

SKIN COLOR AS A FACTOR IN RACIAL IDENTIFICATION OF NEGRO PRESCHOOL CHILDREN
Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie K. Clark (1940)

Classics in the History of Psychology

An internet resource developed by
Christopher D. Green
York University, Toronto, Ontario

SKIN COLOR AS A FACTOR IN RACIAL IDENTIFICATION OF NEGRO PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie K. Clark (1940)

First Published in Journal of Social Psychology, S.P.S.S.I. Bulletin, 11, 159-169.

Racial identification has been assumed to be indicative of a phase of the development of consciousness of self. Horowitz (2) conceives of the beginnings of race consciousness as a function of ego development. The authors (1) also assumed racial identification to be indicative of particularized self-consciousness. An investigation of the factors inherent in the genesis of racial identification would obviously lead to an understanding of the dynamics of self consciousness and its social determinants.

In a preceding paper the authors (1) presented results of an investigation of age and sex factors in racial identification. The present paper is an attempt to determine the influence of skin color as another factor in racial identification of Negro preschool children. Methodology, experimental procedure and subjects are identical with those used in the preceding investigation. However, the subjects are here divided, on the basis of skin color, into three groups; light, medium, dark. Moreover, only choices of white and colored boy are included in the analysis of results, excluding irrelevant choices (lion, dog, clown, hen) of some of the three-year olds. It seems necessary to state that the experimenter who actually worked with the children was medium brown in skin color. This was fortunate in that it tended to neutralize the probable influence of as extremely light or dark investigator on the responses of the children.

When the data presented in Table 1 are analyzed for choices of the colored boy, it is found that the light children chose the colored boy 36.5 per cent, the medium children 52.6 per cent and the dark children 56.4 per cent. This shows a consistent increase (approaching statistical significance) in choices of the colored boy from the light to the medium group (CR 2.69). From the medium to the dark group the increase is negligible (CR 0.76). But from the light to the dark group there is a statistically significant increase as choices of the colored boy (CR 3.15). [p. 160]

TABLE 1
CHOICES OF LIGHT, MEDIUM, AND DARK CHILDREN IN THE TOTAL GROUP
ON THE PICTURE SERIES

	Light*		Medium**		Dark***	
	No. of choices	%	No. of choices	%	No. of choices	%
Colored boy	31	36.5	102	52.6	92	56.4
White boy	48	56.5	81	41.7	66	40.5

*30 children, **66 children, ***54 children.

Analyzing the data for choices of the white boy, there is a decrease in these choices from the light to the medium group (CR 2.38). The decrease is not statistically significant from the medium to the dark group (CR 0.16). However, from the light to the dark group the decrease in choices of the white boy is striking (CR 4.57).

An analysis of the data from the point of view of differences between the percentage of choices of

Livros Grátis

<http://www.livrosgratis.com.br>

Milhares de livros grátis para download.

white and colored boy by each skin color group shows an increase in choice of colored boy over white boy, proceeding from the light through the medium to the dark group. The light group made 20.0 per cent more choices of the white boy than of the colored boy (a - 20.0 per cent choice of the colored boy; CR 2.77). The medium group chose the colored boy 10.9 per cent more than the white boy (CR 1.25) and the dark group made 15.9 per cent more choices in favor of the colored boy (CR 2.52). It is interesting that the highest difference in percentage of choices is found in the light group in favor of the white boy. The significance of this analysis remains, however, in the increase in percentage differences in favor of the colored boy proceeding from the light through the medium to the dark group.

The data from Table 1 show an almost reciprocal picture for choices of the extreme skin color groups of light and dark, identification of light children more with pictures of the white boy, and identification of dark children more with pictures of the colored boy. This would seem to establish the factor of skin color as an important one in the genesis of consciousness of self and racial identification.

The fact that light children chose the white boy many more times than the colored boy suggests an identification of self, not on the basis of socially defined racial group differences, but on the basis of physical characteristics within the specific racial group. That the [p. 161] same thing holds true in the other extreme group of dark children can be safely assumed. It may be stated that consciousness of self as different from others on the basis of observed skin color precedes any consciousness of self in terms of socially defined group differences in these Negro children.

