (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009).

Asian nationalities may express this intergenerational conflict differently. For example, some Vietnamese American youth are unaware of the details surrounding their parents’ experiences as refugees. Their parents may not know the nuances of navigating relationships with peers and the school setting (Cheung & Nguyen, 2001). Gender roles, displays of affection and respect, and religiosity are other sources of conflict for some Asian American families (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009). Research indicates that social support is an effective protective factor against intergenerational conflict: relying on older offspring and neighbors to teach youth about history and values, socializing with ethnic and religious communities, and maintaining ties with extended family members have been shown to reduce the number of problems within the Asian American parent–child relationship (Agbayani-Siewart, 2002; Bankston, 2006; Hayashino & Chopra, 2009).

Another concept that has an impact on Asian American families is the *Model Minority* stereotype. This stereotype promotes the image of Asian Americans as consistently successful in economic, educational, and social domains of functioning (Lee, Wong, & Alvarez, 2009). This term was first coined in a 1966 *New York Times* article entitled *Success Story, Japanese-American Style* (Petersen, 1966). The term proliferated in the next two decades and beyond to describe the academic achievement of Asian Americans.

While non-Asian Americans might mistakenly believe such a term is flattering, the *Model Minority* stereotype is detrimental to the identity development of Asian American adolescents in at least three distinct ways. First, such a term neglects the diversity among Asian Americans and diminishes the unique histories and victories of each specific nationality. This may result in teachers and school administrators ignoring individual needs in favor of generalized solutions. The second deleterious impact of the *Model Minority* stereotype is that it casts Asian American adolescents as competition for other students of color in the school setting. When the successes of Asian American adolescents are compared to the failures of other youth of color, it creates an environment where Asian American adolescents are socially excluded and even bullied in some cases (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). The third impact of this harmful stereotype is that it discourages Asian American youth from resisting the *Model Minority* image, leading to potential feelings of shame when one performs less than what is expected and/or inhibits their adaptive-help seeking behaviors (Lee et al., 2009).

As applied to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial model, Asian American racial/ethnic identity development among adolescents involves a process of reconciling positive segments of their identity and culture (e.g., close relationships with extended relatives, cultural event attendance) with negative feelings associated with their identity (e.g., intergenerational obstacles). During this psychosocial stage where the central struggle is between identity and role confusion, Asian American youth (like youth in other ethnicities) may grapple with an identity *moratorium* where they attempt to draw a line between what they will become and what they do not want as part of their identities going forward (Marcia, 1993). This process may be complicated further if the adolescent experiences feelings of incompetence or inadequacy as a result of *Model Minority* bias and feelings that s/he cannot live up to it (Ryckman, 2007).

Implications for working with Asian American adolescents in school settings. Positive strategies include high participation rates among Asian

Americans in social activism to deconstruct racist images in the media (Chang & Kwan, 2009). School personnel are encouraged to draw from this finding to engage Asian American students in school activities that proactively promote a positive school climate. The *Model Minority* bias has been associated with high reports of bullying in this population (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009) so school counselors are encouraged to pay close attention when Asian American youth report these experiences. School personnel can help promote positive racial/ethnic identity development by being vigilant against using common stereotypes (e.g., hardworking/academic, compliant/obedient) to describe Asian American youth and to consider using nonverbal means of expression (e.g., journal writing, drawing) that are less likely to seem threatening to Asian American youth who display discomfort in self-disclosing (Yeh, 2001). Yeh suggested that school-based mental health professionals become more familiar with culturally relevant coping methods (e.g., including peer networks, community outreach) to help Asian American youth find more adaptive ways of addressing developmental concerns.

Black American Adolescents

The Black American experience includes first-, second-, and even third-generation Americans with direct African descent, people of color from the Caribbean, and the descendants of U.S. slaves from Africa who reproduced with several ethnic groups in the years since their arrival to the U.S. during the seventeenth century. The U.S. Census (2009) reports that Black Americans comprise 12.4% of the general population. Several generations of racist and discriminatory experiences have engendered varying levels of cultural mistrust among Black American groups that have, in turn, had an impact on adolescent racial/ethnic identity development for this group (Phelps et al., 2001).

