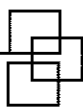


CHAPTER 6



IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN EVERYDAY SETTINGS

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Throughout their lives, individuals are continually faced with new experiences and situations that, somehow, must be integrated with existing aspects of the self (see James 1890/1910; Erikson 1968). Some of these experiences involve major life events such as entering new contexts where people may espouse attitudes, beliefs, and values that are different from one's own. Other experiences involve single encounters with new people or new information that may create conflicts with one's existing set of beliefs and values. In either case, these events and experiences can challenge individuals to reevaluate aspects of the self and subsequently engage in various negotiation strategies in order to maintain a sense of continuity in the self while adapting to changing circumstances (see James 1890/1910; Erikson 1968). The focus of this chapter is to show that such processes can be particularly adaptive for members of racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. Our aim is to show that members of racial and ethnic minority groups are afforded additional identity-relevant resources from which to draw upon as they negotiate new contexts, situations, and information, thereby facilitating their positive overall adjustment.

We begin by defining our key terms for this chapter, following with an overview of identity formation as an adaptive process, as this sets up the framework for our discussion of the adaptive function of ethnic identity in particular. We follow with an overview of the role that contextual factors play in this process, and finally we go into an extended discussion on the special case of ethnic identity as a resource in individuals' negotiations of the self across contexts. Throughout this chapter, we will draw on empirical findings from a study of African American adolescents living in the mid-Atlantic coastal region of the United States. These findings are based on both survey data and in-depth interviews among these youths, and some are longitudinal. Finally, we close with directions for future research and recommendations for

policy and practice regarding healthy adolescent development, with an emphasis on healthy transitions.

IDENTITY AS AN ADAPTIVE PROCESS

In both the lay and scholarly discourses, identity has been treated—albeit often implicitly—as essential, as some “thing” that resides within persons. As researchers, our central objective has been to understand what that “thing” is and how it is formed. In this chapter, we distinguish between the what and the how of identity: content and process. Identity processes refer to sequences of psychological events (both conscious and unconscious) that unfold over time and that serve to maintain a system of self-coherence and a sense of self-sameness, whereas identity content refers to the specific elements (also both conscious and unconscious) that constitute that coherence and sameness. We believe it is critical to maintain both conceptual and operational distinctions between these two phenomena because each provides unique information about individuals’ psychological functioning and behavior. We focus mainly on identity as a process of negotiations between self and context, with identity content serving as the resources upon which individuals draw in this process. Given this emphasis, more precise definitions of our key concepts will be useful.

IDENTITY Despite the popularity of identity as a construct both within and outside psychology, the term often evades definition. There does, however, seem to be a point of convergence among those who study identity that it inherently involves issues around the self in context (Grotevant 1992; for reviews on definition and use of the term “identity,” see Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Gleason 1983). Here we adopt a definition in the Eriksonian (Erikson 1968) tradition, which views identity as an ongoing dynamic process whereby individuals establish, evaluate, reevaluate, and reestablish who they are and are not relative to others in their environments (for examples, see Erikson 1968, 1980; Kleiber 1999; Harter 1990; Waterman 1993). Such a process is inherently dependent on the contexts in which individuals find themselves. Thus, as individuals encounter new physical and social contexts, they are challenged with the task of maintaining a balance between self-continuity and redefinition. To the extent that individuals are able to reconcile conflicts between the self and these changing contexts, they maintain a sense of positive well-being (Erikson 1968; Grotevant 1987).

The dynamic nature of identity formation means that the specific mechanisms by which this process occurs are many and complex. We return to a more detailed discussion of these mechanisms later, but for now offer this simple explanation: identity as a process is best thought of as individuals’ formulations of answers to the question “Who am I?” Identity content would be the substance of those answers. Contained therein are the resources upon which individuals rely when faced with such questions. These resources might include individuals’ likes and dislikes, attitudes, beliefs, values, ideologies and worldviews, skills and competencies, as well as their social roles and descriptive attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and religion. Whatever the case, individuals’ unique configurations on these sets of attributes are said to constitute the content of their personal identities.

SOCIAL IDENTITY Traditionally, psychologists have distinguished between personal and social identity. Personal identity has been treated as an individuated representation of the self (see Brewer 1991; Luhtanen and Crocker 1992; Thoits and Virshup 1997; Turner et al. 1987), reflecting the set of personality characteristics, behaviors, and other attributes that individuals believe distinguishes them from others. This is consistent with our description of identity content. Social identity, on the other hand, has been treated as a collective representation of the self (Brewer 1991; Luhtanen and Crocker 1992; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987), deriving from individuals' memberships in social groups and participation in social roles (Burke and Tully 1977; McCall and Simmons 1966; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Simply put, personal identities distinguish individuals as unique persons, whereas social identities connect them with others on the basis of shared attributes.

Many researchers have begun to ask whether social identities are in fact so distinct from the set of attributes with which individuals define themselves. For example, some have argued that social roles and group memberships are themselves attributes that are included in the personal identity "set" that distinguishes each individual from others (Thoits and Virshup 1997). This position is consistent with our description of identity content, but implies that social roles and group memberships are reduced to descriptors. That is, roles such as mother, psychologist, and husband as well as characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and gender simply mark individuals as belonging in a particular role or social category but do not necessarily take on any deeper meaning for individuals' sense of self.

But for many people, social group memberships go beyond personal description. Membership in social groups can be imbued with personal meanings that help to define a person as a unique individual, thereby functioning as an aspect of personal identity. Thus, although individuals may or may not consider the self as interchangeable with the collective whole of the social group, they may personally identify with the beliefs, values, and ideals they perceive to characterize that group. Moreover, individuals can be selective in this process, rejecting some aspects of the group's position and accepting others. Similarly, individuals may also create their own meanings around their membership in social groups, without regard to the existing meanings to which they have been exposed (Fordham 1988; Waters 1990, 1996). We are particularly concerned here with the societally shared meaning systems around race and ethnicity, and the ways in which individuals negotiate and incorporate such meanings in their own identities.

RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTITY Race has been described by some researchers as a "master" category because it is perceptually salient and believed by some people to be immutable (McGuire et al. 1978; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Moreover, members of ethnic minority groups are more likely to develop ethnic identities than are white Americans (see Crocker et al. 1994; Phinney 1992), on the basis of their distinctiveness in their environments (McGuire et al. 1978). Thus, race and ethnicity may predispose some individuals to develop racial and ethnic identities, special cases of social identity wherein the racial or ethnic group is the specific referent.¹

Ethnic identity has been described broadly as "one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to

ethnic group membership" (Rotheram and Phinney 1987, 13). Racial identity is similarly defined, in Robert Sellers et al.'s (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), as "the significance and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concepts" (23). Inherent in both definitions is the view that racial and ethnic identities are multidimensional. We adopt this multidimensional orientation for both social identity in general and racial and ethnic identity in particular. More specifically, we define racial and ethnic identity as a process whereby individuals link their racial and ethnic group memberships to their thoughts, feelings, and experiences regarding the self. This process is informed by and responsive to existing racial and ethnic meanings in the contexts, both broad and proximal, in which individuals find themselves in their daily lives.

ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONS OF IDENTITY-FORMATION PROCESSES

Having defined our central concepts—identity, social identity, and racial and ethnic identity—we shift now to describe the adaptive functions of identity in the contexts of everyday activities. To be clear, although we describe these functions as they relate to identity in general, social and racial or ethnic identities in particular are inherently implicated. Social and racial or ethnic identities are aspects of identity that derive from people's memberships in and identification with social groups or categories and that cannot easily be separated or distinguished from identity as we have defined it here. In other words, because we describe identity as a dynamic process of negotiating self and context, it is difficult to isolate any single "component" as a separate entity. Therefore, we first describe the general processes whereby identities are formed and negotiated, and follow with a more detailed discussion of the specific cases of social and racial or ethnic identities.

Identity Formation and Negotiation

Individuals are presumed to be motivated in part by a subconscious need to maintain a sense of self-sameness (Erikson 1968; Epstein 1990; James 1890/1910; Swann 1987), one manifestation of which is the effort made to maintain congruency between behavior and identity (Eccles 1987; Steele 1988; Swann 1987). Moreover, individuals are presumed to possess multiple identities (Brewer 1991; Burke and Tully 1977; Deaux 1993; Frable 1997), all of which vary in their degree of importance or centrality to an individual's overall self-concept (Markus and Wurf 1987; Stryker and Serpe 1994; Turnbull, Miller, and McFarland 1990). To the extent that one identity is more important to an individual than others, the content of that identity is likely to drive the individual's behavior, as well as his or her selection of contexts in which to engage (Eccles et al. 1983; Eccles 1987). All of these processes are ongoing across specific contexts and across the life course and function to provide people with a sense of self-coherence across time and space.

But where does the initial content of individuals' identities come from? How do people come to perceive the self in a particular way? In the developmental literature the answers are varied. Although many have argued, as does Erik Erikson, that identity is

formed during adolescence, others have argued that the process begins much earlier and goes on over the whole life span. Whichever the case, there is sufficient agreement that initial identity content is based on feedback from parents and caregivers (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1992; Eccles 1993; Erikson 1968), as well as from other people who are intimately involved in children's daily lives. As children grow older and experience new people, new contexts, new information—about both themselves and the rest of the world—the picture of self becomes simultaneously more distinct and more blurred.

According to Erikson, adolescents are faced with resolving the dilemma posed by the accumulation of multiple sources of self-defining knowledge. As they approach adulthood—the period when they are expected to be self-sufficient, independent, and productive members of society—adolescents are burdened with the task of choosing their course. Who am I? Where do I fit in? What am I supposed to do? Traditionally this process of finding one's place has been viewed as one filled with angst, especially when a person fails to resolve it. But it can also be seen as adaptive. As adolescents forge ahead in their lives, they can try out many of the messages they have received and learn what works for them and what does not (Eccles and Barber 1999; Erikson 1968). These messages can be seen as the resources upon which youths may rely as they try to identify where they do and do not belong, how they are different from the rest of the world, and what they have in common with others around them.

A Sense of Belonging in Social Groups

In trying to forge an identity that is unique yet not so different from others that one would be viewed as deviant, individuals seek a sense of belonging to identifiable social groups in their environments (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Brewer 1991; Eccles and Barber 1999; Eccles et al. 2003; Erikson 1968; Youniss and Yates 1997). These group memberships can be either ascribed (imposed by others, for example, at birth) or chosen (such as joining an organization or associating with a clique, an organization, or a team). In either case, individuals vary both in the extent to which they feel a sense of belonging to and identification with the group and in the specific aspects of that group membership with which they choose to identify. But it is this process of negotiation—deciding for oneself how much and in what ways one "fits" with a given group—that provides individuals with a sense of achievement in the domain of self-knowledge (Eccles et al. 2003; Phinney 1990; Youniss and Yates 1997). A certain degree of confidence in one's knowledge about oneself is in turn related to many positive outcomes (Pelham 1991).

Resources Specific to Racial- and Ethnic-Group Membership

Members of racial and ethnic minority groups are faced with the additional developmental task of considering race and ethnicity in their identity formation (Cross 1991; Erikson 1968; Phinney 1990; Phinney and Rotheram 1987). They are faced with the challenge of reconciling other aspects of the self with their difference from and similarities to others around them (even when those others are not physically present in their life space). On the one hand, perceived differences from others can lead to feelings of mar-

ginalization, which makes it difficult to fulfill one's need for belonging. On the other hand, being part of an ethnic group provides individuals with an abundance of cultural and social resources that can be used to help individuals successfully negotiate the self in different contexts and situations, thereby facilitating positive outcomes and buffering the negative consequences of discrimination and marginalization in those contexts.

