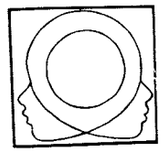

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

A series of books edited by **David S. Palermo**

OSHERSON • *Logical Abilities in Children*
Volume 1 • *Organization of Length and Class Concepts: Empirical Consequences of a Piagetian Formalism*
Volume 2 • *Logical Inference: Underlying Operations*
Volume 3 • *Reasoning in Adolescence: Deductive Inference*
Volume 4 • *Reasoning and Concepts*
FREEDMAN • *Human Infancy: An Evolutionary Perspective*
DEPALMA and FOLEY • *Moral Development: Current Theory and Research*
KLAHR and WALLACE • *Cognitive Development: An Information-Processing View*
SMITH and FRANKLIN • *Symbolic Functioning in Childhood*
HAITH • *Rules That Babies Look By: The Organization of Newborn Visual Activity*
FIELD, SOSTEK, VIETZE, and LEIDERMAN • *Culture and Early Interactions*
SHAPIRO and WEBER • *Cognitive and Affective Growth: Developmental Interaction*
KUCZAJ • *Language Development, V. 1: Syntax and Semantics*
KUCZAJ • *Language Development, V. 2: Language, Thought, and Culture*
HALFORD • *The Development of Thought*
OLSON and BIALSTOK • *Spatial Cognition: The Structure and Development of Mental Representations of Spatial Relations*
LERNER • *Developmental Psychology: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives*
THE CONSORTIUM FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES • *As the Twig is Bent... Lasting Effects on Preschool Programs*
ANISFELD • *Language Development from Birth to Three*
YAWKEY and PELLEGRINI • *Childs Play: Developmental and Applied*
MCLAUGHLIN • *Second Language Acquisition in Childhood, V. 1: Preschool Children, Second Edition*
MCLAUGHLIN • *Second Language Acquisition in Childhood, V. 2: School-age Children, Second Edition*
FISHBEIN • *The Psychology of Infancy and Childhood*
SPENCER, BROOKINS, and ALLEN • *Beginnings: The Social and Affective Development of Black Children*
FAST • *Event Theory: A Piaget-Freud Integration*

BEGINNINGS:

THE SOCIAL AND AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK CHILDREN

Edited by

Margaret Beale Spencer
Emory University

Geraldine Kearse Brookins
Jackson State University

Walter Recharde Allen
The University of Michigan

LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
1985 Hillsdale, New Jersey London

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers
365 Broadway
Hillsdale, New Jersey 07642

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

Beginnings : the social and affective development of black children.
Bibliography: p.
Includes indexes.
1. Afro-American children—Psychology—Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Afro-American families—Addresses, essays, lectures. 3. Afro-Americans—Race identity—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Spencer, Margaret B. II. Brookins, Geraldine K. III. Allen, Walter R.
E185.86.B377 1985 155.4'5796073 84-24742
ISBN 0-89859-520-7

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedicated to the Memory

of

Jean V. Carew
1936–1981

Committed scholar, faithful colleague,
and friend of black children.

Contents

developmental sequence of racial classification, sketched in this preliminary work, holds for larger, more varied samples.

A crucial task of further research is to follow the developmental course of race awareness to its conclusion with the inclusion of a more extended age range. As previously stated, the 10 year old's knowledge of racial categories bears only some semblance to that of the adult. It is critical that we follow the child's racial concept, from the preschool years to, at least, middle adolescence to document the major changes in the child's awareness over this span of years. Impressionistic data (primarily anecdotal material) suggest that a sophisticated concept of race, in its multifaceted manifestation, is not realized until adolescence.

Moreover it is equally important to examine the affective, experiential, and environmental factors which impact on the ontogeny of the child's conception of race. Given that race is a particular, socially determined category, it is important to identify factors (e.g. popular media, school, family, environment, etc.) which contribute building blocks to the child's construction of racial categories. The anthropologist Brace observes that "The reality of races as biological entities . . . is to be found in the human conviction that they exist. . . They are real because people believe they are. . ." (Williams and Morland, 1976). Thus, we need to examine how these nearly elusive categories of race become a shared basis of reference in spite of their inherent ambiguities.