Part of the burden of this historical oppression has been the development of obstacles in the process of positive identity for Black American adolescents. *Colorism*, or the internalization of Eurocentric standards of attractiveness, has been

shown to inhibit the self-esteem of some Black American adolescents (APA Task Force on the Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents, 2008; Breland, Coleman, Coard, & Steward, 2002; Ward, 2000). For example, a national survey suggested that skin tone has a direct impact on educational attainment and socioeconomic status among Black Americans (Keith & Herring, 1991). Attitudes and behaviors that suggest the acceptance of negative stereotypes concerning intrinsic worth and ability among racial minorities is known as internalized racism (Jones, 2000). Several researchers have found a positive correlation between racial/ethnic identity and self-esteem among Black Americans so that those with more developed racial/ethnic identities reported higher comfort with their African features and greater self-esteem (Breland, Coleman, Coard, & Steward, 2002; Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy, & Lovejoy, 2004; Smith, Burlew, & Lundgren, 1991).

Other forms of internalized racism Black American youth must contend with include a judgment orientation that subjugates other Black Americans and elevates White Americans. An extreme example of this is the "Uncle Ruckus" character from the popular Cartoon Network program *The Boondocks* (McGruder, Barnes, Brooks, Taylor, & Veen, 2008). This Black American cartoon character is known for his disparaging comments about the Black community and glowing praise for all things White American.

Black American adolescents who report well-developed ethnic identities are less likely to demonstrate these internally racialized attitudes (Cokley, 2005). In their predominantly Black American sample, Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee (2006) found that Black American adolescents who reported feeling connected to their ethnic group and characterized other Black Americans as having achieved high educational attainment, demonstrated higher grade point averages than those who did not share such perceptions. Another benefit of positive racial/ethnic identity development among Black American youth is the construct of critical consciousness, the ability to comprehend the influence of racism and discern stereotypes of others as they navigate

their own identity development (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002).

Black American families vary in their processes for socializing children and adolescents into their ethnic groups. Some parents and other family members participate in teaching Black American adolescents how to cope with racial discrimination, discuss how their ethnic group membership may have an impact on future opportunities and decision points, and connect them to Black American culture and history (Cooper, McLoyd, Wood, & Hardaway, 2008). The role of family in racial/ethnic identity development is also salient for Black American youth. For instance, Tatum (2004) proposed three approaches adopted by Black families living in White communities: race-conscious family frame (involvement in seeking Black activities and friendships for their children), race-neutral family frame (allowing children to define their own racial group membership), and class-conscious family frame (emphasizing social class status above racial group membership). The Black college students in Tatum's study reported a desire for same-race peer relationships, knowledge and awareness of Black American cultural heritage, access to positive role models within their ethnic group, and the support of significant adults within their lives.

Ethnic socialization has been defined as a two-part process. The first component enhances psychological adjustment for the young person in matters related to ethnicity; the second part involves cushioning the deleterious effects of discrimination on a young person's academic and mental functioning (Cooper et al., 2008). Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley's (2007) research on perceived racial discrimination experiences among Black American adolescents indicated that in some Black American families, the cushioning Cooper and colleagues (2008) refer to may include messages of Black pride and preparation for bias. In the Black American community, family ethnic socialization often includes discussion about discrimination and appropriate coping strategies, ceremonies designed to instill knowledge and ethnic pride, and brainstorming how to succeed in mainstream society

(Hughes et al., 2006). Research has shown that Black American adolescents who receive this type of socialization from their parents demonstrate higher cognitive coping and adaptive help-seeking than Black American youth from less active families (Newman, 1994; Scott, 2004).