For example, several different dimensions of ethnic identity are positively related to individuals' psychological adjustment, and both academic engagement and achievement (Arroyo and Zigler 1995; Oyserman, Gant, and Ager 1995; Taylor et al. 1994; Wong, Eccles and Sameroff 2003): the extent to which individuals have explored and achieved a solid and positive sense of ethnic identity is positively related to academic performance (their grade-point averages) among African American public high school students. Similarly, African American students who report that race is an important part of their self-concept and that they are worthy members of their racial group have more positive attitudes toward academic achievement and higher self-efficacy beliefs. Finally, the negative effects of discrimination on African American early adolescents' mental health, academic motivation, and school grades is buffered by strong positive feelings of a culturally connected ethnic identity. In each of these studies, racial- and ethnic-group identity buffered against the impact of negative race-related experiences.

IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN YOUTHS' EVERYDAY LIVES

For the remainder of this chapter, we present findings from our analyses of data gathered from adolescents living in southeastern Maryland in 1991. We have followed these youths through their junior and senior high school years and on into early adulthood. We conducted analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data related to racial- and ethnic-identity formation and the relation of these processes and identities to multiple outcomes. Here we describe findings supporting our notions of identity as an adaptive process. These data illustrate how African American and white youths negotiate racial and ethnic identity across various situations and across time.

The Participants and Their Setting

The participants in the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study, or MADICS (Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Arnold J. Sameroff, principal investigators), were living in a county in Maryland that has undergone tremendous demographic and political changes since 1960 (Cook et al. 1999). For example, prior to 1960, 85 percent of the residents in this county were white and political control was held by whites; by 1995, 51 percent of the households were African American and 43 percent were European American, and these two groups had equal political control. In addition, because of the fairly comparable social-class profile of the white and African American communities in this county—with both communities composed of low-, middle-, and upper-class households—it was possible to study the development of African American adolescents from lower-, middle-, and upper-class families.

The data we describe here are based on both synchronous and longitudinal analyses. The first wave of data was collected in 1991, when the youths were in seventh grade. Subsequent waves of data collection occurred at the end of seventh grade

(wave 2), the summer following eighth grade (wave 3), the summer following eleventh grade (wave 4), one year after high school graduation (wave 5), and then three years after high school graduation (wave 6). The analyses we describe in this chapter are based almost exclusively on the data in waves 3 and 4, collected right after the eighth and eleventh grades. Both qualitative and quantitative information was collected. The survey questionnaires were administered in the youths' homes. The quantitative analyses reported in this chapter are based on a sample size of 599 African American youths. The in-depth qualitative interviews were also conducted at the youths' homes (unless the youth preferred it be conducted elsewhere) at a different time than the questionnaires. The qualitative analyses reported in this chapter are based on 23 African Americans and 8 European Americans.

Different but related threads of research have been undertaken based on the larger study described earlier. Although each of these studies asks a different set of research questions, all ultimately address the overarching issue of the ways in which youth negotiate race, ethnicity, and identity in a variety of everyday settings and situations. Together, these smaller studies illustrate, first, the different forms of meaning adolescents attach to racial and ethnic identity and, second, the ways in which they negotiate these meanings across contexts and specific situations. These observations serve as empirical support for the processes elaborated earlier in this chapter.

The Construction of Meaning in Identity— Race and Ethnicity as Resources

In order to understand how racial and ethnic identities are negotiated, we first need to understand the meanings that individuals attach to being African or European American. That is, what specific forms of racial and ethnic identity content do they bring into different situations? Given the complexity of this question, we conducted in-depth interviews with a subset ($N = 35$) of the MADICS sample, beginning in the summer following their eleventh-grade year. We conducted follow-up interviews with these youths when they were one year out of high school. We then analyzed these data both independently and in conjunction with our quantitative data to examine the subjective meanings these youths attach to their racial and ethnic identities.

CONTENT-ANALYTIC APPROACHES Previous research (Sellers et al. 1997) has demonstrated the importance of several distinct ideological orientations regarding race in predicting various outcomes among African American young adults. Similarly, research across the social sciences has indicated that people attach specific interpersonal and behavioral characteristics to their racial- and ethnic-group memberships (Ethier and Deaux 1990, 1994; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Keefe 1992; Landrine and Klonoff 1994; Matute-Bianchi 1986; Waters 1990, 1996). These studies have demonstrated that such subjective meanings have important direct implications for behavioral outcomes such as school engagement and performance, intergroup interactions, physical health, and participation in cultural activities. Thus, the subjective meanings of race and ethnicity can be seen as resources for youths' development.

Because the subjective meaning of racial and ethnic identity has only recently emerged as a popular area of investigation, there is no consensus as to what meaning

actually entails. Some researchers have described meaning in terms of individuals' ideological orientations toward race-related issues (Sellers et al. 1997, 1998); others, in terms of individuals' affective orientations toward their group membership (Luhtanen and Crocker 1992; Sellers et al. 1997, 1998); and still others, in terms of specific cultural attributes and behaviors, including stereotypes (Ethier and Deaux 1990, 1994; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Keefe 1992; Landrine and Klonoff 1994; Matute-Bianchi 1986; Waters 1990, 1996). Accordingly, we used a partially grounded approach in our analysis of in-depth interviews with African American adolescents to explore the specific meanings individuals attach to their racial and ethnic identities. First, we conducted semistructured one-on-one interviews at our participants' homes during the summer following their eleventh-grade year in high school. These interviews were conducted by trained interviewers of same race and gender as the interviewee. We have now used a variety of qualitative techniques to analyze the transcripts of these interviews.

