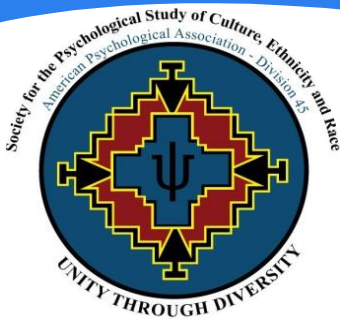


Revisiting Racial Constancy in Adolescents in a “Post-Racial” Society

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2016 4th Biannual APA Division 45 Research Conference



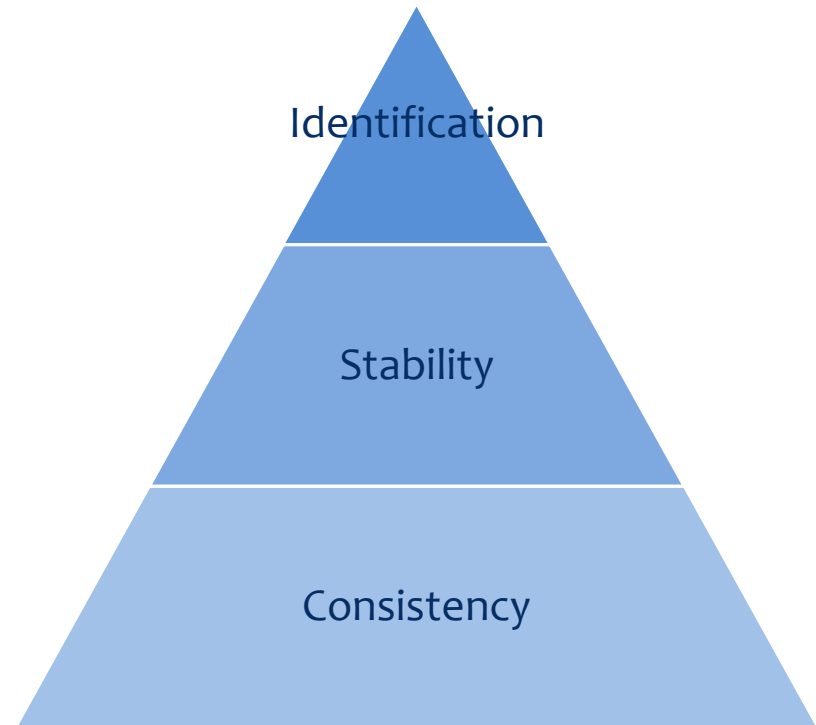
Palo Alto, CA | July 7–9, 2016

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Racial constancy is the understanding that one's race is stable across time and superficial changes

- * Similar to gender constancy
- * Based on concrete operations



- * Established by middle childhood?
 - * 60% of 10-11 year-olds understood racial constancy (e.g., Semaj, 1980)
- * Few studies in the past 20 years
- * No studies in age 12+

Table I. Developmental Sequence of Awareness, Self-identification, and Constancy

Age (Years)	Milestones
3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of physical differences developing • Idiosyncratic classification
4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness based on physical characteristics • Consistent classification
6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification develops • Preconceptual classification
8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness based on physical and biological characteristics • Some awareness of social characteristics • Conceptual classification
10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness based on physical, biological, and social characteristics • Racial constancy develops

Byrd (2012)

What does constancy mean, especially in a “post-racial” society?

- * Belief in progressiveness of youth
- * Relationship between transgender and “transracial” identity
- * Assumptions about meaningfulness of racial identity

Research Questions

- * What percentage will have full racial constancy?
- * How will constancy will be related to age, concrete operations, and formal operations?
- * Will racial identity beliefs be more strongly related to outcomes for those higher in constancy?

Participants

- * 819 adolescents
- * Age 12-18
- * 25% Asian American, African American, Latino/Hispanic, White
- * 54.6% girls
- * 2 nationwide panels

Procedure

- * Self-report race (open-ended) and gender
- * Half completed racial constancy first, half completed gender constancy first
- * **Here are some questions about you and about the world. They might seem silly, or impossible, or really obvious. We ask little kids and older kids the same questions to see how what you know changes as you grow up. So just answer the best you can.**

Racial constancy (Aboud & Doyle, 1993; Semaj, 1980; Slaby & Frey, 1975)

* Identification

- * What is your culture?
- * Are you [self-reported race]?
- * Are your parents [self-reported race]?

* Stability

- * When you were a little baby, were you [self-reported race]?
- * When you grow up, will you be [self-reported race]?

* Consistency

- * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you really wanted to?
- * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you put on a wig?
- * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up?
- * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up and put on a wig?
- * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you took medicine that changed the color of your skin?
- * Explain your answers.

