

Adolescent Integrity: Race and Ethnic Differences*

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ABSTRACT

This study finds significant differences between white and nonwhite teens in the extent to which they value integrity. The Integrity Scale (IS) is based on items from the High School Effectiveness Study, the metropolitan supplement to the National Education Longitudinal Study, and includes questions about cheating on tests, disobeying school rules, copying other students' homework, cutting classes, and being late for school. With various statistical controls, white students score lowest and black students highest, with Hispanics and Asians scoring about average. The interpretation for whites' low scores is that they desire to maintain their traditional privileges in increasing pluralistic high schools, and this is consistent with, for example, cheating on tests. The interpretation for blacks' high scores is that they routinely experience the racism of excessive scrutiny, and, therefore, adopt the most transparent behaviors, which is consistent with their placing a high value on integrity and honesty.

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In spite of media attention, as well as the concerns of parents, teachers, and others about adolescents' academic dishonesty and cheating on tests (see Schab 1991; Alwin 1988), there is little sociological research on this topic. At least we could find no research carried out by sociologists that focuses on variation in honesty, cheating, or the importance teens attach to integrity.¹ In the developmental literature, honesty and integrity refer to conscience (Piaget 1932; Kohlberg 1972, 1984), but the source of variation for developmentalists, with the important exception of Gilligan's (1977, 1982) work on gender differences, is psychological or individual. We draw on the commonsense conception of integrity as referring to behavior and attitudes that reflect a high regard for honesty, as well as to "good character," and, more generally, to paraphrase Spike Lee, trying "to do the right thing."

By drawing on this conception, we operationalize integrity by using teens' answers to questions about the importance of honesty (not cheating and copying from others), their respect for teachers, the importance they attach to complying with school rules, and their class attendance. We ask about race and ethnic differences in adolescent integrity, reminding our readers about the extent to which public opinion about black teens is distorted by the media and the justice system (see McClafferty, Torres and Mitchell 2000). The media tend to inflate and dramatize black delinquency, and the racial profiling practices of police departments and the juvenile justice system has led to excessively high arrest and detention rates of black youths (Males and Macallair 1999; Poe-Yamagata and Jones 2000; Applied Research Center 1999, 2000). Guiding our investigation are four theoretical perspectives that have bearing on understanding variation in integrity. These perspectives are the following: *deprivation*, *oppositional culture*, *class and race socialization*, and *differences in cultural values*.

Theoretical Perspectives

The *deprivation perspective* is based on the assumption that growing up in impoverished conditions is likely to foster rebellious and nonconforming behavior and, therefore, youth from poor homes and neighborhoods have a low regard for conventional norms (Kornhauser 1978; Hagan and Peterson 1995). Because nonwhite teens tend to be poorer than white teens,

¹ We carried out a thorough search of the literatures in sociology, anthropology, psychology and social psychology and found none that included race and ethnic comparisons in analyses of honesty and integrity. In the section, Theoretical Approaches, we do cite earlier sociological research on class differences in conformist values. Social scientists do study the motives underlying dishonesty, such as motives for financial gain of friendship (e.g., Cochran, Chamlin and Wood 1999; Whitley and Kost 1999), but we could not find any published study on racial and ethnic differences in valuing or adhering to integrity or honesty norms.

and poverty tends to accompany delinquency, the presumption is that non-whites are likely to disregard school standards as well. This is consistent with accounts that adversarial groups provide a sense of belonging and positive identity for black and immigrant youth who experience marginality and rejection in their schools and whose struggling parents cannot provide the support that children and adolescents require (Jankowski 1991). Earlier studies on race and delinquency underscored links between poverty, being black and delinquent offending (see, for example, Cohen 1969). However, the actual patterns are more complex than this. For example, black and Latino youth are far more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for various offenses, but surveys, which ask students or their parents about problem behaviors and delinquency, show relatively small racial differences (for a summary, see Jensen and Rojek 1998: 141-142). These marked disparities between arrest or incarceration data and survey data, according to the Applied Research Center (1999, 2000), are due to high police surveillance in black neighborhoods, racial inequities in sentencing, and low thresholds of tolerance in schools that have mostly black students. Moreover, white teens have highest rates for certain kinds of offenses, notably substance abuse, but they rarely are charged or sentenced (Poe-Yamagata and Jones 2000).