Research indicates that these family ethnic socialization practices also contribute toward lower levels of psychiatric distress and higher levels of psychological wellness for Black American adolescents (Caldwell, Sellers, Bernat, & Zimmerman, 2004; Seaton, Scottham, & Sellers, 2006). Similarly, these ethnic socialization practices have been shown to buffer the negative impact of racial discrimination on the school adjustment experience (Cooper et al., 2008; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006). Within the context of Phinney's (1989, 1990) model of ethnic identity development, as Black American youth learn from classmates, teachers, and the media what being Black means (*exploration*), their parents employ specific techniques to ensure their children arrive into adulthood with a clear sense of Black racial/ethnic identity (*achieved*).

The Nigrescence model (Cross, 1991) delineates the steps toward racial/ethnic identity development of Black American adults. Cross suggested a four-stage model of racial/ethnic identity development where the individual gradually moves from a place of relative racial/ethnic unawareness toward pride in being Black (Cross, 2001). Progression through the four stages is not a linear process; rather individuals can experience one or more stages multiple times throughout their lifetime. The *Pre-Encounter* stage is distinguished by an unawareness of race and implications for one's identity. Following this is the *Encounter* stage that is characterized by the experiencing of a series of events that induces one to re-examine their race (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002).

If these events resonate deeply enough to move away from the *Encounter* state, then the Black American adolescent will continue matriculating along Cross's hypothesized path toward racial/ethnic identity development to the *Immersion-Emersion* stage. In *Immersion-Emersion*, the individual tends to be idealistic

about his/her Black identity and rejects White American culture (Cross, 1991; Vandiver et al., 2002). This is representative of the early part of the stage while the later part of *Immersion-Emersion* involves a search for less stereotypical symbols of Blackness in an effort to explore what it means to be Black (Tatum, 1997). The final stage of Cross' theory is *Internalization*. This stage refers to the process whereby the individual has established a self-defined racial/ethnic identity and is able to establish meaningful relationships with members of other ethnic groups. Black Americans in this stage have developed a positive racial/ethnic identity and are able to transcend their personal sense of race and ethnicity into a sustainable commitment to Black Americans as a group (Tatum, 2004).

Implications for working with Black American adolescents in school settings. Much of the literature on the school success of Black American adolescents focuses on contextual factors such as poverty, violence, and inadequate health and education services rather than addressing the interaction of race and culture, and the impact these variables have on social and emotional adjustment (Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003). Tatum (2004) identified knowledge of Black American heritage and accomplishments, access to positive community role models, and opportunities to connect with same-race peers as components for positive racial identity development of Black adolescents.

School counselors can practice culturally responsive methods by being aware of differences in ethnic socialization and identity development of Black adolescents and exploring personal biases that may influence their ability to work with this group. Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003) found that discrimination experienced from peers and teachers influenced the academic motivation, self-esteem, and psychological health of Black American adolescents. Findings of this study also revealed that connection to racial/ethnic group had an effect on the psychological adjustment of Black American adolescents, serving as a protective factor against perceived discrimination (Wong et al., 2003).

Latino/Latina Adolescents

The term Latino/a refers to people who have heritage in Spanish speaking regions in Latin America, such as Mexico, the Central and South Americas, and the Caribbean (Flores, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2005; Javier & Camacho-Gingerich, 2004). Mexican Americans were the first Latino group to be counted in the U.S. Census in the 1930s (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). At that time, the Latino/a population in the U.S. was estimated at 1.3 million individuals. The U.S. Census Bureau (2009) reports there are now more than 48 million individuals who classify themselves as "Hispanic" or "Latino" in American society. For the past two decades, Cubans, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans have been the three largest subgroups in the U.S. (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006). It is expected that Latinos/as will account for 44% of all U.S. population growth over the next decade; it has been projected that Latino adolescents alone will account for a quarter of the entire U.S. population by the year 2050 (Ramirez, 2004; Simpkins, O'Donnell, Delgado, & Becnel, 2011).