Finally, future research should examine whether the developmental stage sequence of racial classification identified in this study is characteristic of a coherent universal system of thought. Cross-cultural studies are necessary to correct this deficiency in the literature. Because racial typologies vary across societies, there may be differences in the content of children's racial categories. However, we speculate that the socio-cognitive developmental view will remain consistent across cultures, with the structure of the child's reasoning progressing from an idiosyncratic, to a physical, to a biological, and finally, to a social conception of race.

12 No Place to Run, No Place to Hide: Comparative Status and Future Prospects of Black Boys

Bruce Robert Hare
State University of New York—Stony Brook

Louis A. Castenell Jr.
Xavier University of Louisana

Something happens when the son knows that the father cannot do anything about it. Something happens to the father too.
—James Baldwin (1981).

INTRODUCTION

Recent reports on mortality rates in the United States indicated that black males were the only race/sex group for whom the average life expectancy actually declined between 1960 and 1970 (Staples, 1978). They also have the shortest life expectancy and the highest high school dropout rate. Current unemployment rates among black youth in major cities in the United States are reported to be as high as 47%. While black males were approximately 6% of the population, they constituted over 42% of the inmates, and as of 1978, 47% of those on death row. Black males have traditionally entered predominately black colleges at lower rates than black women (Gurin & Epps, 1975).

Little has been offered to explain the uniquely endangered status of the black male in America or the forces that have historically acted to limit his possibilities. To be sure, he has not been ignored, which the abundance of negative literature will attest. However, the socialization processes and the educational and occupational structures that create and perpetuate these conditions have scarcely been addressed. The disjunction between role expectations and reality must also be addressed.

The simultaneous existence of normative male role expectations and the "fact" of black male underachievement provides "proof" of the inadequacy of black men. Consequently, while both the black man and those for whom he is supposed to provide, may intellectually understand racism as the cause of his relative inability to provide, the reality of his failure will impact on his life. Both

his self-image and his dependents' view of him will be affected. The existence of an aracial provider role stereotype, along with racial inequality, and the black man's inability to successfully play the role, makes for a racial stereotype most attainable by middle and upper class white men. In short, while he shares the burden of racism with black women, the black male's structured failure to meet the normative male cultural standard as a successful bread winner, protector, father, and husband increases his vulnerability in the general society, his own home, and his own mind. He has no place to run, no place to hide.

While cultural stereotypes regarding his shiftlessness, laziness, or innate inferiority, are easy explanations, they fail to address the conditions against which he must struggle from childhood. Clearly, the preceding information, at the very least suggests that the prospects for black boys, as an aggregate, are relatively dismal. The need to investigate the mechanisms through which they are brought from assumed equal potential at birth, to a disadvantaged adult status, becomes urgent.

It is the intent of this paper to investigate the comparative self-perception and achievement of a sample of 10 and 11 year old preadolescent black boys. The objective is to ascertain their current status and whether there exists early indicators of their future precarious status. The attempt is to identify black boys' shared characteristics with their two general membership groups (i.e., blacks and males), their unique characteristics, and potential connections between their characteristics and future prospects. Data for the paper are from a 1977 study of 500 fifth grade students in Champaign, IL.

There have been few studies comparing black boys and girls. Most studies of black children have been race studies which failed to provide information on sex differences. Most studies of sex differences have been on white middle-class children and adults (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Thus the specific comparison of black boys and girls, and black and white boys offers an opportunity to study black boys in a more systematic way, and raises the possibility of eliciting a clearer picture of their relative status. The study of sex differences among white children has proven to be a poor predictor of sex differences among blacks (Lewis, 1975). So too has the general study of race difference proven a questionable means of assessing within-sex race differences (Hare, 1980a).

This study raises three questions for investigation:

1. Do black boys and white boys differ significantly in self-perception and achievement?
2. Do black boys and black girls differ significantly in self-perception and achievement?
3. Does the relative self-perception and achievement of the black boys shed any possible light on their future status?

The dimensions on which comparisons are made are general self-esteem, area-specific (i.e., school, peer, and home) self-esteem, self-concept of ability, achievement orientation, general anxiety, sense of control, importance of social abilities, and performance on standardized reading and math achievement tests.