Identification and stability scoring

- * What is your culture?
 - * 1 point for consistent with self-reported race, an ethnicity, or “American”
 - * 0 points for religion, trait, or region
- * Are you [self-reported race]?
 - * 1 point for yes
- * Are your parents [self-reported race]?
 - * 1 point for yes or appropriate explanation (e.g., biracial, adopted)
- * When you were a little baby, were you [self-reported race]?
 - * 1 point for yes
- * When you grow up, will you be [self-reported race]?
 - * 1 point for yes

Consistency scoring

- * 1 point for no
 - * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you really wanted to?
 - * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you put on a wig?
 - * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up?
 - * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up and put on a wig?
 - * Could you become another race/ethnicity if you took medicine that changed the color of your skin?
- * Explain your answers.
 - * Not scored but examined for context
- * No total score if missing any responses (except explain) or spurious responses

Concrete Operations



- * Elkind (1961)
- * Play-Doh in balls and sausage
- * Mass
- * Weight
- * Volume
- * Advanced volume

Formal Operations

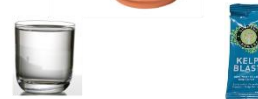
- * Plant task (Kuhn & Brannock, 1977)
- * What would you give the plant to make it grow well?
- * Requires isolation of variables
- * Maximum score of 4 points



Jacob



Emily



Michael



Hannah

Measures

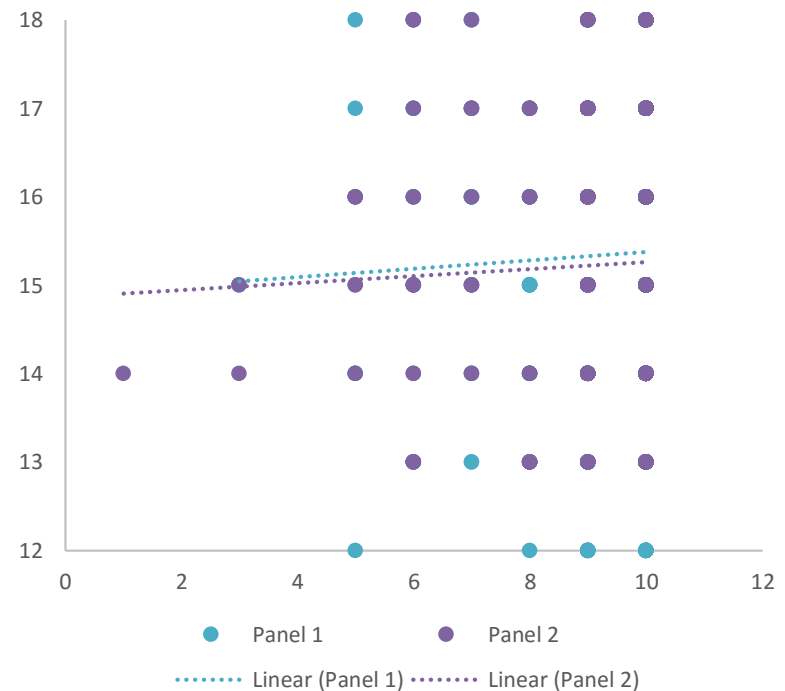
- * Racial attitudes
 - * MEIM-R exploration ($\alpha = .82$)
 - * MEIM-R commitment ($\alpha = .79$)
 - * Diemer critical consciousness
 - * Egalitarian belief ($\alpha = .76$)
 - * Critical reflection ($\alpha = .94$)
 - * Critical action ($\alpha = .92$)
 - * McWhirter critical motivation ($\alpha = .81$)

66.8% of the sample demonstrated full constancy

Question	% Correct
*Identification	
*What is your culture?	83.3
*Are you [self-reported race]?	97.6
*Are your parents [self-reported race]?	97.5
*Stability	
*When you were a little baby, were you [self-reported race]?	96
*When you grow up, will you be [self-reported race]?	96.3
*Consistency	
*Could you become another race/ethnicity if you really wanted to?	91.9
*Could you become another race/ethnicity if you put on a wig?	96.3
*Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up?	92.8
*Could you become another race/ethnicity if you changed the color of your skin with make-up and put on a wig?	92.3
*Could you become another race/ethnicity if you took medicine that changed the color of your skin?	92.3
Top Score	66.8

52.6% of 12 year olds had full constancy, but constancy was not related to age

- * Correlation with age .031 ($p = .40$)
- * No significant race or gender differences
- * Significant correlation with gender constancy (Panel 1 $r = .36$, $p < .001$)