The Latino experience in the U.S. for many includes residing in predominantly urban districts, living in a household with at least three other people, and having more work experience than other Americans in the same age cohort (Marotta & Garcia, 2003). The family is considered the primary socialization agent for Latinos/as (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Garcia Coll, Meyer, & Brillón, 1995), yet it has also been documented that immigrant Latino/a groups (especially adolescents) sometimes report patterns of isolation and interpersonal distance from adults in their family and community networks (Spina, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Like many other ethnic groups of color in U.S. society, Latino adolescents must try to construct a positive identity while living in a mainstream culture that often stereotypes and debases the phenotypic, linguistic, and cultural aspects of Latino/a culture (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). The internalization of these negative stereotypes for Latino/a adolescents may result in what Marcia (1993) characterized as an identity

crisis period, or *moratorium*. When Latino/a adolescents reconsider past beliefs on ethnicity and replace negative Latino stereotypes with positive messages, this reflects *identity achievement* (Marcia).

Latinos/as account for approximately 11 million students currently enrolled in the U.S. public school system (Kohler & Lazarín, 2007). There are conflicting findings in the research about academic success and racial/ethnic identity for Latino/a adolescents. On the one hand, the pro-acculturation hypothesis is reflected in research that indicates Latino adolescents need to be allowed to create "school identities" apart from their culture to achieve academic success (Cordeiro, 1990; Hébert, 1996). For example, Martinez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2004) found that greater student acculturation (i.e., U.S. nativity, English proficiency) predicted lower likelihood of high school dropout for a sample of Latino/a adolescents. These results also indicated that discriminatory and otherwise unwelcoming experiences predicted lower grade point averages and a higher risk of high school dropout.

On the other hand, existing research also indicates a lack of alignment with the pro-acculturation hypothesis that promotes academic success among Latino/a adolescents. Perreira, Harris, and Lee (2006), for instance, conducted a study that sought to identify patterns of high school dropout among immigrant and native-born Latinos. These researchers classified four types of capital used to prevent early educational termination. *Human capital* was defined as information, skills, and experiences that increase individual productivity levels, *cultural capital* was conceptualized as family-based core values, *school capital* was defined as expectations of and commitment to activities related to high academic achievement, and *community-level social capital* was described as the conditions within a neighborhood that influence the individual's normative climate and access to future opportunities (Perreira et al., 2006). The absence of community and social capital was found to put Latino/a adolescents at increased risk for dropping out of high school.

These contrasting findings underscore the complexity of the processes being explored.

Additional research is needed to further our understanding of the interaction among such variables. It might be that having a range of strategies to address educational and other challenges, while also valuing one's racial/ethnic identity, promotes positive development among diverse adolescents (Clauss-Ehlers, Yang, & Chen, 2006).

Implications for working with Latino/Latina adolescents in school settings. Much of the research that we have covered illustrates the importance of family in the ethnic socialization and identity development of Latino/a adolescents. Mental health professionals working with Latino/a adolescents in school settings can implement culturally responsive methods of counseling by acknowledging the role that family plays in their lives. Villalba (2007) suggested that counselors encourage Latino/a youth to use their immediate and extended family members as an asset as well as their bicultural skills. Counselors can encourage Latino/a adolescents to seek out mentors within their family and community that will both serve as a positive role model and relate to their ethnic experience. Mental health professionals can also reinforce bilingualism by incorporating dual language capacity into therapeutic work. This can be accomplished through work with a bilingual school mental health professional or via the incorporation of dual languages in counseling (see Clauss, 1998 for specific strategies).

Multiracial/Biracial American Adolescents

Beginning in 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau introduced the multiracial category to their annual reporting form. Currently, 2.4% of the American population self-identifies as multiracial (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The term "biracial" indicates an individual born to parents with two distinct sets of phenotypic characteristics associated with race (e.g., skin color, hair texture). "Multiracial" categorizes individuals whose parents possess phenotypic traits representing three or more racial groups. For the purposes of this chapter, we focus on the experiences of multiracial youth. In the last quarter of the

twentieth century, interracial marriage rates increased sharply among Asian Americans, Black Americans, and White Americans (Fang et al., 2008; Johnson, 1992; Khanna, 2004; Root, 1995). This social phenomenon is not new, however. Interracial marriage was against the law until the U.S. Supreme Court repealed the last anti-miscegenation laws in 1967 (Root, 2003a).