The fact that the medium group closely resembles the dark group in making more choices of the colored boy than of the white boy seems to indicate that the same dynamics involved in the identifications of the dark children are operative in the identifications of the medium children. A fact which should be noted is that the classification of the medium group was more difficult and resulted in greater heterogeneity of subjects in respect to skin color. This would not, however, explain why the medium group aligned itself, with respect to choices, with the dark group rather than with the light group.

It is quite possible that this difference could be explained through an analysis of the light group. The factors resulting in a cleavage of this group from the other two groups might be inherent in the characteristics of the light group itself. This point of view finds some justification if the results are viewed as indicative of the light group's deviation from the norm of choices of the other two groups. If so, then the extreme lightness of skin color must be conceived as marking off a distinctive group rather than as a mere difference in degree from the medium and the dark skin colors, and this fact responsible for the observed cleavage.

The results show clearly that an analysis of subjects upon the basis of skin color may not assume that the difference between the medium skin color group and the light group is equal to that between the medium and the dark group in reference to the inherent dynamics involved, in spite of the seemingly observed objective differences.

In the light of this rather definite result further analysis of these three groups is necessary before any real explanation or conclusion may be drawn. It is possible that other factors (age and sex) might have influenced the above mentioned results.

An analysis of the data for sex differentials disclosed one deviation from the results already presented; namely, the light males made more choices of the colored boy (58.6%) than of the white boy (41.3%). This result appears to be contrary to the general trend of the influence of the skin color factor on identifications. The small number of cases, 11, however, in this group of light boys as compared with the medium, 39, and dark, 25, groups of boys [p. 162] probably explains the existence of this deviation. Because of the small number of cases in each category of a male-female breakdown according to both skin color and age levels, it seemed advisable to mass all of the cases without regard to sex differences. This was done in spite of the fact that it was previously suggested (1) that the dynamics of the identification of brothers and cousins by the girls was somewhat different from those operative in the boys' identification of themselves. This possibility, however, does not appear to affect seriously the basis of the present analysis especially when it is seen that the medium and dark groups of males (with larger numbers of subjects) do not deviate from the general trend of the results from all subjects.

The male medium group chose in favor of the colored boy (56.1%) rather than the white boy (43.8%). The male dark group chose the colored boy 64.3 per cent and the white boy 35.6 per cent.

In spite of the small number of cases in the light group at each age, some trends for the three groups may be seen from Table 2.

TABLE 2
CHOICES OF LIGHT, MEDIUM, AND DARK CHILDREN AT EACH AGE ON THE
PICTURE SERIES

	Light**		Medium***		Dark****	
	No.*	%	No.*	%	No.*	%
<i>Three-year-olds</i>						
Colored boy	9	34.6	19	32.2	33	52.3
White boy	11	42.3	29	49.1	25	39.6
9 children, ***20 children, *21 children.						
<i>Four-year-olds</i>						
Colored boy	8	34.7	54	67.5	19	44.1
White boy	15	65.1	26	32.5	24	55.8
9 children, *27 children, ****14 children.						
<i>Five-year-olds</i>						
Colored boy	14	38.8	29	52.7	40	70.1
White boy	22	61.1	26	47.2	17	29.8
12 children, *19 children, ****19 children.						

At the three-year level, both the light and medium groups made more choices of the white boy than of the colored boy. The percentage differences in favor of the white boy are 7.7 per cent for the light group (CR insignificant) and 16.9 per cent for the medium group (CR 2.64). On the other hand the dark three-year-olds [p. 163] made more choices of the colored boy than of the white boy (CR 1.47). It would appear that the extreme groups of light and dark children are beginning to identify themselves on the basis of their own skin color, whereas the medium group seems influenced by other factors in making identifications of self. It may be that these medium three-year-olds, not being on the extremes of skin color, have not yet reached the developmental level of self consciousness where identification of self is in terms of skin color. The apparent non-identification of the medium three-year-olds on the basis of their skin color as the determining cue is probably primarily due to the lack of definiteness of their own skin color when compared with the presented line drawings. On the other hand, the apparent trend of the medium three-year-old children may be due to the greater heterogeneity of skin colors in this classification -- an overweighting of this group with children "lighter than" others in the same skin color classification.