The presumption that black youth have little regard for norms about integrity and conformity compared with white and immigrant youth is consistent with Ogbu's (1978) early thesis about *black oppositional culture*. Rebellion, opposition, and defiance are, according to this view, a cultural frame of reference that stems from experiencing racism and discrimination in America. This thesis also contrasts immigrant youth, whose families come voluntarily to America, with African Americans, whose ancestors came to America as slaves. On the one hand, immigrant youth are hopeful about acceptance in mainstream American society and therefore conform to prevailing norms, whereas African American youth are resentful of their historical oppression and continuing marginality, and are more likely to be defiant and rebellious. This perspective is not without its critics, however. Recent tests of this thesis by Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998; also see Tyson 1999) indicate that African American students have more positive attitudes towards school than other students do.

Another perspective on teen's integrity is from an early research tradition dealing with *socialization* that makes certain assumptions about the link between class and race differences in parenting practices and the internalization of moral standards. Bronfenbrenner (1958), Havighurst (1953), and Miller and Swanson (1958) focused on class differences in socialization practices, and Kohn (1969: 80, 85) spelled out racial differences as well. They contrasted a parenting style favored by middle-class whites, which fosters independent thinking and the internalization of

moral standards, with a style favored by working class and black families, which encourages little in the way of an autonomous morality. During the 1950s and 1960s, when this research was carried out, it seemed self-evident that an ethic of individualism and autonomy was crucial for educational advancement, for good citizenship, and for success in professional and entrepreneurial careers. The implication was that schools and parents should encourage youngsters to value risk-taking, independence, and high aspirations. Alwin's (1988) research shows that such an emphasis on individualism and autonomy continued to increase into the 1980s, and Coll, Meyer and Brillon (1995) report that it did so particularly among white parents.

In undertaking our research, we were also attentive to recent work, especially by ethnographers, anthropologists, and psychologists, who have focused on *group differences in cultural values* and, in the American context, differences between immigrant and native-born black and white youngsters. Whether the focus is on immigrants (e.g., Zhou 1997; Saltzstein 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Garrod 1993; Keats, Munro, and Mann 1989; Rumbaut 1998), or on African Americans (Reynolds and Gill 1994; Connell et al. 1995; Porter and Washington 1993; Oliver, Smith and Wilson 1989; Gaziel 1997; Floyd 1996; Caldwell and Ginther 1996; McAdoo 1998), the conclusion is the same. Specifically, nonwhite youngsters tend to have strong attachments to their families and communities, and such attachments instill a heightened sense of responsibility. Immigrant and African American parents generally consider it important that their children have exemplary values and that they behave in public in a way that reflects positively on the family and the larger group.

Each of these perspectives, with the exception of the last one, would predict that white teens would have the highest regard for integrity. As we report, our results support the perspective that focuses on inter-group cultural differences in childrearing. Our interest is on race and ethnic differences, but this requires that we examine additional factors that may be systematically related to both integrity and to race and ethnic group differences. We assume that norms about what is right and wrong are constructed within groups of membership, and that individuals draw from these norms and apply them in relevant social contexts (see Ullman 1987).

