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RACE PSYCHOLOGY

From a historical perspective, *race psychology* in its broad meaning can be divided into four overlapping periods. At the beginning stood the association of race with certain aspects of the psyche or soul. Although so-called great thinkers provided prejudicial assessments of various ethnic groups (e.g., Aristotle) or attributed psychological qualities to certain cultures and types, such as the *noble savage* (e.g., J.-J. Rousseau), the systematic combination of psychological characteristics with race occurred in the 18th century, when humanity was classified into distinct groups.

RACE AND SOUL

Carolus Linnaeus combined in his human taxonomy varieties of humans (races) with psychological, natural, and social characteristics. He assigned the classical temperaments to four races: The *white Europeans* were defined as sanguine and governed by law; the *red Americans* as choleric and governed by custom; the *yellow Asians* as melancholic and governed by opinion; and the *black Africans* as phlegmatic and governed by the will of the master. The construction of psychological, aesthetic, moral, and natural competencies for various races was a common academic endeavor engaged in by scientists and philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, who described, for example, Africans as lazy.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RACE PSYCHOLOGY

The application of and the appeal to science introduced the second period of race psychology, when scientific observations were combined with the ideology

of race. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach advanced the concept of the Caucasian based on his idea that European culture did not originate in Africa but was born in the Caucasus. Based on an analysis of skulls, he concluded that the prototype of the Caucasian could be recognized in the beautiful skull of a Georgian woman, with Georgia being located in the Caucasus. The term *Caucasian*, still used in empirical studies of psychology, has, however, no scientific meaning at all. In the second half of the 19th century, some European scholars suggested that the Caucasian variety divided into two branches, identified as Semites and Aryans. Both were associated with different psychological characteristics and formed the theoretical basis for German fascism and the race psychology of Hitler's regime. The second half of the 19th century also saw the association of mental ability and race. In the 1860s, John Langdon H. Down studied the structure and function of various organs in *idiots* and *imbeciles*. One group he observed was characterized by round faces, flattened skulls, extra folds of skin over the eyelids, protruding tongues, short limbs, and the retardation of motor and mental abilities. Down went on to classify this group on the basis of their resemblance to racial groups. He was convinced that the facial features and behavioral attributes of these individuals represented typical Mongols—hence his term *mongolism* for what is now called *Down syndrome* (trisomy 21). Pioneer of social psychology Gustav Le Bon combined intellectual ability, emotion, and volition with an ideology of race. Races were for him physiologically and psychologically distinct entities, and because all members of a race share an immutable race soul, races were conceived as different species. Eminent figures in the history of psychology participated in scientific racism and race psychology. Paul Broca was convinced that non-European races were inferior and used a variety of scientific tools to prove his preconceived conviction. Francis Galton showed contempt for Africans in his expeditions and writings. He argued that Europeans were by nature more intelligent than so-called primitive races and suggested the quantification of levels of racial intelligence. In the United States, pioneers of psychology such as Granville Stanley Hall, first president of the American Psychological Association, argued that "lower races" were in a state of adolescence, a claim that provided the rationale for segregation and the separate education of African Americans, First Nations people, and European Americans. From a theoretical point of view, the

appropriation of Darwin's theory provided a tool for justifying colonialism because it was seen as the struggle between races. (Northern) Europeans were understood as the champions of evolution.

THE HEYDAY OF RACE PSYCHOLOGY

Empirical race psychology was most prominent during the first half of the 20th century. Race psychologists of that time used the accepted methods of the discipline and applied them to the empirical comparison of various races. An early example is the research that emerged from the Cambridge Torres Straits Expedition, the psychological results of which were published at the beginning of the 20th century and concerned mostly psychophysiological data on racial differences. Many race-psychological studies were used to demonstrate the inferiority of certain races and thus were part of the project of *scientific racism*. Among the other issues covered by race psychologists were immigration and the fear of the decline of national stock. Psychologists participated in empirically evidencing the inferiority of Southern and Eastern Europeans and African Americans. Based on a huge amount of empirical data, specifically the results of the Army Mental Tests, administered to 1.75 million recruits during World War I, it was concluded that there were inborn racial differences between European Americans and African Americans, and between various European races. Psychological studies played a significant role in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, which imposed quotas on so-called less intelligent ethnic groups from Europe. Leading American psychologists, including American Psychological Association president Robert M. Yerkes, who played a decisive role in the army testing, and Lewis Terman, who supported segregated education, participated in race psychology. Popular in race psychology was also the study of the mulatto hypothesis, which suggested that more European American blood in one's African American ancestry led to higher intelligence. Empirical psychological studies divided subjects into *dark children*, *medium-in-color children*, and *light-colored children*; or into *pure negroes*, *negroes three-fourths pure*, *mulattoes proper*, and *quadroons*; or into *pure Indian blood*, *three-quarters Indian blood*, *one-half Indian blood*, and *one-quarter Indian blood*. Most of the empirical studies executed during this period were unable to overcome prejudicial ideas and were grounded in the project of scientific racism. Empirical studies often

