I African-American Psychology

A. D. Phillip McGee “Introductory Comments on African-American (Black) Psychology

1. Black vs. African American
   – Hall - African American, bc it is the preferred term
   – D. Philip McGee - Black & African American are equivalent terms and the choice of which to use is a academic, social, personal & political choice.

   Black: evokes a history of slavery, racism, segregation, and discrimination.
   African-American: evokes a sense of shared cultural heritage rooted in African culture.

2. What is African American (Black) Psychology = any research addressing psychology from the African American perspective (p. 17 foot note). How studied not who.

Origins =
   1920's Francis Sumner earns Ph.D.
   1938 Herman Canady organize black psychologists
   1960's APA begins to recognize black issues
   1968 ABPsi (Assoc of Black Psychologists) forms in protest against APA

B. Current Demographics

   13% of U.S. Population
   35 Million African Americans

C. A Little African History

   - A majority of the American slaves were taken from the sub-Saharan region of north west African (See Appendix for Map).
   - Africa has been portrayed by European/American historians as a cultureless, tribal, uncivilized continent.
     - The “Dark Continent”
     - The “Jungle Continent” (though only a small portion of African is jungle. It is mostly savanna).
   - African has a rich culture and has a history of highly organized, city-state civilizations.
     - Gahnah (also called Kumbi Saleh) : rises approximately 600 ad, though some evidence suggest it existed as early as 100 ad.
     - (600 ad England still has not be conquered by the Romans: Europe is still a tribal, stateless society),
       Decline approximately 1200 ad
     - Mali (Melle) : 1235 - to late 1300's - replaces Gahnah as the dominant political influence in the area. Strongly influenced my Islam.
       - Mansa Musa : 1324 - visits Mecca: The show of opulence rivals the visit of any great leader ever to visit Mecca.
     - Songhay: 1400's - 1600's, Gives rise to the modern Sudanese culture. Develop a unique sub-Saharan written language.
     - (Note: 1500's slave trade begins).
       - Slaves were often the prisoners taken by rivaling political and tribal systems and sold to the white traders.
       - Africans sold Africans into slavery (though probably not realizing what slavery meant to the whites).

D. A Little African American History

1. Establishing Slavery
   - 1669 Virginia Legislature formally define slaves as Property
   - 1691 Virginia denies slaves the right to vote, hold office, or testify in court
2. Abolishing Slavery

Article XIII of the U.S. Constitution

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Proposal and Ratification

-proposed to the legislatures of the several States by the Thirty-eighth Congress, on the 31st day of January, 1865, and was declared, in a proclamation of the Secretary of State, dated the 18th of December, 1865, to have been ratified by the legislatures of twenty-seven of the thirty-six States.

Ratification was completed on December 6, 1865.

The amendment was subsequently ratified by Oregon, December 8, 1865; California, December 19, 1865; Florida, December 28, 1865 (Florida again ratified on June 9, 1868, upon its adoption of a new constitution); Iowa, January 15, 1866; New Jersey, January 23, 1866 (after having rejected the amendment on March 16, 1865); Texas, February 18, 1870; Delaware, February 12, 1901 (after having rejected the amendment on February 8, 1865); Kentucky, March 18, 1976 (after having rejected it on February 24, 1865).

The amendment was rejected (and has never been ratified) by Mississippi, December 4, 1865.

3. The right to Vote

XV Amendment

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Ratification was completed on February 3, 1870

The amendment was subsequently ratified by Texas, February 18, 1870; New Jersey, February 15, 1871 (after having rejected it on February 7, 1870); Delaware, February 12, 1901 (after having rejected it on March 18, 1869); Oregon, February 24, 1959; California, April 3, 1962 (after having rejected it on January 28, 1870); Kentucky, March 18, 1976 (after having rejected it on March 12, 1869).

The amendment was approved by the Governor of Maryland, May 7, 1973; Maryland having previously rejected it on February 26, 1870.

The amendment was rejected (and has never been ratified) by Tennessee, November 16, 1869.