Measurement and Methods

This research is based on analyses of data from the High School Effectiveness Study (HSES), a survey carried out under the auspices of the Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics 1992). HSES is a special follow-up to the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), and is a representative sample of high school students from ur-

Figure 1

Integrity Scale and Baseline Control Factors used in Multiple Classification Analyses, with N's for Individual Race/Ethnic Groups and Total N's for Other Factors

Integrity Scale

The items are:

- How often do you feel it is OK for you to be late for school?
- How often do you feel it is OK for you to cut a couple of classes?
- How often do you feel it is OK to skip school for an entire day?
- How often do you feel it is OK to cheat on tests?
- How often do you feel it is OK to copy someone else's homework?
- How often do you feel it is OK to talk back to teachers?
- How often do you feel it is OK to disobey school rules?

Response categories are: "It is never OK" (coded 1), and, "It is often OK," "sometimes OK," or "rarely OK" (coded 0). Answers are summed and the scale is standardized with mean 0 and standard deviation, 1.

Alpha = .76, N = 4977.

Race/Ethnicity and Baseline Control Factors

Race/Ethnicity. Black, N = 915; Latino, N = 1012; Asian, N = 488; White, N = 2373

Gender. Female, 1; Male, 0. N = 5054

School Location. Urban, 1; Suburban, 0. N = 5054

Socioeconomic Status (SES). Composite indicator based on each parents' education, occupation, and income. Scores are standardized scores and divided at the mean: High, 1; Low, 0. N = 4788.

ban and suburban schools in the 30 largest US metropolitan areas. This sampling frame is advantageous for our purposes because the survey includes sufficiently large numbers of Asian, Hispanic, and African American adolescents for comparisons with white adolescents. We use the 1990 data from the survey of tenth-graders attending public schools, as well as data from the teacher, parent, and school principal surveys. The Common Core of Data (National Center for Education Statistics 1990) is the source of information for school composition, diversity, and school size. Through ID linkage, data from each of these sources were attached to student files. These data on teens in metropolitan public schools permit close examination of the view that urban African American and immigrant youngsters are least conformist and most defiant of conventional school norms.

Race and ethnicity, as reported by students, is categorized as follows: Asian, or Pacific Islander; Hispanic; Black, not of Hispanic origin; and White, not of Hispanic origin. There are too few American Indians and

Alaskan Natives to yield stable estimates and they were excluded from the analysis.

The Integrity Scale (IS), as described in Figure 1, is a summed scale, standardized for the entire sample, with a mean of zero and unit variance.² It includes items asking about cheating as well as ones about respect for the teacher, cutting classes, and conforming to school rules. We recognize the substantive limitations of any attitudinal scale that is not validated by indicators of actual behavior, but suggest that these items are not culturally specific and would be interpreted by all students in comparable ways. That is, these questions pertain to normative behaviors at school, rather than, say, normative behaviors in the family setting, which might vary along culturally relevant dimensions. The scale has high face validity,³ and its alpha value is .76, which is well within the acceptable range.⁴

In all of the analyses, we control for three factors. These are gender, school location (urban vs. suburban), and socioeconomic status (SES). These are also defined in Figure 1. On the basis of Gilligan's (1997, 1982) research, it is hypothesized that females have higher values on IS than males. The socialization researchers (e.g., Kohn 1969) contrasted the higher moral standards of middle-class youth with working-class or poor youth, and this would lead to a prediction that suburban, high-SES students have higher IS scores than urban, low-SES students, respectively. The deprivation, oppositional culture, and socialization perspectives, already summarized, would predict that white adolescents have higher scores than nonwhites, while, in contrast, recent ethnographic research suggests that black and immigrant adolescents would have higher IS scores than whites.

² Each of the 7 items in the IS scale had 4 response categories (1, often; 2, sometimes; 3, rarely; and 4, never). Before summing responses we combined categories 1, 2, and 3 to improve scalability.