OVERVIEW

Because of the scarcity of literature directed to the study of black boys, the following overview will be presented within the context of what is known about sex and race differences in general.

Sex Difference

Most of the psychological work on sex differences has been done with white middle-class American children and adults. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reported no significant sex differences among children in general self-esteem, confidence in task performance, achievement orientation, sense of control or verbal (reading) and math ability, although they reported a tendency for girls to score higher in verbal abilities than boys. They also reported boys to be more independent; to have more positive peer interaction, possess a higher self-concept of strength and potency; and to have lower anxiety scores than girls. There is little comparative sex data on area-specific (school, peer, and home) self-esteem. However, recent area-specific research (Hare, 1977a) on black and white children of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, revealed no significant sex differences on these dimensions when race and SES were controlled.

Although we would generally expect similar sex findings for black boys and girls, the possibility of varying patterns of sex differences across racial groups must be considered. Arguing an egalitarian character of black culture, some researchers have hypothesized fewer sex differences among black children and adults (Gutman, 1976; Lewis, 1975; Willie, 1976).

Race Differences

There is a long tradition which reports lower general self-esteem among black children than among white children (Clark & Clark, 1947; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951). The theoretical premise of this school of thought was succinctly stated by Kardiner and Ovesey (1951) when they postulated, "the basic fact is that in the Negro aspiration level, good conscience and even good performance are irrelevant in face of the glaring fact that the Negro gets a poor reflection of himself in the behavior of whites, no matter what he does or what his merits are" (p. 297). The foundation of this assumption is that as a people in a predominately white culture, blacks are incapable of rejecting the negative images of themselves that are held by whites. This tradition has been based on interpretive analysis of why black children chose white dolls over black dolls, and studies that often used psychiatric patients to make generalizations about the

black population at large. Such research also frequently ignored the effect of socioeconomic background on self-esteem. Because such studies often compared lower-class blacks and middle-class whites, and attributed all differences to race, their results are highly questionable.

In contrast, more recent studies with larger and more representative samples, and SES controls, have ranged from finding no significant differences among white and black boys (Edwards, 1974; Calhoun, Kuriffs & Warren, 1976) to finding blacks scoring higher (Bachman, 1970; Hare, 1977a). There has been little cross-race research on area-specific (school, peer and home) self-esteem. Coopersmith's (1967) major work in this area used a restricted sample of white, male, middle-class children. However, more recent research by Hare (1977a) reported a significant race difference only in school self-esteem, although a subsequent study by Hare (1980b) showed no significant race difference on any of the area-specific self-esteem measures.

Significant race differences also have been reported on other variables germane to this article. Blacks were reported having a higher self-concept of ability than whites (Hare, 1980b); lower achievement orientation (Hare, 1980b; Rosen, 1959); lower sense of control (Battle & Rotter, 1963; Hare, 1980b); higher concern with social abilities (Dreger & Miller, 1968; Hare, 1980b); and lower scores on standardized reading and math achievement tests (Coleman, Campbell 1966; Hare, 1980b). However, these findings are from studies which did not compare the black and white boys separately, but rather analyzed a pooled sample of black and white children of both sexes.

METHODS

Sample

This study was conducted in the Champaign, IL school system in the spring of 1977. The complete sample of over 500 subjects included all fifth graders (10–11 years old) in the district who participated with parental approval and were in school on the days of the survey. Over 90% of the total fifth grade population completed questionnaires. The literature supports the belief that both in stability and ability, children at this age are an ideal sample for such a study (Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973).

Instruments

A 30 item general and area-specific (school, peer, and home) self-esteem scale developed by Hare was used to measure self-esteem. School, peer, and home self-esteem were the three 10 item subscales of this general measure (Hare, 1975; Shoemaker, 1980). A seven item general self-esteem measure by Rosenberg (1965) was also included as an additional general self-esteem measure. Self-concept of ability was assessed by five of Brookover's (1965) items, and general anxiety by Sarason's et al. (1964) scale. Academic achievement was measured by performance on the math and reading sections of a standardized metropolitan achievement test administered district wide in the fall of 1976. Sense of control was measured by Coleman and Campbell's (1966) three item internal versus external control measure. Higher scores on this measure indicate a greater belief in internal control. Finally, achievement orientation was measured by Epps' (1971) 13 item scale, and social abilities by a scale developed by Hare (1975).