In one approach we used an iterative process of independent and group analyses with the goal of developing a coding scheme for interview text regarding the meaning of one's ethnicity. This process revealed four emergent themes in the data:

1. Stereotypes and other challenges related to racial or ethnic stigma
2. Racial and ethnic pride and affirmation
3. Cultural differentiations between African Americans and other ethnic and racial groups
4. Race and ethnicity as an individualistic orientation

We applied codes to sections of the interview texts on the basis of their "fit" to these categories and explored alternative interpretations among our team of researchers especially in the case of ambiguous data.

Consistent with previous research on the subjective meanings of race and ethnicity, ideology (particularly as it pertains to stereotypes and other race and ethnicity-based challenges), racial and ethnic pride, and culture emerged as particularly prevalent subjective themes. Specifically, respondents consistently conveyed concerns about being judged by others on the basis of stereotypes about and prejudice against blacks and about having to deal with these experiences in their everyday lives. Also, almost all of the youth reported being proud of their racial or ethnic group membership, but an important finding was that individuals differed in the source of their racial or ethnic pride. For some it was a sense of pride in the accomplishments of their African and African American ancestors, particularly in "rising above" slavery and other forms of oppression. For others it was a sense of pride in their skin color simply as an attribute of the self, just as one might be proud of one's height or hair color. Finally, many described the meaning of being black in terms of the behaviors, speech styles, and musical and stylistic preferences associated with African American culture. Some of the youths believed that these cultural indicators constituted the boundaries between them and other racial and ethnic groups. Some saw these boundaries as cultural bridges; others saw them as facilitating racial and ethnic separateness.

We were also struck by the number of our participants who included a strong sense of individualism as part of the subjective meanings they attached to their racial and ethnic group membership. The role of individualism in racial and ethnic identity formation has also been noted quite recently by Linda Strauss and William E. Cross (chapter 4, this volume) in their work on identity enactments and by Sellers and his colleagues in their discussion of a humanist ideology (Sellers et al. 1998). Individualism manifested itself in our youths' interviews through their use of a range of strategies for reconciling the individuated self with racial- and ethnic-group membership. Their comments ranged from recognizing race only as a personal attribute (akin to having brown eyes) to "de-racializing" personal attributes in an attempt to maintain connection to the group (for example, attributing speech and clothing styles to racial group "culture"). Motivations for adopting an individualist orientation included the need to distance oneself from negative stereotypes, redefine stereotypes to maintain group connection, or acknowledge that one's race is fundamentally linked to one's view of self. Adopting an individualistic orientation did not preclude respondents being aware of stereotypes, having pride in their ethnicity, or acknowledging cultural differences.

Discursive Approaches

We have also conducted extensive analyses of these data using a discursive approach, which focuses on the language forms individuals adopted in expressing their self-representations during the interviews. In the social-constructionist epistemology on which discursive analysis is based, it is assumed that individuals are exposed to multiple messages about the meaning of their race or ethnicity, and that over the life course much of the work in constructing a sense of self requires that individuals negotiate these messages and reconcile any inherent contradictions. Discursive analysis focuses on the ideological dilemmas presented in discourse (in this case, the youths' interviews) and the ways in which people position themselves with respect to these dilemmas.

Our team's discursive analyses have focused on both our European American and African American youths' construction of racial- and ethnic-identity meaning systems (O'Neill and Chatman 2003). This analysis corroborated and extended findings from the content-analytic approach described earlier. That is, both groups of youths discussed stereotypes and other race- and ethnicity-based challenges and biases, racial and ethnic pride, cultural differences between their own and other groups, and individualism as an aspect of racial and ethnic identity. The discursive approach increased the depth and complexity of our understanding of these phenomena. Although the youth were able to give accounts of events and issues related to their racial and ethnic group membership, they struggled to define what it means to be black or white. Most did attempt to do so, drawing on the discourses available to them to make sense of race in the context of the interview setting. Moreover, many of the youths expressed some apparent tension between representing themselves as individuals and as part of the collective.

These tensions are apparent in the following excerpt from an interview with a high school student we will call Antoinette. Antoinette is a very articulate, introspective African American female who had given a lot of thought to her racial- and ethnic-group membership and what it meant for the self. Yet, when asked what it means to be black, she struggled to provide a definition:

That's a little bit of a weird question. I mean because before I'm even black, I am me. But sometimes I . . . I mean, I'm not, I know I'm black, but it's not something that I constantly harp on like go out and say "oh, I'm black," because people are going to see that when they see me.

For Antoinette, being black was a part of her self that both she and others around her took for granted. There was no definition for it—it just "was." She explicitly denied any influence of her race on who she was as a person, saying: "So, it . . . it . . . it really . . . it really hasn't changed me that much." Nevertheless she continually alluded to racial differences, her identification with those differences, and the constraints race often put on her self-expression. "I'm proud to be black every day, because when I think about it—I mean, no offense or nothing—but I wouldn't want to be white." The interviewer responded with agreement: "Uh-hmmm." Then Antoinette stated: "I'm happy to be black every day of my life."

In sum, both our content and discursive analyses of interviews with African American youths indicated that they attach different subjective meanings to race and ethnicity. These meanings seemed to fall into four different realms:

1. Ideology around issues of social inequality
2. Racial and ethnic pride
3. Cultural characteristics
4. Individualism

In addition, several tensions were evident in the ways these youth talked about race and ethnicity in their lives. For example, many if not all found it difficult to articulate subjective meanings of race and ethnicity, alluding in their discourses to an inability to separate race and ethnicity from self. Some of the youths in the study took offense at their perception of the interviewer's imposing racial and ethnic identities on them. Similarly, many expressed tensions between being perceived and identifying as an individual versus as a member of a collective.

Negotiating Across Contexts

How do youths rely on these meanings as resources for negotiating identity across contexts? Kay Deaux and K. A. Ethier (1998) proposed that identity-negotiation strategies often occur in response to perceived identity threats. Such threats are often encountered by members of racial and ethnic minority groups, and include such instances as being a member of a minority group or being exposed to negative stereotypes about one's group. We have argued that racial and ethnic meanings can serve as resources to members of racial and ethnic minority groups as they negotiate identity across contexts. In this section we describe findings illustrating some of the mechanisms by which meanings may operate as resources in identity-negotiation processes. We draw on ideas from Linda Strauss and William E. Cross's identity functions framework (see Cross and Strauss 1998; Strauss and Cross, chapter 4, this volume).