E. Black Psychology: An Historical View (Maulana Karenga “Black Psychology”)

1. Three Schools of Black Psychology
   - Traditionalists -
     1) Defensive &/or reactive posture
2) Not focused on Black Psychology, but on redefining psychology in general.
3) Focus on changing white attitudes
4) Critical of psychology, but offers no substantive corrections

Kenneth Clark - First Black Pres of APA
- Traditional Analysis of Segregation
  - Like all forms of cruelty and tyranny, debases all those associated with it (victims, victimizers, and accessories)
  - Victims are blamed for their lack strength (portrayed as fantasy oriented, sexually excessive, matriarchal, and irresponsible children), e.g. that they cause their own plight. Not the result of inferiority, but a result of brutally enforced segregation.
- Criticizes psychology for its focus on trivial minutia and the individual without considering the larger perspective of prejudice and oppression, that constrains efforts aimed at identifying truth

- Reformists -
  1) Both historical revolution and a current posture
  2) Less emphasis on white attitude change and more on changes on public policy.
  3) want to develop Black Psychology within the context of traditional focus on benefitting blacks, whites, and general culture.

Charles Thomas: helped found and co-chair the (1968) ABP. First major figure in the reformist movement.
- Assigns the role of “instructive intervention” to black psychologists, to bring about change in black attitudes, self-mastery, social competence, and personal fulfilment.
- Social scientists have a responsibility to change the black condition.
- Argues for the Ethnic perspective. Ethnicity frames the issue as a cultural one, not a biological one, and breaks down patterns of self-hate and self-denial.
- Critical of socio-biology that ignores cultural influences
- Critical of cultural pathologists’ preoccupation with the deficits of the victims not the institution of victimization.
- Critical of the integrationists that believe blacks can act like whites if we give them more opportunities to be treated as white.

- Radicals -
  1) totally unconcerned with the state of traditional psychology
  2) focus on the analysis, treatment, and transformation of black people
  3) focus on developing a view of psc from the African perspective which is opposed to and opposite of the European world view.
  4) Black Psychology should aim to change social reality through cultural and political struggle.

a. Na’im Akbar
- Traditional Psychology’s “Intellectual Oppression” is geared toward the mental
degradation of a people.
-“Democratic Sanity” Model of Mental Health: insane behavior was determined by the degree to which it deviated from normal behavior in a given context.
- Criticizes Traditional Psychology’s focus on “documenting deficits of Afro-Americans” based on Democratic Sanity models.

b. Joseph Bladwin (Kobi Kazembe Kalongi Kambon)
- Two Core components of the African Personality
  1) African Self-Extension Orientation. (self and other are one).
  2) African Self-Consciousness is imbedded in ASEO. (individual thought is symbolically collective).

c. Linda James Myers
- The Optimal Africentric World Veiw:
  1) Holistic-Spiritual/Unity = Spiritual and Material are united (Animism); helps one to loose individual ego/mind and experience collective identity.
  2) Communalism: the extended self = self equals all others including ancestors past and future.
  3) Proper Consciousness: Truth is internal (not external as exemplified in European world view).
- The Suboptimal Eurocentric World View-
  - racist, sexist, and materialistic (Hegemony)
  - socializes member to seek key life values (self-worth, peace, happiness) through externals (materialism)
  - racists and sexists are the oppressors who act out and project their own feelings of insecurity onto the oppressed.
  - this world view fragments people into categories.

E. Parenting Issues
- Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1980; Ainsworth et al., 1978)
  - Euro/Am. Samples - Secure parent child relationships predict secure Adult romantic relationships.
  - Af. Am.s P-C rels less predictive of adult romantic relationships
    - may be result of interaction between fam history and minority status.
  - Af. Am’s socialized for Interdependence, Ero/Am socialized for independence
    - may result in conflicting expectations when interacting with dominant culture.
- Nuclear Families vs. Mother Dominant Nuclear Fams and Single Parent Families
  - Euro/Am developmental theories view Nuclear Fam as normative
    - Af. Am. fams viewed as deviant
    - Af. Am. mothers criticized for being overly dominant and therefore responsible for inadequacies of Black males and Black children.
    - Af. Am. Single mothers criticized for being inadequate parents.
  - Data does not support these assertions
    - Egalitarian and Mother Dominant fams. don’t differ in frequency of psychopathology or delinquency. (in Af. Am. and Anglo fams)
    - No diffs between Single- Mother and 2-Parent fams. for alcohol use, substance use, delinquency, academic failure, or psychological distress.
  - Af Am. fathers (in Mother Headed Single Parent Fams) often blamed for being
uninvolved with their families.
- Coley & Chase-Lansdale (1999) - ½ of the fathers in Single-P fams were involved with their children. (The pattern changed over time)
- Zimmerman et al. (1995) -more time spent with father is associated with fewer negative outcomes for adolescents.
  - Psyc symptoms, well-being, delinquency, & marijuana use
- Af Ams. have been criticized for their use of Physical Discipline.
  - Learning Theory suggests that corporal punishment leads to higher levels of acting out beh., aggression, and teacher child conflict.
  -This seems to be the case in Euro/Am. families.
  -Does not seem true for Af. Am. families
    -Reason? = af am. families use corporal punishment to correct anti-social behavior, Cauc families often use out of anger.
  -Corporal Punishment in Af Am. fams may be associated with child abuse in adulthood.