Socioeconomic divisions were developed from the Blau and Duncan (1967) index of occupational status. The index was divided into thirds based on head of household's occupation. The index is divided such that the first point approximated the separation of manual from nonmanual labor, and the second division approximates the point of separation between nonprofessional and professional workers. Educational background of parents was used as an additional social class indicator.

Analysis

To investigate the questions, a set of separate 2×3 (black boys versus black girls and white boys by blue collar, lower white collar, upper white collar) analyses of variance were used. The test reported for each main factor effect (race and sex) is equivalent to the test for the unique proportion of the variance accounted for by each factor in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. As such, it is a conservative test of the importance of race and sex, since the variance accounted for jointly by race and SES (or by sex and SES) is removed before assessing the significance of race and sex.

RESULTS

Sex Differences Between Black Boys and Black Girls

Whereas literature reviewed on sex comparisons between white children reveal few differences, black boys and girls in our sample differed on a variety of important dimensions (see Tables 12-1 and 12-2). Our results were consistent with the literature for similar aged whites in reporting no significant sex differences among blacks in general self-esteem or sense of control. The results were also consistent with the literature on whites in reporting black boys scoring lower than black girls in general anxiety (means 11.84 and 14.54, respectively) and reading achievement (means 25.90 and 34.31 respectively), and in showing among black boys a tendency toward higher peer self-esteem, and significantly higher ratings of the importance of social abilities. However, our results differed

TABLE 12.1
Analysis of Variance for Compared Groups
(Significance of "F Values" From Two
by Three ANOVAs for Compared Groups)

Variables	*Black Boys vs. Black Girls Sex differences within race*	*Black Boys vs. White Boys Race differences within sex*
Rosenberg General Self-Esteem	.354	.196
Hare General Self-Esteem	.768	.275
School Self-Esteem	.082	.060
Peer Self-Esteem	.067	.789
Home Self-Esteem	.654	.397
Self-Concept of Ability	.194	.183
Achievement Orientation	.042*g	.000***w
General Anxiety	.042*g	.691
Sense of Control	.713	.031*w
Social Abilities	.012*b	.000***bl
Read Ability	.004**g	0.000***w
Math Ability	.026*g	0.000***w

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001
g = Girls higher; b = Boys higher; bl = Blacks higher; w = Whites higher

from the literature on white children, in that black boys score significantly lower than their female counterparts in math ability (means of 24.48 and 31.96, respectively), achievement orientation (means of 32.82 and 34.55), and tended toward lower school self-esteem.

It should be noted that separate comparison of white boys and girls did not differ significantly on these dimensions. There were no significant differences between black boys and girls in home self-esteem or self-concept of ability. It should also be noted that none of the sex by socioeconomic interaction values were significant. In short, our data suggest some very important sex differences between black boys and girls, particularly with regard to the school related dimension of achievement (and achievement orientation), in which girls hold a

clear advantage. The only dimensions where the boys scored higher, were the non school dimensions of social abilities, and peer self-esteem.

Race Differences Between Black Boys and White Boys

Consistent with more recent studies of race differences in general and area-specific (school, peer, home) self-esteem, the results indicated no significant differences on any of these measures between the black and white boys. Nevertheless, as previous studies of race differences have reported, the black boys scored significantly lower than the white boys on sense of control (means 8.98 and 9.88), achievement orientation (means 32.82 and 37.49), performance on

TABLE 12.2
Group Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	*Black Boys*		*Black Girls*		*White Boys*	
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
Rosenberg General Self-Esteem	21.20	3.37	20.87	4.02	22.63	3.53
Hare General Self-Esteem	88.40	11.39	88.85	12.05	91.86	11.59
School Self-Esteem	27.70	5.27	29.45	5.33	30.05	5.07
Peer Self-Esteem	29.04	4.53	27.42	4.36	28.76	4.94
Home Self-Esteem	31.66	5.54	31.99	5.01	33.05	5.13
Self-Concept of Ability	18.54	3.85	19.39	3.06	18.52	3.19
Achievement Orientation	32.82	5.28	34.55	5.21	37.49	5.74
General Anxiety	11.84	6.54	14.54	6.89	10.38	6.44
Sense of Control	8.98	2.04	8.76	1.68	9.88	1.70
Social Abilities	33.66	3.89	31.43	5.05	31.06	4.41
Reading Ability	25.90	15.23	34.31	18.72	51.40	26.24
Math Ability	24.48	13.87	31.96	18.22	48.70	26.46
	n = 50		n = 67		n = 241	