At the four-year level the light group again makes more choices of the white boy than of the colored boy (CR 2.37). However, the picture is changed for the medium and dark groups at this age. The medium group makes significantly more choices of the colored boy than of the white boy (CR 4.79). The dark group makes more choices of the white boy than of the colored boy (CR 1.10).

The persistence of the light group in identifying with the white boy and the increase in statistical significance of this difference at the four-year level further emphasizes identification of these children on the basis of their own skin color. The reversed trend of the medium group at this age level as compared with the three-year medium group and the statistical significance of their identifications in favor of the colored boy (CR 4.79) indicates the attainment of a developmental stage where identifications are now made in terms of awareness of skin color differences, particularly differentiating themselves from the light group.

A possible explanation of the tendency of dark four-year-old children to make identifications in favor of the white boy (CR 1.10) is that these children are conscious of being dark or of being different from the light children, but make identifications of themselves in a direction indicating "wishes"

thinking" by pointing to the white boy. The fact that the difference in choice in favor of the white boy is not more impressive statistically than it is would seem to call for more evidence. [p. 164] The five-year-old light children are still consistent in identifying themselves more with the white boy than with the colored boy (CR 2.16). The three-, four- and five-year-old light children have consistently made a greater percentage of identifications of themselves with the white boy. The percentage of choices of the white boy increases from the three-year (42.3%) to the four-year level (65.1 %) but decreases slightly at the five-year level (61.1 %). This slight decrease in choice of the white boy by the light five-year-olds is, of course, concomitant with a slight increase in choice of colored boy. This slight trend may point in the direction of identifications on the basis of socially defined race; a developmental stage subsequent to identification on the basis of their own physical characteristics.

Although the five-year-old medium children make more choices of the colored boy than of the white boy the difference is entirely insignificant statistically as compared with the difference in favor of the colored boy at the four-year level (CR 4.79). In order to understand the decreased difference in choice of colored boy over white boy of the five year medium group as compared with the four-year medium group, it is necessary to keep in mind two facts; (a) the general instability of choices of the medium group as compared with the light and the dark group, and (b) the indicated lesser sensitiveness of the technique for the five-year-olds as contrasted with its sensitiveness for the three- and four-year-olds (1).

For the dark five-year-olds the choice of colored boy over white boy is striking (CR 21.21). In choices of the colored boy the data show an insignificant drop from the three-year (52.3%) to the four-year level (44.1%) (CR .08) and a sharp rise from the four-year to the five-year level (70.1%) (CR 3.42). Indications of the operation of the mechanism of "wishful thinking" were found to some extent only in the four-year-old dark children (choices were in favor of the white boy). This mechanism was not indicated to any appreciable extent in the three-year-olds, suggesting the possibility that the operation of the mechanisms of "wishful thinking" and phantasies in reference to self identification is too sophisticated an operation for the three-year-old developmental level. The five-year-old dark children seem to have abandoned almost entirely "wishful thinking" in favor of identifications based on the concrete fact of their own skin color.

When cases of children making consistent choices of either the [p. 165] a white boy or the colored boy (that is, choosing either boy consistently throughout the series of three pairs of line drawings of colored and white boys) are taken from the total group for analysis, the same trends for the skin color groups already discussed are even more evident.

Of the total group of 150 Negro children, 58 or 38.66 per cent were consistent in their choice of either the colored or the white boy. [1] Age was found not to be a factor in consistency of response since 40.0 per cent of the three-year-olds, 36.0 per cent of the four year-olds and 40.0 per cent of the five-year-olds were consistent.

Of the 30 light children in the total group of 150 children 47.0 per cent were consistent; 26.0 per cent of the medium children were consistent; and 50.0 per cent of the dark children were consistent. This lower percentage of consistent medium children again indicates the general instability and vacillation of choices of the medium colored children.