2. Racial Socialization
   - 3 dominant strategies
     a. No Socialization
        33%
     b. Racial Socialization:
        Emphasize African American culture and history (including racism)
        frequency equally distributed across class
        Associated with Cross’s Internalization level of ID devel.
     c. Egalitarianism
        De-emphasize the ethnic group diffs
        Promote development of self-esteem to defend against prejudice/discrimination
        Tends to be espoused by older Af.Am.s
     d. What is best?
        -(Fischer & Shaw, 1999) Racial Socialization seems to be better than no racial socialization and esteem-building (egalitarian) approaches.
        - (Thompson, Anderson, & Bakeman, 2000) Racial Socialization may also be related to higher levels of acculturative stress.
          -Strong racial identity protected against acculturative stress.
          -Socialization may not be sufficient for ethnic identity development.

3. Academic Achievement
   - College enrolment has increased
   - more likely that European-Am. to drop out of school.
   Explanations
   - SES - though African Americans in grades 2-7 have lower standard achievement scores, regardless of family income.
     - may represent racism beyond SES effects
   - Beliefs about education
     - Af Am students less likely to believe poor educational performance will negatively affect future employment. (Not necessarily incorrect)
   - Limited peer support for academic success.
   - Stereotype threat
Responses
  - Disidentify with education
    - may be viewed as “acting white”
  - Disidentify with Af Am identity and peers
    - associated with better academic performance
    - associated with anxiety and depression
  - Strong collectivist orientation and identification with other college students
    - associated with success in college

2. Psychopathology
  - Stress Diathesis Model
    - Stress increases vulnerability to experiencing major mental illness
  - Rates of Illness does not meaningfully differ from Euro Am.
    - differences is very small (small effect sizes)
    - less likelihood of Major Depressive Episodes, Major Depression, Dysthymia, OCD, Drug & Alcohol abuse/dependence, Antisocial Personality Disorder, & Anorexia.
    - Increased likelihood of Phobia and Somatization.
  - Given the numerous stressors faced by Af Ams. Why is there no more overall risk for mental illness.
    - May be using more coping strategies
    - Ethnic identity and self-esteem my buffer stress effects
  - We really don’t know as much as we should because most of the research is done by white mental health professionals and their research does not take into account important Af Am issues like Communalism, Spirituality, and Discrimination.

3. Mental Health Services
  - Over-represented in public mental health facilities.
    - typically serve low income communities
  - less likely to seek help for mental health problems from family members, friends, or religious leaders, compared to Euro Am
  - Depressed individuals are more likely to see a doctor than a mental health professional.
  - More likely to view mental health problems as religious or supernatural problem (compared to Euro Am & Latinos)
  - likely to terminate therapy after a single session (perhaps culturally unresponsive)
  - More likely to stay in therapy when other minorities are being served as well (may be more culturally responsive, or may simply be overloaded an therefore less effective).

4. Violence
  - Highest risk for homicide and non-lethal assault
    Af Am Males 1-27
    Af Am Females 1-117
    Euro Am Males 1 - 205
    Euro Am Females 1-496
    Males Age 15-24 are eight times more likely to be homicide victims than Euro Am males
    90% of all Af Am Homicides committed by Af Am.
  - Why?
    - Poverty is correlated with violence (regardless of ethnicity)
      - gain access to resources
      - not all who are poor are violent (moderated by psyc, social, family, and neighborhood characteristcs).
- Cycle of violence
  - Victims become perpetrators
  - Witnesses to violence become perpetrators
  - the legacy of violence (slavery and discrimination)

- Cool Pose
  - regaining Af Am masculinity
  - ritualized masculinity (beh, scripts, phys posturing, impression management, and crafted performance): symbolize pride, strength and control

- Aggressive Stereotypes
- Protective Factors
  - Effective Discipline
  - Parental Monitoring
  - Family Cohesion
  - Strong Belief in Family importance.
PRECOLONIAL AFRICA. This map shows Africa before European penetration in the nineteenth century. It is difficult to indicate boundaries, for even the most extensive African kingdoms had shifting and indefinite borders. Names in gray designate ancient or medieval centers which no longer exist in modern times.