standardized reading (means 25.90 and 51.40) and math tests (means 24.48 and 48.70). The black boys, however, scored significantly higher on social abilities ratings (means of 33.66 and 31.06, respectively), and showed a tendency toward higher peer self-esteem (see Table 12.2).

Black Boys Current Status and Future Prospects

Although the data were of limited value for projecting the future status of these black boys, they nevertheless painted an illuminating picture. A picture which was not at all inconsistent with the contemporary status of black men as outlined at the beginning of this paper.

The existence, for example, of standardized test performance differences which place black boys at the bottom of the reading and math hierarchy is consistent with their lower rates of college attendance. Their lower achievement orientation scores and trends toward lower school and higher peer self-esteem were consistent with the higher high school dropout rates of black boys, as well as was the reportedly greater role of peers and nonacademic activities, in influencing their general self-esteem. The absence of significant differences in general self-esteem between black boys, and either the black girls or white boys, further suggested that whatever academic liabilities black boys suffer may already be compensated for by their perceived social assets. In short, while projections about their relative future are tenuous at best, these black boys do appear to currently hold an attainment position, which, if not altered during adolescence, will ultimately deliver them to the same relative disadvantaged status currently outlined for black men.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion we attempt to theorize regarding some reasons for the contemporary comparative status and future prospects of black boys. We look at the nature of their interactions at home, in schools, and with peers. Theoretically, these three arenas may be considered the child's universe. It is further assumed that the quality of interactions here, as well as the level of consensus or conflicts among the significant others across these arenas, are critical to the self-perception and performance of children (Hare, 1977b).

Black Boys at Home

The existence of sex differences in academic performance as well as attitudes toward school among black children, suggests a need to investigate sex role socialization practices in black homes. To be sure, the absence of differences in self-esteem at home by sex among black children suggests that they feel equally

adjusted. Nevertheless, unless the school is to receive *total blame* for the achievement differential, both the home and the peers deserve attention. Some authors have, in fact, begun to theorize about the characteristics of black child socialization that might shed light on these findings. For example, Kunkel and Kennard (1971) argued that "mothers are apt to be strong disciplinarians, particularly toward daughters, from whom they expect more responsibility than sons" [p. 46]. McAdoo (1979) also reported more fathers expected their daughters to be independent and assertive in relation to their sons. Lewis (1975) concluded in a study of black families that "while mothers have high expectations for their daughters they do not expect as much from their sons" [p. 236]. Allen (1978c) concurred by suggesting that black parents are likely to be harder on their same sex children, since they have responsibility for teaching the specifics of the future role. Thus, since fathers are likely to be out of the home more often, daughters are more likely to be under the more stringent continuous discipline of their mothers. Reid (1972), in a survey of over 200 black women, noted that many felt their brothers received preferential treatment, got away with more, and were generally raised differently. It is tenable then to conclude that black boys are treated differently at home than black girls.

The combination of the Allen notion, more restrictive socialization of black girls than boys by mothers, and the possibility of a better fit between the black girls and school, probably accounts for reported sex differences in attitudes and academic achievement among black children. The implication for the rearing of black boys is that lessons from the more effective academic socialization and control of black girls by black families should be applied toward black boys.

The effects of the presence or absence of fathers, and successful male role models as they condition the socialization of black boys should also be studied. Specifically, given the preponderance of athletes and entertainers over academically successful black male role models that these boys are exposed to through the media, one must wonder if these boys are in fact being *led* to the unrealistic view that nonacademic pursuits are higher probability roads to success. This possibility becomes even more tenable when one considers that they are likely to be exposed to educationally unsuccessful male role models in their real world.