TABLE 3
CHOICES OF CONSISTENT CHILDREN IN REFERENCE TO SKIN COLOR

Consistent children	White boy		Colored boy	
	No. of children	%	No. of children	%
14 light	10	71.4	4	28.5
17 medium	5	29.4	12	70.5
27 dark	8	29.6	19	70.3

These data show that the consistent light children were choosing the white boy more than the colored boy by an appreciable percentage. The consistent medium children and the consistent dark

children chose the colored boy over the white boy to the same degree as the light children did the reverse. This clearly substantiates the foregoing results from percentage of total choices.

The analysis of the data in terms of age levels for each consistent skin color group shows insufficient cases for presentation of the results in percentages. However, the general trend can be seen when the results are shown by the number of consistent children, as in Table 4.

Data in this table further substantiate the fact that skin color [p. 166] is a determinant in self identification of these children, with the same exception of the three-year-old medium children already noted above.

TABLE 4
DIRECTION OF CONSISTENCY OF LIGHT, MEDIUM, AND DARK CHILDREN AT EACH AGE LEVEL

	No. of children for Colored boy	White boy
<i>"Consistent" Light Children: (No. = 14)</i>		
3-year	2	2
4-year	1	4
5-year	1 n = 4	4 n = 10
<i>"Consistent" Medium Children: (No. = 17)</i>		
3-year	1	3
4-year	8	0
5-year	3 n = 12	2 n = 5
<i>"Consistent" Dark Children: (No. = 27)</i>		
3-year	9	3
4-year	2	3
5-year	8 n = 19	2 n = 8

DISCUSSION

Horowitz (2) states that Negro children's identifications of themselves with the line drawings and pictures of white children could possibly be interpreted as "wishful activity," or as identifying one's self "not so much in terms of what one is as . . . in terms of what one is not." It is clear that the consistent identifications of the light children with the white boy strongly point in the direction of an awareness of self in terms of a concrete physical characteristic such as skin color. While it is still possible that the factor of "wishful activity" may be of some influence here in a few instances, it seems, however, too great an abstraction, in the face of the predominant concrete clue of the actual skin color of the light subjects to be seriously considered as a determining factor in this instance. It is only when the more concrete factors, e.g., dark skin color, would tend to militate against a given choice that one would be justified in utilizing intangible concepts for an interpretation of the results.

Although twice as many dark children were consistently choosing the colored boy, eight of them were consistently choosing the white boy. "Wishful activity" as an explanatory concept seems to be more plausible here-but at best not a very strong point in the face [p. 167] of lack of information concerning the effects of other factors on consciousness of self and racial identification; namely, intelligence and an understanding by the subjects of the concept of difference.

In a preliminary supplementary study an attempt was made by the authors to determine the number of children who were able to verbalize the actual skin color difference in the drawings of the white and colored boy. The awareness of this difference was expressed by the subjects' pointing to the drawings and saying something as follows: "He's white-and he's colored" or "A black boy -- a white boy." Among the four children positively indicating a skin color difference in this supplementary study and at the same time consistently choosing the white boy in the picture series three were light and one was medium. This result, if substantiated by a more extensive investigation, would definitely rule out "wishful activity" as an explanation of the choices of the white boy by these Negro

children in the one instance in which it at present seems most applicable. Then too, the operation of "wishful activity" involves the following two factors: (a) The negation of concrete determinants of the self, and (b) an evaluation of alternatives and a definite decision as to the better of the two. This, in the light of the observed behavior of the children, seems wholly outside of their present scope.

In general, these results give little evidence of the operation of "wishful activity" in the identifications of the subjects and show clearly that identification of oneself is in terms of what one is rather than "what one is not."