Deaux and Ethier (1998) proposed that identity-negotiation strategies in response to threat can take two basic forms: those that enhance identity and those that negate identity. Identity-enhancement strategies identified by the authors include attaching increased importance to a particular identity (reaffirmation), employing new outlets and supports for the identity (remoooring), increasing one's contact with members of the identity group (intensified group contact), and changing the social system to facilitate one's expression of the identity (social change). Identity-negation strategies include abandonment of an identity, the belief that one can escape categorization (elimination), rejection of a label imposed externally (denial), and de-emphasizing the importance of an identity without relinquishing it entirely (decreasing importance).

Cross and Strauss (1998) described several identity functions that are served by black identity in particular. Whereas identity strategies focus on the means by which individuals negotiate self and context (goal-directed behaviors), identity functions focus on the self-relevant goals they are trying to achieve through these means (identity end-states). The functions described by Cross and Strauss (1998) include buffering, bonding, code switching, bridging, and individualism. Buffering occurs when identification with the identity group protects the self-concept from negative effects of stigmatization. Bonding occurs when identification with the group promotes and sustains a sense of connection. Bridging refers to the connections with members of out-groups that are forged directly as a result of racial and ethnic differences. And finally, individualism refers to a sense of being different from other members of one's racial or ethnic group as a result of personal attributes not attached to ethnic-group membership, and facilitates a unique view of the self.

In our preliminary analyses of the interview data, we used the identity strategies and functions described earlier as categories for coding the text. These preliminary analyses yielded additional emergent strategies that we used in the subsequent and final coding scheme. These strategies included individualism, redefinition, humanist orientation, discounting, and code switching. Individualism as a strategy is distinguished from individualism as a function because it refers to an agentic, personal resistance to stereotypes based on emphasizing one's own unique attributes ("I'm not like that"). In this sense, individualism is a strategy for negotiating identity across contexts, not an everyday function. Redefinition refers to an active and conscious resistance to stereotypes by emphasizing the group's attributes ("We're not like that"). A humanistic orientation refers to individuals' emphasizing the similarities among all humans without regard to race (Sellers et al. 1998). Discounting refers to the devaluing of the source from which stigma is expressed (Crocker and Major 1989). And finally, code switching refers to the conscious turning on and off of those attributes and behaviors associated with group membership in response to situational demands (Cross and Strauss 1998). Although Cross and Strauss conceptualize code switching as a function of identity, we view it more as a strategy because it is a means by which individuals are trying to achieve identity fit in a given context. In this sense, however, code switching as a strategy is very similar to Cross and Strauss's concept of identity enactments (see chapter 4, this volume).

To better understand the circumstances under which African American youths employed the identity-negotiation strategies and to what end, we coded the interview text for instances in which both strategies and functions were apparent. We also noted

Table 6.1 Identity-Negotiation Strategies as a Function of Context

Strategy Employed	Contextual Characteristics				
	In-Group in Majority	In-Group in Minority	Interracial Contact	Domain-Specific Stereotypes	General Experiences
Elimination					
Denial					
Decreased importance					
Reaffirmation	XXX	XX		X	XXXX
Remooring					
Intensified group contact		XX	XX		XXX
Social change					
Code switching		XXXX		XXX	
Individualism	XXX	XXX	X	XX	XXXXXXXX
Redefinition		XXXXX	X	XXX	XXXXXXXX
Humanist worldview		XXX		X	XXXXXX
Discounting		XX	X	X	X

Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: Number of X's indicates respondents' mentions of a strategy.

(using information from preliminary analyses) whether the contexts in which the strategies and functions occurred were characterized by the respondents' in-group being the minority or majority, were instances of interracial contact or in-group stereotypic cues, or were general everyday experiences unrelated to race or ethnicity.

Our results provided only partial support for the strategies identified by Deaux and Ethier (1998). On the one hand, no instances of identity-negation strategies were reported by our participants, even in contexts described by Ethier and Deaux (1994) as potential threats to identity (for example, in-group as minority; see table 6.1). On the contrary, our respondents overwhelmingly expressed pride in their race or color as a personal attribute, regardless of the particular contextual circumstances. On the other hand, identity-enhancement strategies were frequently employed across a variety of situations. Few strategies were employed when respondents were in contexts where their group was in the majority. If ethnicity is less salient in such situations, then there should be less need for identity negotiation. In contrast, several strategies were adopted in situations in which ethnicity was salient.

Although Deaux and Ethier (1998) described identity-negotiation strategies as responses to situationally specific instances of threat, respondents revealed the ubiquity of ethnic stigma in their everyday lives, regardless of ethnic salience in the immediate context. For example, our participants most frequently reported using various strategies to deal with their awareness of negative media images of African Americans.

Table 6.2 Identity-Negotiation Strategies and Functions

Strategy Employed	Function			
	Buffering	Bonding	Bridging	Individualism
Elimination				
Denial				
Decreased importance				
Reaffirmation	XX	XXXXXXXX		X
Remooring				
Intensified group contact	X	XXXX	X	X
Social change				
Code switching	XX		XXXX	X
Individualism	XXXXXX		XX	XXXXXXXXXX
Redefinition	XXXXXXXXXX			
Humanist worldview	XXXX		XX	XXXXXX
Discounting	XXXXX			

Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: Number of X's indicates respondents' mentions of a strategy.

Respondents were often proactive in their use of strategies such as intensified group contact to select themselves into certain contexts. For example, they might choose to attend a predominantly black college rather than simply react in the face of immediate threat.