Black Boys in School

Given gender performance and attainment differences, there exists a dire need to investigate schools as potential contributors to this pattern. While conventional wisdom would have us believe that every child begins the great quest for status at the same starting line, there is ample evidence to suggest that such egalitarian theories are myths (Hare, 1977b). For example, Cicourel and Kitsuse's (1963) study of educational decision makers, after examining the egalitarian assumption, concluded that quite the opposite is true. Lavin (1965), in a study predicting academic performance concluded, ". . . some evidence suggests that implicit

subjective criteria are involved in teacher grading practices . . . the more the student's atttitudes and values coincide with those of the teacher, the higher the student's academic performance will be'' (pp. 20 and 150). Thus these studies suggest that the greater the commonality of characteristics and attitude between student and teacher, the higher the possibility of positive outcome. Conversely, the lower the commonality, the greater the possibility for conflict and failure. Other authors, such as Parsons (1959), Smith and Brache (1962), Greeley and Rossi (1966), and Hare (1977b), have posited that the quality of teacher/parent interaction also varies by their commonality of characteristic and values, with direct implications for the academic socialization and performance of children.

This phenomenon may both explain why middle-class, white children are most effectively educated in the American public schools, and why lower class, nonwhite children are least effectively educated. The latter are, in theory, less likely to share the middle-class, white oriented values of their teachers. Such a possibility, needless to say, does not argue well for the schooling prospects of black children in general, or black boys in particular.

With specific reference to teacher behaviors and student race, Epps (1975) concluded that ''turning from student characteristics to the learning environment provided by the school, there is ample evidence that teachers perceive minority students differently than they perceive white students'' (p. 311). The belief among black children that they can succeed, ''but that someone or something is blocking their progress'' (Hare, 1980b, p. 687), and the greater discrepancy between their expected and actual achievement scores (West, Fish & Stevens, 1980), suggest that black children may know this themselves. Rubovitz and Maehr (1973) reported a surprising race difference in patterns of gifted student treatment, with black gifted children experiencing *more* discrimination than those labeled nongifted. Katz (1967) concludes, in an analytic study of teacher attitudes, that:

> the meaning of these teacher differences is that on the average, children from low income homes, most of whom are Negro, get more than their fair share of classroom exposure to teachers who are really unqualified for their role, who basically resent teaching them and who therefore behave in ways that foster in the more dependent students, tendencies toward debilitating self-criticism. (p. 177)

Given suggested sex differences in student treatment, it seems logical to investigate whether there also exist within race sex differences in teacher treatment of black children. If the idea that commonality of characteristics is conducive to support and differences conducive to conflict, is sound, then black boys, and especially lower-class black boys, would theoretically experience the greatest potential conflict, in a middle-class, white female dominated public elementary school system. Black males might also be theorized to have the greatest difficulty in the middle-class, white male dominated postelementary

schools. The assumptions here are that shared sex might prove slightly beneficial to the relationship between black girls and their white female teachers, and that black girls may also be perceived as less threatening by white males.[1]

While there are no data to confirm these speculations, it is the authors' opinion that these factors are urgently in need of investigation. The work of Grant (1984) may fill some of this void. The findings of her study about the relationship of race-sex status to schooling experiences indicate that, black boys are privately rated lowest in educational ability by teachers, although most often praised. They have the least ''personal chit chat'' with the teachers and are least likely to approach the teacher if failing. They are most often threatened by the teacher, sent to the principal or guidance counselor, and disciplined by calling in the parents. Additionally, Rosenberg and Simmons (1971), and Hare (1977a, consistent with the Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) finding of a sex difference among whites) found black girls receiving significantly higher grades than black boys. Interviewed teachers have also reported that black girls receive better conduct ratings, and behave better (more passively?) than black boys. However, black boys are not without school success and are most likely overrepresented in school athletic achievement. This further suggests that the ''non-academic but athletically gifted'' stereotype of black males may also condition school personnel to route black boys toward athletic activity at the possible expense of academics, both creating and reinforcing the stereotype (Braddock, 1980).

