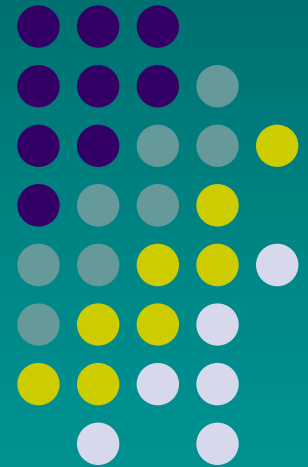


If I'm Not For Myself- But Which Self?

Living in Multiple and Conflicting
Identities

Laura S. Brown, Ph.D. ABPP

www.drlaurabrown.com



AWP 1976



Detroit Girl



Who Am I, Really?



- What do I mean by identity? And of all of my selves, which of them are identities? Is it truly the case that my identities conflict? Or is it more likely that, as I explore more deeply into these questions, that I run into contradictions only when I accept others' constructions of the social roles that emerge from my identities? When I try to discover who I am, am I surprised by the answers?

A meeting of minds...



Identity...



- A pervasive, core sense of “me”-ness that affects
 - Values
 - Choices
 - Spirituality
 - Relationships
 - “Conflict” may actually be values clarification

Social Roles...



- Often confused with identities
- Sometimes in apparent conflict with identities
- Differ from identities
 - More time and context-bound
 - What you do or how you are rather than who you are

Self



- Problematic construct in feminist theory
 - Is self essential?
 - Is it singular?
 - Is there a “true” self?
 - Is self=identity?
 - Or does self, however we define it, emerge from within the dialectics between identities and social roles?

Eem ayn ani li, me li?



- The question raised by Rav Hillel to Jews two thousand years ago
- If I am not for myself, who am I?
- If I am only for myself, what am I?
- If not now, when?
- And herein lies my core identity-Jew

N'varech et makor habracha..