found differences, but these differences, if they were real, did not speak for themselves and were interpreted in racist terms. They were understood as natural differences between races and seldom as cultural variations. Empirical studies were also unable to challenge the cultural meaning of psychological instruments, concepts, theories, and methods. The results of empirical race psychology were presented as scientific knowledge, and this situation continued to some extent into the second half of the 20th century. In particular, studies on differences between races in intelligence continue a racist legacy when differences are interpreted as representing essential racial divisions or when ideas of inferiority and superiority are invoked.

THE DECLINE OF RACE PSYCHOLOGY

After World War II and the international recognition that racism was an essential component of the atrocities committed in the name of racial superiority in Europe and Asia, empirical race psychology, which could not overcome its racist connotations, declined. In social psychology, the shift from race psychology to the study of prejudice was completed. Although not generally acknowledged in psychology, the move from understanding race as a natural and biological category to viewing it as a social and historical concept was also significant. This reconceptualization was partially inaugurated through the advancement of genetic analyses that showed that the variation *within* traditionally conceptualized races is much larger than between them. Empirical studies that include race as a variable are now often motivated by the idea that a sociohistorical concept of race should be taken into account when making generalizations in psychology. In fact, the concept of race has been abandoned in favor of the concept of ethnicity, and empirical differences are not interpreted as inborn and reflecting a natural hierarchy but as differences that must be understood in the context of the multicultural reality of North America. Empirical race psychology also demonstrates that scientific methods are not sufficient to prevent bias, prejudice, and racism. In fact, empirical methods were used to support racism. Race psychology has participated in epistemic violence, meaning that knowledge has been produced to shape negatively the lives, health, and opportunities of minorities. Challenges to the concept of race will emerge from studies of the human genome, which might lead to the transformation of race psychology into population psychology. However, a postcolonial

psychology must move from conceptualizing race as a problem to understanding and identifying the problems that ethnic minorities encounter within a dominant sociocultural context.

—Thomas Teo

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RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Researchers have long been intrigued by the processes by which young children transform nascent notions of race into mature identities in a racialized sociocultural context. Research on racial identity dates back more than 50 years and has produced findings that have influenced profound changes in social policy in the United States. Specifically, seminal studies by Kenneth and Mamie Clark were cited in support of the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which concluded that segregated schools were not equal, resulting in the court order to desegregate public schools throughout the United States.

RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Below is a brief overview of theories explaining racial identity development. Within this literature, two overarching theoretical approaches have been used to conceptualize racial identity development. The first approach applies developmental theories to account for maturational changes in racial identity from early childhood through adolescence and includes work by Frances Aboud, Jean Phinney, and Stephen Quintana. This approach applies developmental principles discovered in other domains of children's functioning to

conceptualize children's understanding of race. For example, Aboud applied neo-Piagetian theories concerning children's understanding of their social world to explain the development of their understanding of their racial world.

The second approach, framing racial identity from a social identity perspective using Henri Tajfel's theory, suggests that racial identity is affected by many factors associated with the dynamics of social identification with a group. Research for the second approach includes seminal work by Kenneth and Mamie Clark and, more recently, by Robert Sellers. Social identity theory suggests that specific social dynamics occur when someone identifies with a group. For example, identification with a group leads to bias toward the in-group and against out-groups. Racial identity theorists have shown that the identification with a racial group, particularly when that racial group is stigmatized, is associated with the formation of particular attitudes toward the racial in-group and toward racial out-groups. Social identity theory describes the social and personal effects of belonging to a group, where *identity* is developed through membership in a group that is valuable to the individual. This theory also posits that identification with group membership can increase self-esteem and the sense of positive racial attitudes to an in-group. Social identity theory has been successfully applied to the study of racial identity and has been empirically supported for separate groups, including Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans.

Taken together, these two overarching theoretical approaches suggest that racial identity development is influenced by the maturation of cognitive and psychological processes internal to the child or adolescent and by the child or adolescent's context of complex sociocultural group dynamics. Most racial identity theories integrate both developmental and social identity perspectives but do so with different emphases. Quintana's model is used below to identify critical milestones in racial identity development.

Early Childhood

During preschool and early elementary grades, children's understanding of their social world is based on their observation of physical features. Consequently, children's understanding of race and ethnicity is based on their observation of the physical features associated with race, including skin color, facial