³ To protect minors, school transcripts do not include reports of delinquency. To explore the validity of the IS scale we constructed a scale based on student estimates of disciplinary problems. It includes responses to questions about fighting, in-school suspension, suspension, transfer for disciplinary reasons, and arrest. These are indications of serious problems in contrast with the items that make up the IS scale. The overall correlation is in the predicted direction; it is negative and significant, $-.21$. We carried out a thorough search of the literatures in sociology, anthropology, psychology and social psychology and found none that included race and ethnic comparisons in analyses of honesty and integrity. In the section, Theoretical Approaches, we do cite earlier sociological research on class differences in conformist values. Social scientists do study the motives underlying dishonesty, such as motives for financial gain or friendship (e.g., Cochran, Chamlin and Wood 1999; Whitley and Kost 1999), but we could not find any published study on racial and ethnic differences in valuing or adhering to integrity or honesty norms.

⁴ Confirmatory factor analysis showed that these items all loaded on one factor.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the method employed, and we present results from Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) output that is produced by ANOVA. MCA is particularly useful when comparing two or more groups in order to ascertain whether group differences persist when additional variables are included as controls (see Hughes and Thomas 1998). One advantage of MCA over Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) is the easy interpretability of the results; the values represent group means – with zero as the pooled sample reference – on the continuous variable as these means are adjusted for other factors. In other words, the adjusted means can be interpreted in much the way that partial correlation coefficients are. That is, we ask about race and ethnic differences on the integrity scale, while holding constant other variables to evaluate individual differences that might be due to gender, socioeconomic status, characteristics of schools that teens attend, and other individual characteristics. For ease of interpretability, all control variables were recoded as dichotomies.⁵ For the purposes of these cross-sectional, tenth-grade comparisons, un-weighted data are used. Tests of significance are based on a comparison of a given ethnic/racial group with all other groups combined. Figure 1 includes the number of valid cases for each of the factors.

Initial Results

The initial analyses involve simple comparisons of means for groups and the categories of SES, gender, and school location, which are included in subsequent analyses. Table 1 reports IS means for each race and ethnic group and for the categories of SES, gender, and school location.

The overall F value for the race-ethnic group comparisons is highly significant, and, on average, whites have the lowest scores compared with all others, and Hispanics have the highest scores. These results are contrary to most theoretical perspectives summarized, although they are consistent with the conclusions of recent qualitative studies (see Zhou 1997) that focus on group differences in cultural values. It appears that white youth, who are distinctively privileged compared with others, are least concerned about complying with taken-for-granted standards about honesty and integrity.⁶ Also contrary to the expectations of all perspectives except the one that focuses on group cultural values, low SES youngsters have higher IS

⁵ OLS is inappropriate because of high intercorrelations among many variables of interest. However, we carried out many additional analyses using OLS and entering blocks of noncollinear variables. The results of these analyses are consistent with those reported here, and are available on request.

⁶ Item analysis shows that whites have lowest means on each of the individual items that make up the scale.

Table 1

Means for Integrity Scale for Race and Ethnic Groups, SES, Gender, and School Location, F-test Statistics

Variables	Means	F-test statistic
1. <i>Race and Ethnicity</i>		45.34**
Black	.15	
Hispanic	.18	
Asian	.14	
White	-.17	
2. <i>SES</i>		50.85**
Low	.10	
High	-.11	
3. <i>Gender</i>		43.43**
Males	-.09	
Females	.09	
4. <i>School Location</i>		114.67**
Urban	.17	
Suburban	-.14	

Note: Values rounded to second decimal; N's for variables reported in Figure 1.

* $\rho < .01$, ** $\rho < .001$.

scores than high SES youngsters. Separate analysis for individual race and ethnic groups shows that high SES whites have, on average, the lowest IS scores. More specifically, the mean for high SES whites is $-.21$, compared with $.01$ for high SES Asians, $.17$ for high SES blacks, and $-.07$ for high SES Hispanics. The higher mean for females, compared with males, supports Gilligan's (1982) findings. Consistent with our assumptions about the differences between privileged and other adolescents, those who attend urban schools have higher scores than those who attend suburban ones.