Not all functions corresponded with specific strategies (see table 6.2). The redefinition and discounting strategies functioned only as buffers to counteract the negative effects of stigmatization. Respondents were acutely aware of the stereotypes associated with their ethnic group and these strategies likely protected them from the potentially damaging effects of harmful messages. The individualism and humanist-worldview strategies served several functions for identity, but they did not bond group members together. This is to be expected, as respondents employing individualism as a strategy determine which characteristics make them unique by comparing themselves to other group members.

Identity Negotiation and Adaptation

In the preceding sections we have described the subjective content of youths' racial and ethnic identities and some of the strategies they employ as they negotiate their identities across various contexts and situations. Another of our objectives was to illustrate instances in which these identity-negotiation strategies, relying on subjective meanings as identity resources, are adaptive for developing youths. Although our findings related to the racial-identity functions described by Cross and Strauss (1998) lend themselves to such an argument, they are limited to the domain of identity management. In this section, we describe findings illustrating adaptive functions of identity negotiation in other domains, such as academic motivation and achievement and psychological adjustment.

In this research we took a pattern-oriented approach to operationalizing ethnic and racial identity. In the descriptions of racial and ethnic identity meanings and the ways these meanings are used to negotiate identity across contexts, three consistent themes resonate. First, many of the youths have not elaborated a sense of self as a member of their racial or ethnic group, and treat race and ethnicity simply as a personal attribute (skin color or ancestral lineage) in a set of many that distinguishes them as individuals from other individuals. Thus, when asked whether race and ethnicity are important to their sense of self and whether they are proud of their race and ethnicity, such individuals respond affirmatively, but their responses are not indicative of any ties to the racial or ethnic group. Here we used cluster analyses to identify a typology of racial- and ethnic-identity profiles among a sample of early adolescents (eighth grade, average age thirteen years), ranging from the type we have just described to more elaborated forms based on connections to the racial and ethnic group culture or an awareness of the racial and ethnic group's social disadvantage in society (for a full description of this work, see Chatman, Malanchuk, and Eccles 2003).

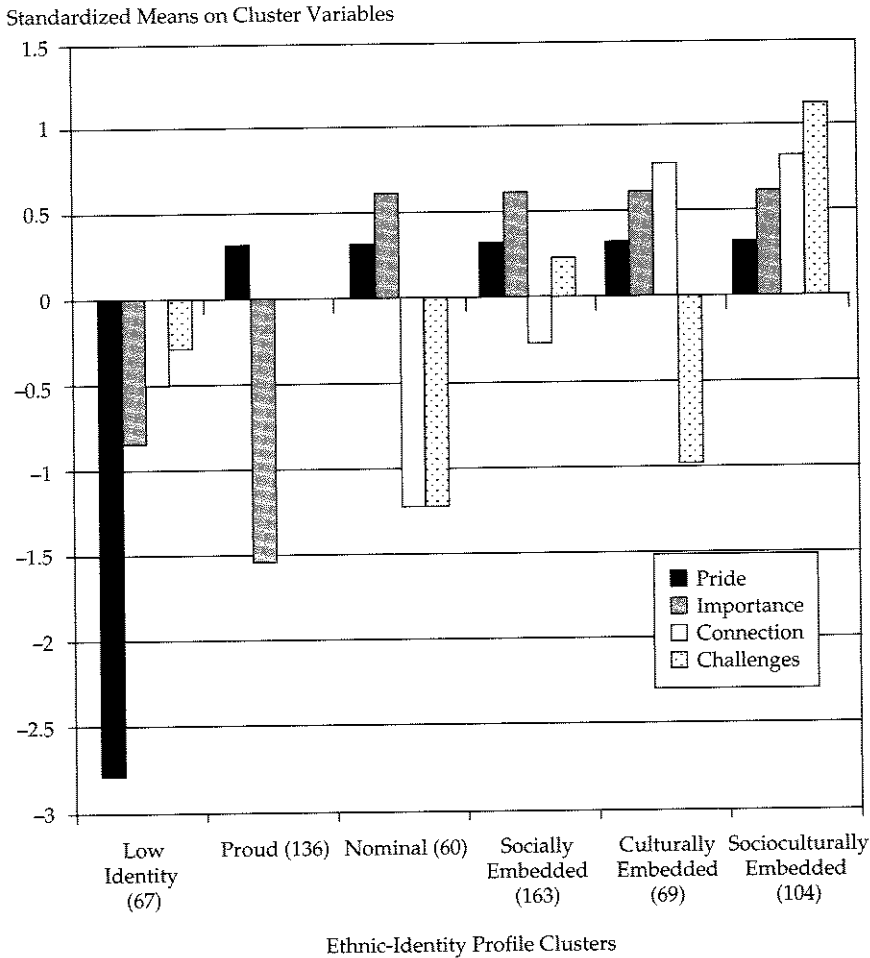
Our cluster analyses supported a typology of six different ethnic-identity profiles (see figure 6.1):

1. Low identification
2. Personal pride
3. Nominal identification
4. Socially embedded identification
5. Culturally embedded identification
6. Socioculturally embedded identification

The personal-pride group was the second largest of the six profiles ($N = 136$)—and the only one we failed to predict. Youths falling in this cluster reported that they were proud of being African American and acknowledged mean levels of cultural and social significance to their racial-group membership but did not see their race as being an important aspect of their sense of self. In retrospect, we realized that this pattern is consistent with developmental theory on racial- and ethnic-identity development (Phinney 1992; Quintana and Segura-Herrera 2003). Given their relative youth, the young adolescents in this study likely have just begun to consider the meaning of their racial- and ethnic-group membership to their sense of self, beyond personal identification markers such as skin color, ancestral lineage, and self-categorization. The other five profiles are consistent with previous conceptualizations of ethnic and racial identity based on factors such as cultural affirmation and pride, sense of belonging, and racial ideology (placing the racial group in the broader context of its relation to other groups and society) (Cross 1978, 1991; Oyserman, Gant, and Ager 1995; Phinney 1990, 1992; Sellers et al. 1998; Strauss and Cross, chapter 4, this volume).