Multiracial American young children often choose the reference group of their closest primary caregiver (Bowles, 1993). The extended families of each parent are likely to expose the child to the socialization experiences common within respective racial/ethnic groups. For those multiracial adolescents who do not have contact with or have lost their monoracial families, the process of socialization may become more difficult; these youth may have to seek out racial socialization messages from other adults.

There are many reasons why Multiracial American adolescents of European descent might commit to their non-European racial/ethnic identity. Multiracial adolescents with White heritage are believed to enter a period of turmoil when they begin to accept both their minority and majority cultural roots because of a "dual existence." This may lead to questions about where they belong in peer groups and society (Renn, 2008). It may be easier for some Multiracial American adolescents to choose a part of their ethnicity that they identify with most closely to avoid feeling as if they do not belong. In a study on the comparisons of identity development measures of mono- and biracial adolescents of various racial heritages (e.g., Asian, Latino) for instance, Herman (2004) found that more biracial adolescents chose their minority category rather than their White category, especially those of African American descent. Neighborhood and peer group were also found to play a role. For instance, Herman's study found multiracial adolescents who had a primarily ethnic minority peer group were more likely to identify with their minority race and those that were raised in affluent White neighborhoods, were more likely to identify as White (Herman, 2004).

Similar to differences within monoracial adolescents, it is important to explore within group

differences in the racial/ethnic identity development of multiracial adolescents. Rockquemore and Brunson (2002) found that multiracial individuals with darker physiognomy reported experiencing more ethnic discrimination than monoracial individuals and were more likely to identify with their ethnic minority heritage. Multiracial American racial/ethnic identity theorists also contend that gender alignment between Multiracial American youth and their monoracial parents may have significant implications for adolescent racial/ethnic identity development (Khanna, 2004). While some researchers posit that mothers often play more significant roles in ethnic socialization, others argue that the father more heavily influences the cultural practices of the family. Herman (2004) found that sharing gender with a parent significantly increased the likelihood of the adolescent identifying with the heritage of the same-sex parent over the heritage of the opposite-sex parent.

Miville, Constantine, Baysden, and So-Lloyd (2005) compared the efficacy of several developmental models of racial/ethnic identity to explain how Multiracial Americans make sense of ethnicity, including Poston's (1990) model, Kich's (1992) three-stage heuristic developmental model of biracial identity, Rockquemore's (1999) multi-dimensional model of biracial identity, and Maria P.P. Root's (2001) ecological meta-model of racial/ethnic identity development for multiracial Americans. Poston's model (1990) details a process by which multiracial adolescents move from excluding ethnicity from their reference group identity to appreciating and integrating all aspects of their ethnic heritage into their identity.

Kich (1992) posited that racial/ethnic identity development for multiracial adolescents begins with self-awareness of dissonance with the immediate environment, continues with a struggle for acceptance from self and others, and culminates with the affirmation of a multiracial identity. Other models approach racial/ethnic identity development for multiracial adolescents by examining the cultural knowledge, historical context, and the degree to which adolescents feel accepted or excluded by family and friends (Root, 2001; Suyemoto & Tawa, 2009).

In their study, Miville and associates (2005) found that parents, developmental period (i.e., elementary school years, high school years, college years) and certain places (e.g., school settings) were influential in the racial/ethnic identity development of participants during their adolescence. Miville et al. (2005) contended that these developmental periods heighten the multiracial adolescent's experience of being different from others in addition to influencing racial/ethnic identity development. For instance, if the multiracial adolescent's school is marked by tension surrounding ethnic issues, this tension may impinge upon one's self-acceptance (Miville et al., 2005).