Additional Control Variables

In order to examine whether these inter-group differences in mean IS scores might be due to other factors owing to their association with either IS or with group membership, we considered a variety of likely candidates for further testing. These factors include relevant school and student characteristics. The definitions of these factors, along with the number of valid cases, are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Additional Factors used in Multiple Classification Analyses, with Total N's

School Characteristics

1. *School Composition.* Those in the highest quartile on percent white (Mostly White) coded 1 and those in the lowest three quartiles (Not Mostly White) coded 0. (The highest quartile includes schools with at least 92 percent white.) N = 4788.
2. *Race and Ethnic Diversity.* Schools in the highest quartile (.58 or higher) on diversity index coded 1 and schools in the lowest quartile coded 0. Diversity is measured over 5 categories (whites, blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans) and the equation is: $1 - \sum p_i^2$, where p_i is the proportion of the student body in each racial and ethnic category. N = 4239.
3. *School Size.* Schools received a value of 1 if their enrollment was above the mean of 1778 and a 0 otherwise. N = 4788.
4. *Disciplinary Climate.* The administrator's estimate of the degree to which discipline is emphasized at the respondent's school. It equals 1 if the administrator's estimate is above the mean and equals 0 if the estimate is below the mean. N = 3885.

Student Characteristics

5. *Teacher's Evaluations.* Teacher's evaluation of student on the following: (1) "How often does student have homework done?" (2) "How often is student attentive?" (3) "How often is student disruptive?" (4) "How often is student tardy?" (5) "How often is student absent?" (6) "Does the student usually work hard?" (7) "Will the student go to college?" The response categories for items 1-5 are coded: (1) all times; (2) most times; (3) sometimes; (4) rarely, and (5) never. The response categories for items 6 and 7 are no/yes dichotomies. The scale is summed so that good students get high scores and then divided at the mean. Alpha = .807, N = 3472.
6. *GPA.* Grade-point average (10th grade). Grades in math, history, English, and science classes. Divided at the mean. High = 1; Low = 0. N = 4788.
7. *Likes School.* "Classes are interesting." Yes = 1; No = 0. N = 4404.
8. *Grades are Important.* "How important is it to get good grades?" 1 = Very important; 0 = Less than very important. N = 4774.
9. *Grades Important to Peers.* "How important is it to your peers to get good grades?" 1 = Very important; 0 = Less than very important. N = 4382.
10. *Parents' Expectations.* "How far in school does your mother expect you to go?" BA or more = 1; Less than BA = 0. N = 4247.
11. *Parents' Academic Involvement.* Student report of parental academic involvement: (1) "Do you discuss grades with your parents?" (2) "Do parents limit your privileges for bad grades?" (3) "Do parents reward you for good grades?" (4) "Do parents check your homework?" (5) "Do parents help with homework?" (6) "Do parents monitor your school work?" (7) "Do parents discuss your studies with you?" and, (8) "Do parents discuss school with you?" These eight variables were combined in a weighted factor score, that was divided at the mean, where 1 = above mean parental involvement; 0 = below mean parental involvement. N = 4788.

Figure 2
(Continued).

Indications of "Good Character"

12. *Play Sports*. Participates in any individual or team junior varsity or varsity sport. Yes = 1; No = 0. N = 4532.
13. *Holds Job*. "Are you currently employed or even been employed?" Yes = 1; No = 0. N = 4273.
14. *Religiosity*. Questions: "How often do you attend religious services?" Never (0); Several times a year (1), about once a month (2); two or three times a month (3); about once a week; (4); more than once a week (5). "Do you consider yourself a religious person?" No (1); Yes, somewhat (1); Yes, very (2). The additive scale ($\alpha = .85$) is standardized and divided at the mean, with High = 1; Low = 0. N = 4294.
15. *Uses Marijuana*. "How many times in your life have you used marijuana?" None = 0; Any other answer = 1. N = 4237.
16. *Uses Cocaine*. "How many times in your life have you done cocaine?" None = 0; Any other answer = 1. N = 4261.