Analyses of variance testing for whether the six ethnic-identity profiles differed in terms of psychological adjustment, problem behaviors, and academic achievement three years later, just after the respondents' eleventh-grade year in high school,

Figure 6.1 Ethnic-Identity Profiles Among African American Eighth-Grade Youths



Source: Authors' compilation.

indicated complex relations between racial and ethnic identity and individual development (Chatman, Malanchuk, and Eccles 2001) (see table 6.3). For example, although those youth whose ethnic identities were socioculturally embedded had higher GPAs, on average, than all the other groups, they also reported lower psychological adjustment and higher involvement in problem behaviors than the other groups. These findings, however, are best interpreted in context. For example, the average levels of psychological adjustment are quite high, so being lower than the other groups represents a relative difference among very high functioning adolescents. Similarly, the average rates of problem behaviors are quite low—so being

Table 6.3 Mean Scores on Achievement, Psychological Adjustment, and Problem Behaviors for Ethnic-Identity Profiles

	Low Identity	Nominal	Proud Identity	Socially Embedded	Culturally Embedded	Fully Embedded
Grade-point average	-.16 ^a	-.07	-.12 ^a	-.14 ^a	.16 ^b	.36 ^b
Psychological adjustment	-.13 ^a	-.12 ^a	.21 ^b	-.07 ^a	.40 ^b	-.04 ^a
Problem behaviors	-.03	0	-.24 ^a	.15 ^b	-.21 ^a	.09 ^b

Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: Standardized scores are reported for all measures; figures with different superscripts across each row denote statistically significant differences.

higher than other groups represents a relative difference among a population of adolescents with very low rates of problem behaviors.

We interpret these findings in terms of the impact that anticipated future racial discrimination might have on adolescents' development. In other analyses with this data set, we found that expecting future racial discrimination predicts increases in academic motivation and achievement (Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff 2003). Apparently, these youths respond to anticipated future racial discrimination in an agentic manner, increasing their academic striving in order to best equip themselves to personally combat the impact of racial discrimination on their own lives. Thus, it is not surprising that the socioculturally embedded group had a very high grade-point average.

But it is also likely that anticipated future racial discrimination might affect other aspects of adolescents' behavior and psychological states. For example, anticipated future discrimination might increase anger and lead to such problem behaviors as fighting and using alcohol in order to cope with these future external challenges. Developmentalists such as Diana D. Baumrind (1987), Michelle Fine (1991) and Niobe Way (1998) talk about healthy "acting out" and risk taking. The youths who exhibit what might be considered the most mature and integrated ethnic identities (those in the socioculturally embedded group) may also be "acting out" in ways that reflect a relatively healthy adolescent reaction to perceived oppression. On the one hand, they are maintaining high academic engagement; on the other, they are reacting emotionally and behaviorally to being a member of an oppressed minority. As expected, the youths who did not report relatively high levels of concern about future racial discrimination also did not report these emotional and behavioral reactions. The long-term consequences of these patterns of identity beliefs and behavioral and emotional reactions remain to be seen and should depend on a variety of other psychological and social characteristics of the individual adolescents, as well as on the subsequent development of their racial identity and their coping strategies.

We next looked at developmental changes in identity profiles and found considerable individual variation over time. That is, although we were able to identify the same

six profiles in the data at wave 4, many of the youths' specific profiles had changed, suggesting that between waves 3 and 4 these adolescents are using different forms of ethnic-identity negotiation strategies. Because the significant developmental transition from middle school to high school occurs between these two points, the youths are likely responding to changes in context as well as their own increasing maturity. In high school, these youths were more systematically exposed to their ethnic group's history and cultural heritage through specific courses and extracurricular activities. In addition, the salience of the task of both personal and social identity formation normally accelerates during this age period. Thus the pressure to "become black," as described by Cross's (1978, 1991) nigrescence theory, is likely to have increased for these youth as they tried to find their place. As proposed both by Deaux and Ethier (1998) and by Cross and Strauss (1998), these changes will have led some of the youths to a shift toward a more complex socially and culturally embedded ethnic identity and other youths to shift toward detachment from their ethnic identity. We plan to investigate the factors that explain these different developmental trajectories.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON IDENTITY NEGOTIATION

In this chapter we have argued that individuals' subjective meanings about race and ethnicity can serve as resources for negotiating identity across contexts and across developmental time. We have presented data from a sample of African American youths demonstrating some of the ways in which such negotiation may occur. These data illustrated youths' use of a variety of strategies to make sense of race and ethnicity and its relevance for the self. In some instances, identity-negotiation strategies were shown to be facilitative of positive psychological and behavioral adjustment.

The findings we have presented corroborate previous research on racial and ethnic identity and integrate much of that work within a framework describing the content of such identities as resources for identity negotiation. Our use of multiple and mixed methodological approaches allowed us to highlight and better understand some of the processes by which such negotiation may occur. As youths develop over the course of childhood and adolescence, they are exposed to a host of new sources of information that they are pressed to integrate into existing knowledge structures. As they try to better understand who they are and where they fit in their proximal and distal worlds, they must evaluate both the new and preexisting knowledge they have acquired and position themselves as they best see fit. To the extent that they can do so, they are able to maintain a positive and coherent sense of self and identity.

Our approach highlights the dynamic nature of identity. Individuals are constantly faced with new information, new situations, and new contexts, both as they make major life transitions (such as from school to family, college, and work life) and as they progress in their day-to-day activities. This new information may bear on their sense of who they are and are not relative to others around them and on the way they have seen themselves in the past. Thus, individuals are constantly negotiating identity as they mature and traverse the course of daily life. This is in contrast to the base of theoretical work presenting identity as existing knowledge structures that can be located within the person and that interact with features of various contexts. Our

approach departs from such a perspective in that identity is viewed as a process that must be tracked across time and contexts, and contexts are viewed as having features that are negotiated and often are integrated with existing knowledge about the self. In other words, we emphasize what individuals *do* with identity content in different contexts and situations rather than focusing only on the specific content of identity and its interactions with contextual features.

