

<sup>15</sup>Taylor and Walsh, 242-243.

<sup>16</sup>John D. McCarthy and William L. Yancey. "Uncle Tom and Mr. Charlie: Metaphysical Pathos in the Study of Racism and Personal Disorganization." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 76, No. 4(1971)664.

<sup>17</sup>William H. Fitts. *Manual for the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale*. (Nashville: Counselor Recordings and Tests, 1965).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 13.

## Critique

"Self-Evaluation of Black and White College Students" presents informative results of a study concluding that blacks have higher self-esteem than whites at one Southern university. Although self-esteem in blacks at the university under study may be higher than that of whites, the same is not the case in elementary school districts throughout the Los Angeles Basin in Southern California.

An accurate assessment of self-esteem in blacks as a whole is an impossible task to achieve, but J. Kenneth Morland and Ellen Suthers show how pre-school black children see themselves vis-a-vis whites:

There is probably an unconscious preference for and identification with [whites] by very young black children. Upon entry into school, especially when racial balance is practiced, black children learn clearly the race to which they belong [is inferior].<sup>1</sup>

Young children are likely to be open and honest about their basic emotions. University students, on the other hand, have learned to mask theirs. Making judgements about self-esteem appears to be a risky undertaking.

Although Parker uses reference group theory to partly explain self-esteem in blacks in his study (blacks compare themselves to other blacks rather than to whites), this critic wonders if something is being masked by the theoretical statement. If blacks compare themselves to other blacks rather than to whites, the basis for the author's argument is destroyed. Parker's study leaves it to the reader to clarify why his black students maintain higher self-esteem than whites.

Although the author maintains that black students "participating in this investigation appear to have resources enabling them to maintain a level of self-esteem equal to white students," and have the resources and networks of support as key elements for maintaining high self-esteem, the evidence presented in the article does not support the contention.

Parker's second finding shows a significant difference between males and females; males have higher self-esteem than females. Black females maintain higher self-esteem than white females. Parker offers no explanation for these phenomena, but leads the reader to assume the reference group theory as a viable explanation.

In sum, Parker offers some hope and solution to problems of low self-esteem in black college students, i.e., resources and networks. But Parker does not sustain his contention that blacks normally have higher self-esteem than whites.

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### Note

<sup>1</sup>J. Kenneth Morland and Ellen Suthers. "Racial Attitudes of Children: Perspectives on the Structural Normative Theory of Prejudice." *Phylon*. Vol. XLI, No. 3 (Fall, 1980) 267-277.

### Critique

The article by Keith D. Parker raises interesting theoretical and methodological questions, but this review focuses on the latter. The author is correct in his critical assessment of black self-esteem research (BSER) methodology. Projective measures have been used in most cases and questions have been raised regarding the validity of such self-esteem measures and therefore about the believability of BSER findings.<sup>1</sup> In addition, blacks and whites tested have not been representative of the general black or white communities of the United States, yet inferences to and comparisons of the populations have been made. Finally, studies have employed non-multivariate statistical techniques which have prevented the use of controls.

One would think that, having recognized this, Parker would have avoided these and other serious methodological errors, but he does not. Two principles of survey research must be respected as a matter of course. First, a researcher must clearly identify the population or populations to which he wants to infer his results. Second, subjects must then be selected *at random* to permit each individual in a given population to have an equal chance of being selected.

The author fails on both counts. He makes it clear that he wants to