One of our suppositions was that, regardless of their own race or ethnicity, students who attend racially and ethnically diverse schools would have lower IS scores than those who attend relatively homogeneous ones, because of the greater inter-group rivalry in highly diverse schools (Jackson 1968; Heath and McLaughlin 1993). Bidwell (1987) considers large, impersonal schools to be detrimental for the transmission and reinforcement of high standards for behavior. There is also some evidence (Pellerin 2000) that a disciplinary school climate fosters negativity among students. On the basis of these considerations, the following school characteristics are included: (1) whether the school is mostly white or not; (2) high racial and ethnic diversity versus relative homogeneity;⁷ (3) school size, or a comparison of schools with small and large enrollments; and, (4) low versus high disciplinary climate, as reported by the principal of the school.

We considered a range of factors that characterize individual students. Indicators of performance include: (5) teachers' evaluation ("good student"), and (6) grade point average, or GPA. The dichotomy (7) "like school" or not, contrasts those who report that they attend school because classes are interesting with those who report otherwise. Our assumption was that students who have high teacher evaluations, a high GPA, and like school would have high IS scores.

⁷ Race and ethnic school composition was initially measured several ways to capture different student mixes. The results for each of these alternative specifications are practically identical, and for that reason only one is reported.

Item 8 refers to how much importance the student attaches to receiving good grades, and Item 9 to the importance that their peers attach to grades. It was not clear to us whether attaching a high value to getting good grades by the student or by the student's peers would foster a low or high regard of integrity. It is possible that ambitious students or students who feel their peers are ambitious support norms about integrity, but it is also possible that they are highly pragmatic about the means to getting good grades. We use indicators of parental concern about achievement, specifically: (10) the importance parents attach to academic success, and, (11) the extent of parents' involvement in the student's high school studies. Research by Schneider and Stevenson (1999) and Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) report that parents' involvement in their children's academic work enhances engagement with school, and, therefore we predicted that youngsters who have involved parents would have high IS scores.

Finally, drawing from our understanding of prevailing opinion about what behaviors are considered to be indications of "good character," we include: (12) participating in sports; (13) holding a job; (14) religiosity; (15) ever used marijuana; and, (16) ever used cocaine. Coakley (1993) and Otto and Alwin (1977) find that participating in athletics fosters teens' sense of responsibility, and Marsh (1991) reports that working is negatively related to behavioral problems in school. We also expected that students who are religious are more likely than those who are not to adhere to norms about integrity (Piliavin and Chang 1990). Jenkins (1995) reports that school commitment is low among delinquents, and, therefore, we hypothesize that drug use (Items 15 and 16) is associated with low IS scores.

Before summarizing the results for group variation on the Integrity Scale with controls for these other factors, it is useful to examine whether these factors are themselves related to scores on the Integrity Scale. Table 2 reports F tests for each of the 16 comparisons. The results show that, on the average, IS scores are highest in schools that are (1) not mostly white (which parallels our finding for white students), although (2) race and ethnic diversity is unrelated to IS. Contrary to Bidwell's (1987) assumption, students in schools with (3) large enrollments have high scores. The school's disciplinary climate (item 4) is unrelated to IS.

For the next block of factors, Student Characteristics, the results show that (5) high teachers' evaluations, and (6) high GPA, are both positively related to IS scores. Consistent with our expectations, (7) liking school, (8) the student's assessment of the importance of grades, and (9) peers' assessment of the importance of grades, are positively related to IS scores. In contrast, (10) parent's expectations is unrelated to IS scores, and, (11) parents' involvement in the student's academic work accompanies low integrity. This latter result is contrary to expectations (see Schneider and

Stevenson 1999), although the indicator for parental involvement may be capturing parental intrusiveness, rather than supportive involvement.