Hebrew High School Graduation

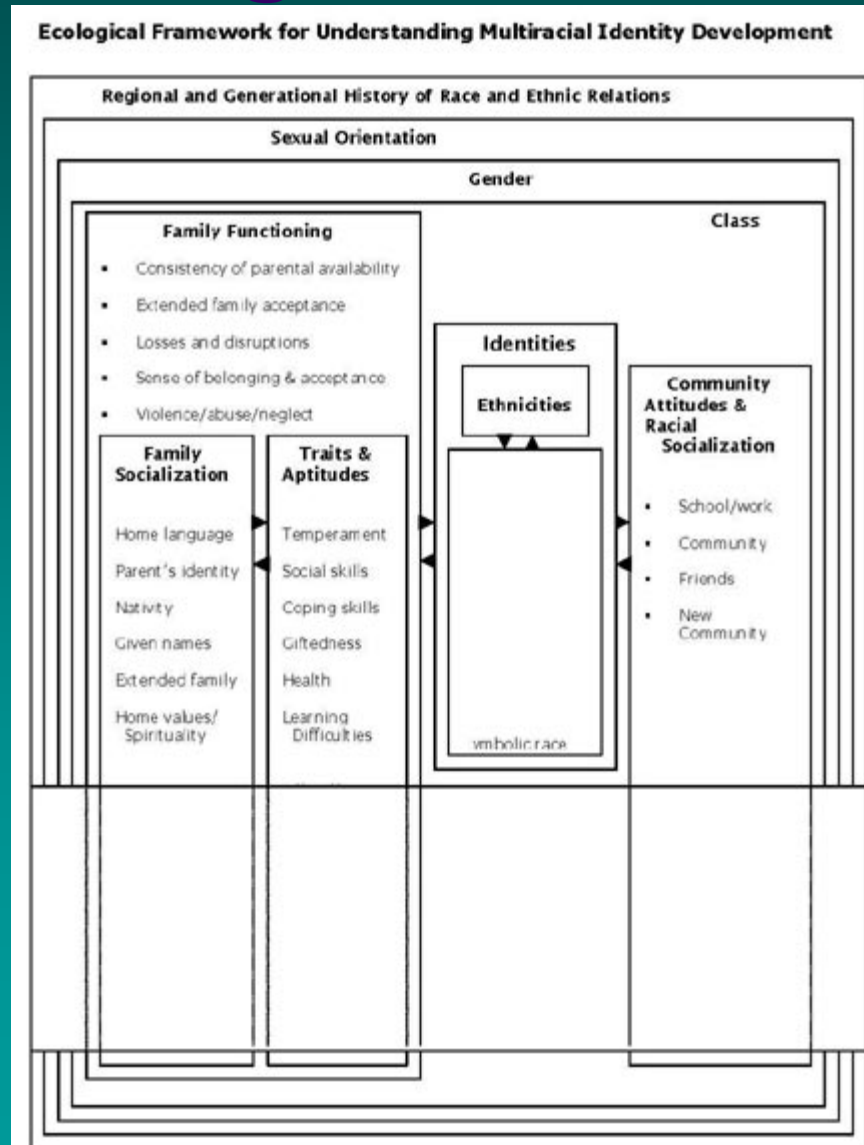


Maria Root's Model of Identity Development



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Root's Ecological Model





Regional and Generational History of Race and Ethnic Relations

Sexual Orientation