Future research on identity might examine the processes we have outlined here among adult populations. Although identity development has traditionally been presented as a major task of adolescence and early adulthood (Erikson 1968), several researchers now suggest that identities change throughout the life span, particularly in response to changes in the context of individual lives (Cross 1991; Eccles and Bryan 1994). Although research in social psychology emphasizes contextual cues that may make particular identities more or less salient, leading individuals to "activate" those identities in a given context, this approach still presents identity as a fixed structure located within individuals' psychic makeup. Such approaches do not take into account identity negotiations whereby identity content may be reevaluated and sometimes altered. Approaches that do take such content negotiation into consideration can be informative as to the ways in which identities may be adaptive resources in individuals' lives.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The research presented in this chapter has several implications for policy and practice in an increasingly multicultural society. First, youths vary both in the degree to which they identify with racial and ethnic groups and in the subjective meanings they attach to their membership in those groups. Although it is common practice in contemporary society to assume that individuals sharing racial- and ethnic-group membership necessarily also share racial and ethnic identity, the research presented in this chapter and throughout this volume indicates that this practice is faulty and can have adverse consequences. For example, one of the most prevalent themes in the data we have presented here, and in other chapters in this volume (particularly chapter 3, by Downey, London, Bolger, and Velilla, and chapter 4, by Strauss and Cross), is that adolescents and young adults experience great tensions in expressing individualism in the context of group membership. Although they do not wish to disassociate from the racial and ethnic group, they are also resistant to being labeled and stereotyped on the basis of their group membership.

Second, as adolescents mature and enter new contexts in which they are increasingly exposed to societal messages around racial inequalities, their response may be to become angry and to "act out." Our research converges with previous findings suggesting that providing youths with a sense of cultural connection and heritage can buffer these feelings and behaviors to some extent. Clearly, however, developing youths are in need of additional resources to help them cope with conflicting messages about race, ethnicity, and self. Beverly Tatum (1997) suggests that the best way to do this, for both minority and majority individuals as well as society as a whole, is to put racial and ethnic issues on the table. Open discussions about race and ethnicity can facilitate progress on social inequality through providing a broader range of

discourses on which youths may draw in negotiating personal meaning and self (O'Neill and Chatman 2003).

Finally, as has been argued elegantly and comprehensively by many contemporary scholars studying race and ethnicity in developmental context (for example, Boykin and Toms 1985; Cross 1991; Garcia Coll et al. 1996; Quintana and Segura-Herrera 2003; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams 1990; Tatum 1997), children take many varied paths in integrating relevant experiences. It should never be assumed, for example, that all youths will respond to discrimination with anger, frustration, or a sense of helplessness. It is, however, important that children who do experience such race- and ethnicity-based disadvantage (including discourses regarding their group's status) be helped to succeed by being given supports in the way of affirming their group's culture and its significance to their own sense of self as a member of the group.

APPENDIX

I. Racial Configuration Measures

- Importance: "How important is it for you to know about your racial background?"
- Pride: "How proud are you of your racial background?"
- Connection to ethnic heritage (alpha = .72):
 "I have a close community of friends because of my race or ethnicity."
 "People of my race/ethnicity have a culturally rich heritage."
 "I have meaningful traditions because of my race or ethnicity."
 "People of my race or ethnicity are very supportive of each other."
- Expectation of race-based challenges (r = .83):
 "Because of your race, no matter how hard you work, you will always have to work harder than others to prove yourself."
 "Because of your race, it is important that you do better than other kids at school in order to get ahead."

II. Ethnic and Racial Attitudes and Behaviors

- Same-ethnicity peer preferences (alpha = .78)
 "In general, you prefer to hang out with kids of your own race."
- Family involvement in own-ethnicity activities (alpha = .67)
 For example, "How often do you celebrate any special days connected to your racial background?"
- Salience of discrimination in the family (alpha = .71)
 For example, "How often do you talk in the family about discrimination you may face because of your race?"
- Perceived Racial Discrimination at School (alpha = .89)
 For example, "How often do you feel that kids do not want to hang out with you because of your race?"

- Psychological salience of race and ethnicity: Frequency count of multiple open-ended survey questions unrelated to race for instances of spontaneously mentioned race or ethnicity.

III. Outcomes

- Achievement ($\alpha = .86$): standardized composite grade in English/Science/Math/Health and Maryland Functional Test Math Score
- Psychological adjustment ($\alpha = .80$): Standardized Composite Score for:
 - Resiliency
 - Self-esteem
 - Satisfaction with self and relationships
 - Preference for improvement-based coping strategies
 - Depression (R = reverse scored)
 - Anger (R)
 - General confusion (R)
 - Problem paying attention (R)
 - Social self-consciousness (R)
- Problem behaviors: Examples from summed score of problem behaviors ever participated in (out of twenty-four)
 - Skipping class without a valid excuse
 - Lying to your parents
 - Cheating on tests or exams
 - Damaging public or private property just for fun
 - Hitting someone because you didn't like what they said or did
 - Being involved in a gang fight
 - Being suspended from school
 - Bringing alcohol or drugs to school
 - Being a member of a gang
 - Stealing or trying to steal a motor vehicle
 - Using crack in last six months
 - Being involved with the police

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NOTE

1. "Race" and "ethnicity" often have been used erroneously as interchangeable concepts. For a detailed analysis on how each has been defined, see Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994). Although we acknowledge the differences between race and ethnicity, in this chapter we use both terms, sometimes together and sometimes separately. For many reasons, including methodology, it is difficult to disentangle the psychology of one from the other.

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NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

Social Identity, Coping, and Life Tasks

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