The last set of factors relates to conventional understandings of what builds or accompanies “good character.” It is the case that (14) religiosity is positively related to the IS scale, but (12) participating in sports, and (13) holding a job are negatively related to it. Finally, using either drug – (15) marijuana or (16) cocaine – accompanies a low IS score. The findings for drugs are consistent with what we would expect, as is that for religiosity (see Piliavin and Chang 1990), but those regarding athletics and employment are somewhat contrary to expectations.

These results reported in Table 2, along with those reported in Table 1, provide the background for the final analyses. Next, we examine the extent to which race and ethnic differences reported in Table 1 persist after controlling for each of the factors reported in Table 2, along with SES, gender, and school location.

Final Results

In the final analyses our objective is to examine whether the group comparisons reported in Table 1 remain the same when each of the other factors (summarized in Figure 2) is controlled. It is useful to note that cultural differences may be relevant in accounting for group differences. For example, Asian youth are often expected to do exceptionally well in school, although Porter and Washington (1993) find that they often resent being considered “model minorities,” and such resentment may be reflected in low IS scores. Marginality in school is often experienced by black and Hispanic students (Moore and Pinderhughes 1993; Gordon 1996), and although we find that black and Hispanic have the highest IS mean scores (Table 1), taking indications of marginality into account might reduce these high scores. Finally, it is also helpful to note again the emphasis on high moral standards in black communities, churches and schools (Billingsley 1999; McAdoo 1998; Willie 1979). If blacks’ high IS scores can be traced to this, we would find that controlling for school composition and religiosity would reduce these high scores.

The results are presented in Table 3.⁸ The first (unnumbered) row in Table 3 reports the baseline models for each group. These are the

⁸We do not report cell N’s for readability. The total N for each row can be obtained in Figures 1 and 2; it is based on that particular variable in the given comparison with the most missing cases. (The largest row N is 4788 since all means are adjusted for SES, for which there are 4788 non-missing values, and the smallest row N is 3855, specifically in the comparison that includes ‘Disciplinary Climate,’ because it is based on the school administrators’ survey for which there were relatively many non-respondents.)

Table 2
Means for Integrity Scale, Adjusted by Factors, F-test statistics

Factors	Means	F-test statistic
<i>School Characteristics</i>		
1. School composition		46.90**
Not mostly white	.05	
Mostly white	-.18	
2. Race and ethnic diversity		3.64
Low diversity	-.02	
High diversity	.05	
3. School size		18.88**
Small	-.06	
Large	.06	
4. Disciplinary climate		1.56
Low	-.01	
High	.03	
<i>Student Characteristics</i>		
5. Teachers' evaluation		61.34**
Not good student	-.16	
Good student	.11	
6. GPA		51.96**
Low	-.11	
High	.09	
7. Likes school		2731.8**
No	-.71	
Yes	.53	
8. Grades are important		435.15**
No	-.33	
Yes	.25	
9. Grades important to peers		337.28**
No	-.31	
Yes	.22	
10. Parents' expectations		0.503
Low	-.03	
High	-.08	
11. Parents' academic involvement		527.1**
Low	.25	
High	-.39	
<i>Indications of "Good Character"</i>		
12. Plays sports		6.27*
No	.01	
Yes	-.06	
13. Holds job		13.19**
No	.00	
Yes	-.13	

Table 2
(Continued).

Factors	Means	F-test statistic
14. Religiosity		24.08**
No	-.10	
Yes	.05	
15. Used marijuana		232.4**
No	.08	
Yes	-.48	
16. Used cocaine		24.00**
No	-.02	
Yes	-.41	

Note: Values rounded to second decimal; N's reported in Figure 2.