Root (1996) proposed that youth with multiple racial heritages navigate this process by using four strategies, or border crossings. These border crossings include the ability to shift one's racial/ethnic identity to meet the needs of the environment, establish a multiracial reference status around family members, the ability to view life through more than one ethnic lens and the maintenance of a monoracial identity when the adolescent interprets this is warranted by the situation. Because multiracial youth have the genotype of more than two ethnic groups, it may be more difficult for this population to maintain a monoracial identity to meet the needs of their environment. Biracial racial/ethnic identity models propose that biracial youth can choose an identity somewhere on a spectrum with two points, but they do not account for the additional dimension of ethnicity for adolescents with three or more ethnic backgrounds.

It has been suggested that the Multiracial American racial/ethnic identity development literature is limited by the idea that Multiracial Americans are searching for a fully integrated racial/ethnic identity (Root, 1998, 1999, 2003b). On the contrary, it seems as if the process of identity development among this population is dynamic and continues throughout the person's childhood and young adulthood. Those Multiracial American young adults who achieve meaningful, balanced social identities demonstrate techniques such as shifting their ethnic identities when it is context-appropriate and the ability to access numerous

cultural perspectives when communicating with others (Root, 1996, 2003b).

Implications for working with multiracial adolescents in school settings. Rather than being forced to choose those parts of themselves that are most salient or meaningful, Herman (2004) discussed how “multiracial youth are simply at greater liberty to embrace all their racial identity, when given a chance” (p. 746). Mental health professionals working in school settings can help to facilitate the process of racial/ethnic identity development of multiracial adolescents by identifying and supporting these strengths. School counselors can work with multiracial adolescents to explore all aspects of racial/ethnic identity and help further define what their various identities mean to them.

White American Adolescents

The term White American assumes membership to one or more sub-ethnic groups with European origins. At close to 64%, non-Hispanic White Americans comprise the largest portion of the U.S. total population, although this number has decreased more than 5% since the year 2000 (Hixson, Hepler, & Kim, 2011). It is projected that what is described as today’s minority population will increase to the point at which it will represent the majority of people residing in the U.S. between 2040 and 2050, while the non-Hispanic White population is expected to decrease during this time (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). These projections show rapid changes in the U.S. demographic landscape.

A group of British and other northwestern European settlers came to what is now called the United States of America during the years 1607 and 1634 (Tehrani, 2000). After this early settlement, waves of other European immigrants including Irish, Greek, and Jewish peoples joined the White American ethnic group. Inter-marriage among this set of diverse sub-ethnicities was common (Warren & Twine, 1997).

When many of the German, Sicilian, and Irish immigrant groups first arrived to U.S. shores,

they were immediately relegated to the bottom of the social pecking order and worked alongside Black people in building the country (Fussel, 2007). Gradually, these immigrant groups worked their way up the ethnic social hierarchy to transcend stereotypes. This process often involved distancing themselves from Black Americans (Warren & Twine, 1997).

Today, some White Americans may have little association with their race and dissociate from its meaning. McDermott and Samson (2005) propose three major characteristics of White American racial/ethnic identity: it is invisible and often taken for granted; it is rooted in social and economic privilege; and its meaning is highly situational. In their review of recent developments in White American racial/ethnic identity research, these researchers found privilege, social status, and invisibility of White racial/ethnic identity to be highly mutable (McDermott & Samson). For example, if a White American adolescent has a marginalized status, his/her racial/ethnic identity is more likely to be less privileged than other White American adolescents. White American youth from low income families may not enjoy the same social privilege as White American adolescents with no such socioeconomic limitations (Buck, 2001; Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001).

White racial identity development (WRID) is one framework to understand the experience of one’s race as a White individual. Originally created by Helms (1990), this developmental model is comprised of six statuses of racial identity development, defined as constantly changing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional processes that determine how racial environments are interpreted within one’s interpersonal environment (Helms, 1995).