Existing evidence concerning race and sex differences in the quality of the school experience, suggests that the lower attainment, greater negative attitudes, and higher attrition rates of black boys may, in part, be due to the unique problem that they present to the schools. Put simply, black males are probably the most feared, least likely to be identified with, and least likely to be effectively taught group. If this is true, then the responsibility for their lower attainment should be shifted from them, their families, and peers, to the alien, indifferent if not hostile, climate of the schools. Furthermore, their reportedly more negative attitude toward school should be seen, not as the cause of their low attainment, but as a consequence of their mistreatment.

It should also be noted that the school plays a unique role in allocating people to different positions in the occupational system through routing and grading practices (Anderson, 1968). Relative success in school is, in fact, the major avenue through which discrimination in the job market is justified. People in lower status jobs are said to *deserve* them, being the losers in a ''fair'' competition.

[1]It should be emphasized that whatever slight advantage in treatment black girls might accrue relative to black boys, they also remain significantly behind Whites of both sexes in attainment. The fact that black girls are also least likely to attend professional schools, leaves them most underrepresented in many of the highest status occupations. Thus, sex role socialization to traditional female typed occupational choices (nurse, teacher, social worker, etc.) also serves to discourage higher attainment, by conditioning them to ''self-select'' out (Cole, 1981).

Given racism and classism in America, it can be argued that the disproportionate allocation of black males to the lowest male labor slots is intended and functional. It goes without saying that their relative academic failure is essential to getting the job done. Their failure feeds the lowest ranks of the military, fills the unskilled labor pool, and provides necessary unemployed workers. Furthermore, the myth of equal educational opportunity increases the probability that these black men will blame themselves for their failure, accept their low status, and be seen as getting what they deserve.

Black Boys and Peers

Although our sample of preadolescent boys, at ages 10 and 11, are probably too young to be fully entrenched in a peer culture, they are already showing a trend toward higher peer self-esteem. It may be theorized that as black boys age and progressively lose in school evaluations, they shift toward peer evaluations, in search of higher possibilities of success and ego enhancement. As indicated by Castenell (1983) in a recent study of area-specific achievement motivation, if an adolescent is discouraged by significant others, or through repeated failure, to perceive achievement within the school environment, then that adolescent may choose to achieve in another arena. Cummings (1977) reported that as black boys grow older, their values are more influenced by peers than is true for other groups; and that the maintenance of ego and self-respect increasingly requires peer solidarity. These authors further support the possible existence of a progressive shift in motivation and attachment from the school to the peers among black boys, and particularly urban, lower-class black boys. They also suggested that such a shift is a logical pursuit of "achievement" and positive "strokes," and a flight from failure and ego damaging experiences. Given this possibility and the relative failure of black males in the American educational system, it is plausible to discuss black adolescent peer culture as a short term achievement arena, but a long term wash-out plan.

Although the benefits are short term, and unlikely to pay off in the adult occupational structure, the black male adolescent peer culture may also be viewed as an achievement arena. Consistent with Castenell's (1984) area-specific achievement motivation notion, Maehr and Lysy (1978), also questioned traditional restricted cultural and academic notions of achievement motivation. They posit that contextual conditions are important in expressions of achievement motivations, and that the particular form in which achievement is expressed is determined by the definition that culture gives to it. They further indicated that motivation is manifest in a broad range of activities, and that motivational questions are questions of the ways in which, rather than whether, people are motivated. It would take no more than the observation of a serious basketball game in a lower-class black community playground, to observe the need to achieve. Other abilities such as mastering the streets, sexual conquests, supplementing family income, and taking on aspects of adult roles at early ages, also provide opportunities to demonstrate competence (Hare, 1977b). It should be noted that although the larger culture views these patterns as maladaptive and strange, they are, within the cultural milieu, perfectly realistic, adaptive, and respected responses to reality (Davis, 1948).

The black boy's peer culture may be regarded as a dead end mainly because, even though it succeeds in providing alternative outlets for achievement through the demonstration of competence, it offers little hope of long term legitimate success. The real dangers are that it often drafts young boys into the self-destructive worlds of drugs and crime. The notion of "peer solidarity" (Cummings, 1977) also suggests an anti intellectual strain between peers and the schooling experience. It should be re-emphasized, however, that the collectively negative schooling experiences of black boys produce this anti school sentiment, rather than the opposite. The apparent contradiction between "being cool and doing school," becomes more a necessary affirmation of the possibility of being cool without suffering school, and a self-protection, rather than a purely anti school ideology.