Gender

Class

Racial Identity

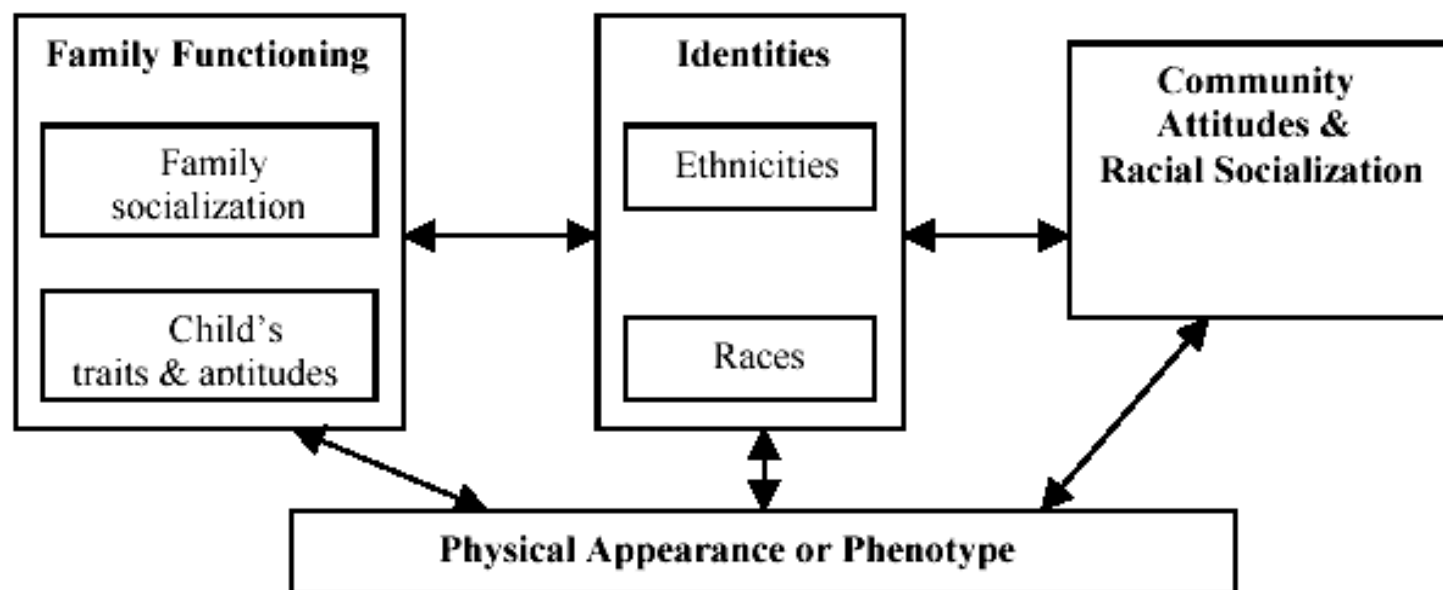


Ethnic Identity



Background “Invisible” Contexts

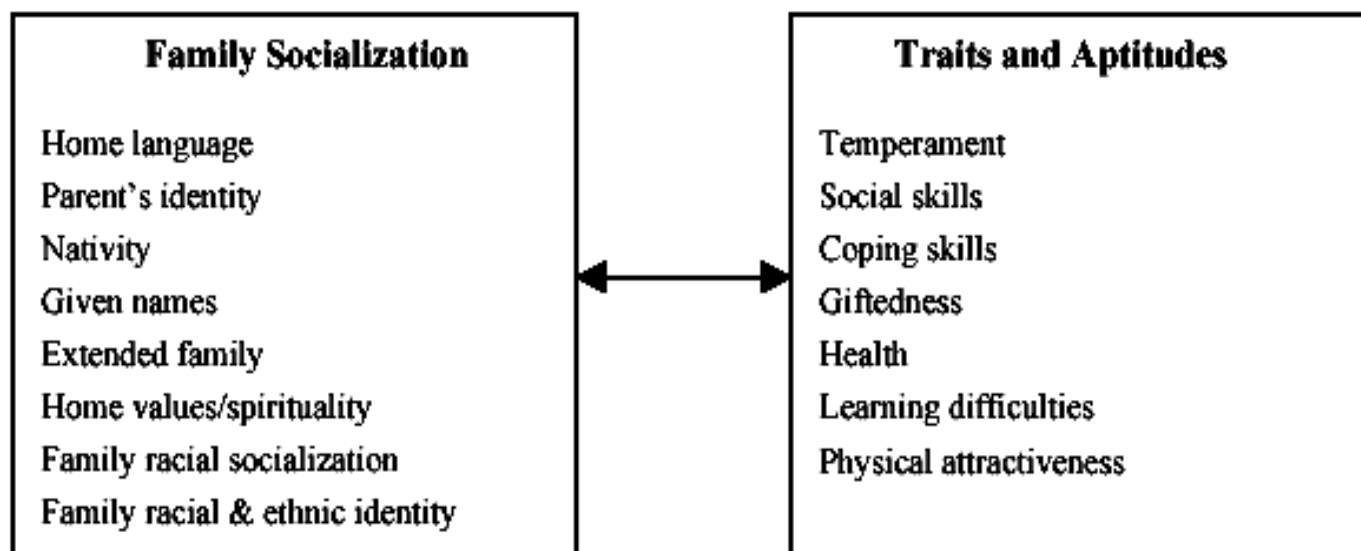
- Regional and generational history of race and ethnic relations
- Gender and sexual orientation
- Class