The first racial identity status of the WRID model is *Contact*, where the White adolescent denies or avoids racial information perceived as sensitive. Once White adolescents experience a racial event they cannot ignore, the WRID model suggests they progress toward the *Disintegration* status, where they begin to question stereotypes and other misguided racial beliefs. White adolescents experience *Reintegration* when the growing dissonance between their previously held

racially insensitive beliefs and invalid racial stereotypes causes them to regress to attitudes of White racial superiority. The fourth stage of Helms' (1990) WRID model suggests that White adolescents will begin to reject those superior attitudes when they reach *Pseudo-Independence* by beginning to consider how racism is maintained by White Americans. An understanding of race and racism during this status is primarily on an intellectual level.

At the fifth status, *Immersion-Emersion*, White adolescents commit to exploring one's Whiteness and its meaning. The final status of White American racial identity development, *Autonomy*, involves a rejection of racial oppression and being engaged in seeking out relationships across racial/ethnic groups (Clauss-Ehlers & Carter, 2005, 2006; Cross, 1991; Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1995).

There are several positive implications of racial/ethnic identity development for White American adolescents, including the ability to recognize and understand racism, to avoid internalizing negative external perceptions of White racial/ethnic identity, and the freedom to enjoy cultural values and practices (Frankenberg, 2001; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; McIntosh, 2003; Phinney, 1990). These are all productive, constructive ways to internalize WRID.

It has been suggested that White American identity is shaped in part from social exposure to non-Whites and that this exposure shapes how White Americans think and feel about themselves and their ethnic group (Knowles & Peng, 2005). White American adolescents who gain exposure to other White Americans with more developed White racial identity are likely to have examples for developing their own healthy racial/ethnic identity (Clauss-Ehlers & Carter, 2005, 2006). Thus, White American adolescents with diverse social networks and White Americans at more developed White racial identity statuses may gain insight into differing cultural values and ways of being, and, in turn, be privy to engage in a process of understanding and awareness.

Implications for working with White American adolescents in school settings. Mental health professionals can engage White American youth in a

dialogue about their perceptions of their own and other racial/ethnic groups in a safe environment. White adolescents can begin to construct their own racial/ethnic identities using positive messages and traits as building blocks. School administrators can aid in healthy development of racial/ethnic identity for White adolescents by creating multicultural opportunities and diverse social networks. It is hoped that this kind of outreach can initiate a process whereby White adolescents learn what it means to be White while also learning about cultural diversity, having diverse social networks, and have greater understanding of the ethnic minority experience in the U.S. (Mercer & Cunningham, 2003).

Conclusion

Our changing demographic landscape provides the context for diverse youth in the process of establishing their social and racial/ethnic identities. Adolescents at the crossroads of their racial/ethnic identity development face the challenge of how to merge individual values, traditional cultural/familial values, and societal values. Examining the complexities of present day adolescent identity development helps to shed light on some of the unforeseen challenges that tomorrow's adolescent may endure. Exploring racial/ethnic identity development among diverse racial/ethnic adolescents underscores the extent to which one must be cognizant of within-group differences (i.e., the vast array of differences within a racial/ethnic group) rather than merely focusing on between-group differences (i.e., differences between racial/ethnic groups). The amount of time required for *exploration* is shorter for some, longer for others; parents may wield explicit influence in the components of ethnicity their children will *commit* to, while some adolescents are more likely to rely upon peers in their decision making. For each ethnic group, an *achieved* racial/ethnic identity is certainly possible. When surveying the patterns of racial/ethnic identity development among diverse groups, it becomes clear that adolescents benefit from agents who are willing to facilitate, not control this process.

Mental health providers and school personnel are at the forefront of adults who work with adolescents on a day-to-day basis. Given this access, these professionals are encouraged to create safe environments that respect differences and guard against bias. Youth-serving professionals can be active advocates for adolescents, helping them navigate the complexities, not only of adolescence itself, but also those associated with acculturation and racial/ethnic identity development. The adaptive racial/ethnic identity development of tomorrow's adolescent may incorporate a complex network of community, family influences, and the adolescent him- or herself. By granting each component the respect it deserves, practitioners can help tomorrow's adolescent integrate multiple social/reference group identities.

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