In summary, given the presence of negative schooling experiences, the availability of positive peer experiences, and the inability of adolescents to perceive the long term consequences of youthful decisions, these boys can be said to be making a logical decision in shifting from school to peers. In the long run, of course, they are disproportionately washed out of legitimate occupational success possibilities.

CONCLUSION

The data presented here document black boys' (and by inference, black men's) uniquely precarious status and suggest that, even if a conscious conspiracy does not exist, normative individual and institutional processes are operating to their disadvantage. These processes disproportionately deliver black males to the lowest rungs of the educational, and subsequently, occupational ladder. Perhaps the most surprising finding is that compared to black girls and white boys, black boys do not generally feel any less good about themselves, either as preadolescents, or adolescents (Castenell, 1981). A plausible explanation may reside in Epps' (1975) conclusion of a stronger connection between school grades and self-esteem among whites than blacks. He argued that the finding could be "attributed" to the fact that the two groups base self-esteem on different attributes [p. 306]. The process may also have been well described by Rosenberg (1965) when he stated that,

> In the long run, we would expect most people to *value those things at which they are good* [emphasis added], and try to become good at those things they value.

> They may still consider themselves poor at those things which to them are unimportant, but this is likely to have little effect on their global self-esteem. (p. 250)

They appear to increasingly value the nonschool areas in which they feel they are good and have control over, and to devalue their negative schooling experiences. This is not, however, meant to imply that school ceases to matter. Hunt and Hunt (1977), in a study of black youth, found a high sense of control to be associated with low school attachment and nonschool factors. They suggest a pattern of self-image maintenance among black boys not so much through rejection of conventional values and institutions as clear substitution of compensatory terms of self-respect.

The implications for home relations are that socialization practices must encourage black boys to exert greater school effort, despite negative experiences. The implication for schooling is that the community must exercise greater influence over the process, in order to reduce the incidence of their children's miseducation (Woodson, 1933). The implications for peers reside in the assumption that if home and school are consonant, there will be less room or reason to devalue school. Greater parental control will also reduce negative peer influence.

Finally, and most importantly, none of these goals will be attained without the strengthening of a collective sense of identity and mission. This will defend and preserve the community, and inform black children of the community's definition of the situation, and their role in the resolution of problems. These actions are commonly engaged in on behalf of their children by other racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Black parents cannot trust the schools—or streets—to tell the children their story, or to do their job. Nor can black people expect an alien structure to have their, or their children's, best interests in mind. The motto during the "community control" of schools movement in New York City in the late 1960s is still necessary:

> We are engaged in a struggle over the control of the minds (and the futures) of our children.

13 Cultural Cognition and Social Cognition as Identity Correlates of Black Children's Personal-Social Development

Margaret Beale Spencer
Emory University

A preoccupation with identity themes and issues concerning black people has characterized research on minorities during the previous four decades. The motivation for the focus has its etiology in the literature concerned with black children's white-choice behavior (Clark & Clark, 1939, 1940). Generally, the focus on identity research is paralleled in volume only by black/white comparative studies of IQ and achievement. This paper's focus is on the black child's understanding of societal values and attitudes. Specifically, the child's implicit knowledge of culture, along with the more general social cognitive abilities, are seen to shape group identity.

Cultural cognition specifies the child's limited although evolving awareness of race as a biological and social phenomenon. The child's basis for judgements concerning culture are relative, differing, for the most part, according to events, persons, patterns of feedback, and contexts. The capacity to "step out of self" is related to the child's ability to make explicit interpretations using implicit knowledge about related cultural and racial issues.

Social cognition as described by Shantz (1975) refers to the way in which children conceptualize other people: How children come to understand the thoughts, emotions, intentions, and view points of others. Social cognition refers to the child's intuitive or logical representation of others, that is, how he characterizes others and makes inferences about their covert, inner psychological experiences. Although not usually conceptualized as such, identity is assumed to be influenced by underlying cognitive structural characteristics. This particular cognitive-developmental perspective, or "child as constructivist view," offers as a basic proposition the notion that the expected developmental course of identity