Constancy was not associated with cognitive development

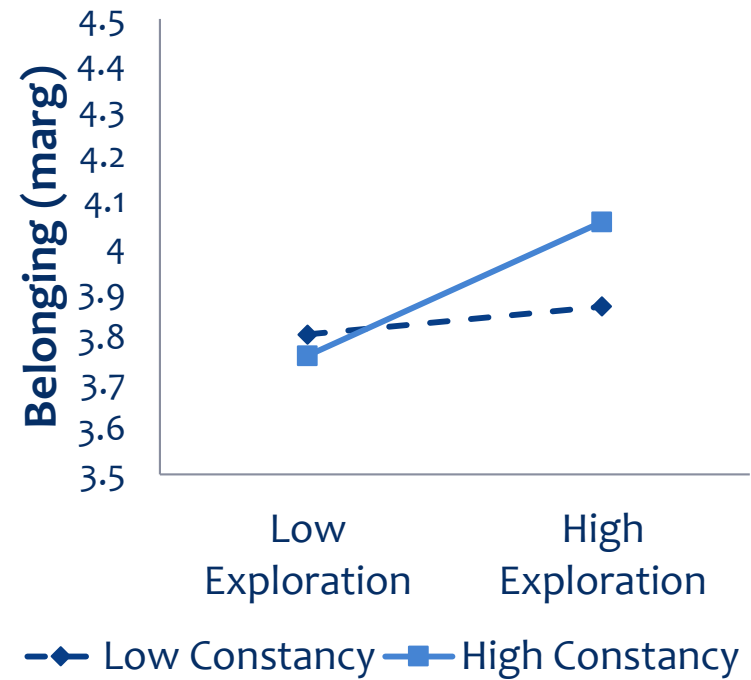
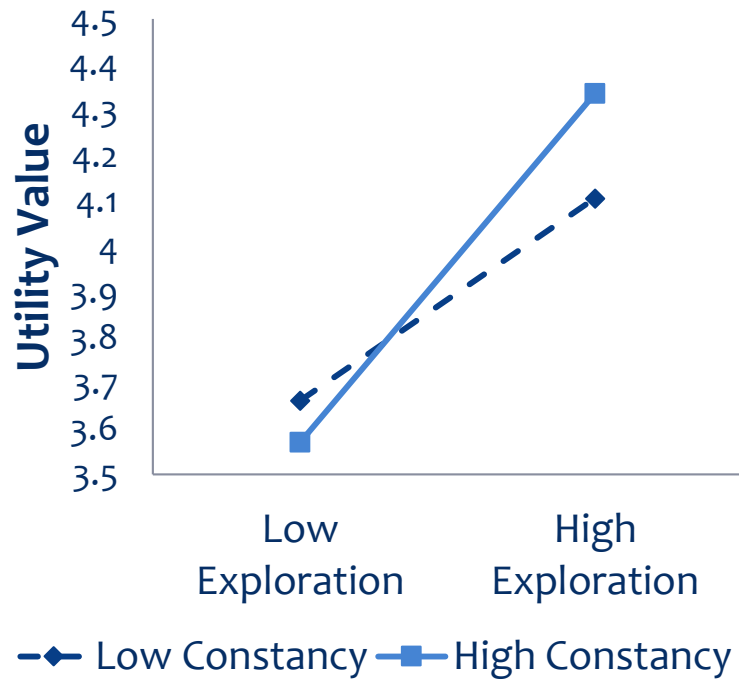
* No significant correlation with conservation ($r = .065, ns$) or advanced conservation

* No significant correlation with plant task ($r = .015, ns$)

Constancy was positively related to critical action (civic engagement)

- * MEIM-R exploration $r = .006$, ns
- * MEIM-R commitment $r = .016$, ns
- * Egalitarian belief $r = .083$, $p = .077$
- * Critical reflection $r = .010$, ns
- * Critical action $r = -.113$, $p = .016$
- * Critical motivation $r = .072$, ns

Constancy interacted with racial identity exploration to predict outcomes



Controls: race and age

Conclusions

- * Most but not all adolescents demonstrated racial constancy
- * Constancy was related to some identity beliefs
- * Constancy interacted with exploration to predict utility value and school belonging

Implications

- * Societal changes may lead to an increase in the flexibility of racial identification without a corresponding increase in the consequences of belonging to those categories

Future Directions

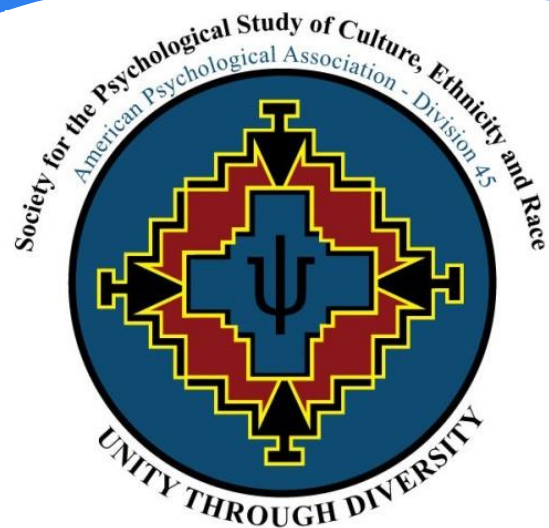
- * In-person interviews
- * Interactions with discrimination experiences
- * Parental racial socialization

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