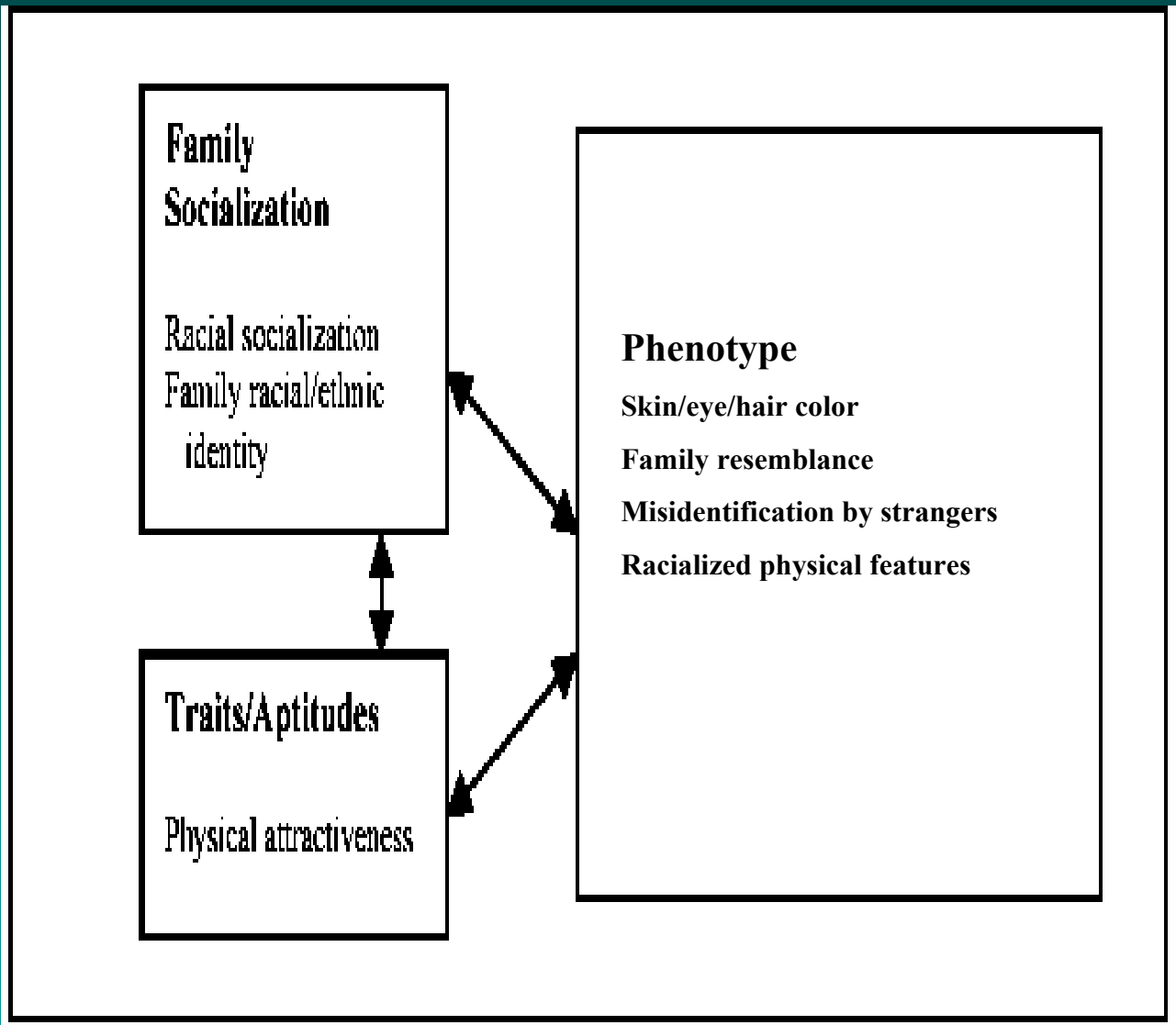




Family Functioning

- Consistency of parental availability
- Extended family acceptance
- Losses and disruptions to family life
- Sense of belonging, acceptance, and love
- Violence/physical, sexual, mental abuse/emotional neglect







Community Attitudes & Racial Socialization

- School/work
- Community (e.g., church, athletics, recreational groups)
- Friends
- New community



Identities

Ethnicities



Races

1. Assignment by hypodescent
2. Monoracial fit/self-assignment
3. Blended identity
4. Bi- or multiracial
5. White with symbolic identity



Identity Options:

Accept Identity Society Assigns

- **Passive strategy**
- **Internalizes and applies one-drop rule**
- **Internalizes and applies hypodescent**
- **Congruent with society's expectations**
- **Subject to other's realities**

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Identity Options:

Identify Monoracially

- **Active strategy congruent with experience**
- **May coincide with social assignment**
- **Phenotype may not coincide with other's perceptions**
- **Difficult choice if socially incongruent with hypodescent and one-drop rules**

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Identity Options:

Identify with Multiple Racial Groups

Active strategy

- **Fluid notion of identity**
- **Salience of heritages may alternate**
- **Heritages inform the experience of each one**
- **Challenges orthogonal notions of ethnicity and race**
- **Requires coping with social resistance**
- **Avoids fractionation of self**

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Identity Options:

Identification as a New Racial Group

- **Active strategy**
- **Racial heritage is not viewed as additive**
- **Blended experience creates new experience of race**
- **Requires coping with social resistance**
- **Challenges racial system**

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Identity Options:

Symbolic Racial Identity

- **New strategy possible because hypodescent and one-drop rules not fully internalized**
- **Subverts rules of racial assignment**
- **Identifies as white**
- **Acknowledges heritages with pride/interest but detachment**

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Each unhappy family...



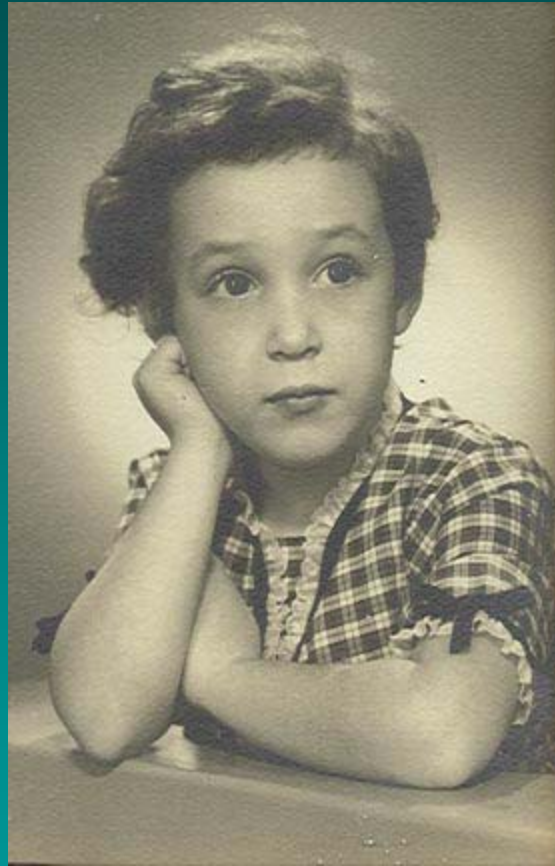
How many books a day?



Early manifestations of Dr. Brown



Taking myself too seriously...



“Smart girl” at fourteen



Wins Bible Contest



A proposal for a new model



- The “Tag Cloud”
 - A concept from the blogosphere which allows for a dynamic representation of energies around a construct as it moves from foreground to background to midground
 - Like Root’s model, dynamic and changing; takes her model into third and fourth dimensions and speeds up the possibilities of change to reflect changing social and interpersonal contexts



05 africa amsterdam animal animals architecture art august australia autumn baby
barcelona beach berlin birthday black blackandwhite blue boston building bw
california cameraphone camping canada canon car cat cats chicago
china christmas church city clouds color concert day dc december dog dogs
england europe fall family festival florida flower flowers food france
friends fun garden geotagged germany girl graffiti green halloween hawaii
hiking holiday home honeymoon hongkong house india ireland italy japan july kids
lake landscape light london losangeles macro me mexico moblog mountain mountains
museum music nature new newyork newyorkcity newzealand night nyc ocean
october paris park party people photo portrait red river roadtrip rock rome san
sanfrancisco school scotland sea seattle sky snow spain spring street
summer sunset sydney taiwan texas thailand thanksgiving tokyo toronto travel
tree trees trip uk urban usa vacation vancouver washington water
wedding white winter xmas yellow york ZOO

Your turn



- What do I mean by identity? And of all of my selves, which of them are identities? Is it truly the case that my identities conflict? Or is it more likely that, as I explore more deeply into these questions, that I run into contradictions only when I accept others' constructions of the social roles that emerge from my identities? When I try to discover who I am, am I surprised by the answers?