Horowitz (2) states: "Judging from the choices of the children and their verbal comments, one may conclude that identification with the correct picture indicates an awareness of one's own skin color as a factor of differentiation and similarity." If this awareness of one's own skin color is actually a level of self consciousness preceding consciousness of socially defined racial differences, one would expect these light children to identify themselves with pictures of white children. Any interpretation of data in terms of correct identifications, i.e., identifications of Negro children with pictures of colored children, disguises significant findings. The fact that identification of the light children with pictures of the white boy is an indication of awareness of self in terms of one's own skin color is supported in this study by: (a) The fact that at all ages the light children made more choices of the white boy than of the colored boy; (b) the fact that [p. 168] light children showed a sharp increase in identification with the white boy from the three- to the four-year level and maintained this increase at the five-year level; (c) the fact that 10 out of 14 light children making consistent choices in the picture series chose the white boy rather than the colored boy; (d) the fact that of children verbally indicating a skin color or racial difference between the colored and white boys (supplementary study) and at the same time consistently choosing the white boy in the picture series, three out of the four were light in skin color.

The general tendency of the dark children to identify themselves with the drawings of the colored boy is not incompatible with the objective fact of their own skin color. This same thing holds true of the medium children with certain already stated modifications. There would be, however, a definite incompatibility if the majority of light children identified themselves with the drawings of the colored boy, hence the persistence of their identifications with the white boy. It is obvious that these children are not identifying on the basis of "race" because "race" is a social concept which they learn at a higher stage in their development. They are, however, definitely identifying on the basis of their own skin color which is to them a concrete reality.

The results indicate a slight trend for the light children to make identifications contrary to the objective clue of their own skin color. This paradox increases with age and can best be interpreted as the approach to another developmental stage in the consciousness of self. At this stage it appears that concepts of self gleaned from the concrete physical characteristics of perceived self become modified by social factors, taking on a new definition in the light of these social factors.

The implications of these results seem pertinent to an understanding of the genesis of the personality in general and "personality of minority peoples" in particular. Whatever the concepts of self in relation to society as found in Negro adolescents and adults, whether they result in adjustments or conflicts, they are certainly to be conceived as part of a total pattern of development in which these findings are primordial.

REFERENCES

1. Clark, K. B., & Clark, M. K. The development of consciousness of self and the emergence of racial identification in Negro preschool children. *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 1939, 10, 591-599.
2. Horowitz, R. E. Racial aspects of self-identification in nursery school children. *J. of Psychol.*, 1939, 7, 91-99.

Footnotes

[1] That is, choosing the same boy (white or colored) three out of three times.

Livros Grátis

(<http://www.livrosgratis.com.br>)

Milhares de Livros para Download:

[Baixar livros de Administração](#)

[Baixar livros de Agronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Arquitetura](#)

[Baixar livros de Artes](#)

[Baixar livros de Astronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Biologia Geral](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Computação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Informação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência Política](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciências da Saúde](#)

[Baixar livros de Comunicação](#)

[Baixar livros do Conselho Nacional de Educação - CNE](#)

[Baixar livros de Defesa civil](#)

[Baixar livros de Direito](#)

[Baixar livros de Direitos humanos](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia Doméstica](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação - Trânsito](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Engenharia Aeroespacial](#)

[Baixar livros de Farmácia](#)

[Baixar livros de Filosofia](#)

[Baixar livros de Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Geociências](#)

[Baixar livros de Geografia](#)

[Baixar livros de História](#)

[Baixar livros de Línguas](#)

[Baixar livros de Literatura](#)

[Baixar livros de Literatura de Cordel](#)

[Baixar livros de Literatura Infantil](#)

[Baixar livros de Matemática](#)

[Baixar livros de Medicina](#)

[Baixar livros de Medicina Veterinária](#)

[Baixar livros de Meio Ambiente](#)

[Baixar livros de Meteorologia](#)

[Baixar Monografias e TCC](#)

[Baixar livros Multidisciplinar](#)

[Baixar livros de Música](#)

[Baixar livros de Psicologia](#)

[Baixar livros de Química](#)

[Baixar livros de Saúde Coletiva](#)

[Baixar livros de Serviço Social](#)

[Baixar livros de Sociologia](#)

[Baixar livros de Teologia](#)

[Baixar livros de Trabalho](#)

[Baixar livros de Turismo](#)