* $\rho < .01$, ** $\rho < .001$.

group means on the Integrity Scale, after adjusting (or taking into account) students' gender, school location, and SES. The results for these baseline models in Table 3 are similar to the unadjusted means reported in Table 1, namely, that when compared with all others, whites have significantly lower scores. The adjusted mean for whites is negative and significant, those for all nonwhite groups are positive, but the only significant positive mean is for blacks. (Although the mean value for Asians is .09 and that for blacks is .08, the one for Asians does not attain significance because MCA takes both the mean and the standard deviation into account. Additionally, it should be noted, each group is compared to all others, and the N for Asians, as Figure 1 shows, is quite small, 488.) Before turning to the results in which additional factors are controlled, it is useful to point out that the finding for black teens is counter to public perceptions about racial differences in deviance and delinquency.

Provisional Interpretation

The perspectives on deprivation, oppositional culture, and socialization all would predict high white IS scores and low black IS scores, but this prediction is not supported by these comparisons. However, they generally support the perspective that focuses on cultural differences among race and ethnic groups. As the findings in the baseline models show, each nonwhite group has a higher mean compared with all the other groups combined. This is, of course, largely a function of the very large white N and because whites' IS scores are low they dominate in any comparison. However, it is only the black IS mean that is significantly positive in these comparisons.

We propose that blacks' high scores are related to the experience of being closely scrutinized in their daily lives, and as a result being reflective

Table 3

Multiple Classification Analysis: Means for Race and Ethnic Groups on Integrity Scale Controlling for SES, Gender, School Location, and Additional Factors

Factors	Blacks	Latinos	Asians	Whites
Baseline Model (controlling for SES, gender, and school location)	.08*	.06	.09	-.11**
<i>School Characteristics</i>				
1. School composition	.07*	.03	.07	-.12**
2. Race and ethnic diversity	.08*	.05	.08	-.11**
3. School size	.08*	.04	.08	-.12**
4. Disciplinary climate	.09	.09	.11	-.10**
<i>Student Characteristics</i>				
5. Teacher's evaluation	.08	.06	.00	-.10**
6. GPA	.10**	.06	.01	-.11**
7. Likes school	.03	.01	.03	-.10**
8. Grades are important	.04	.04	.02	-.07**
9. Grades important to peers	.02	.00	.01	-.09**
10. Parent's expectations	.04	.06	.08	-.12**
11. Parent's academic involvement	.11**	.09**	.00	-.12**
<i>Indications of "Character"</i>				
12. Plays sports	.05	.04	.09	-.13**
13. Holds job	.02	.00	.05	-.11**
14. Religiosity	.01	.00	.06	-.11**
15. Used marijuana	.01	.00	-.01	-.09*
16. Used cocaine	.01	.01	.05*	-.12**

Note: Values rounded to second decimal; N's for factors in baseline model reported in Figure 1; N's for other factors reported in Figure 2.

* $\rho < .01$, ** $\rho < .001$.

about the difference between what is right and what is wrong – as Spike Lee's film title – “Do the Right Thing” – suggests. This also relates to what is termed “Robinson's Rule,” namely, that like Jackie Robinson, who broke through baseball's race barrier, blacks must hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct (see White 1998). Likewise, we interpret whites' distinctively low scores as reflecting attitudes related to privilege. To wit, being white and, therefore advantaged in the US, promotes arrogance and indifference about rules and conventions. White teens, we suggest, tend to consider themselves as being exempt from the rules that apply to others. If this is the case, high socioeconomic status would interact with racial differences and high-SES whites would have the lowest IS scores. In order

to test this we examined the subgroup means, without any controls. The mean for high-SES whites is $-.21$, and that for low-SES whites is $-.10$. The means for high-SES and low-SES categories for the other groups are, respectively, as follows: Asians, $.01$, $.23$; Hispanics, $-.07$ and $.23$, and blacks, $.17$ and $.15$. These comparisons show that high-SES teens have lower scores than low-SES teens among whites, Asians, and Hispanics, but that there is not such a big difference between high-SES black teens ($.17$) and low-SES black teens ($.15$). In addition, high-SES white teens have the lowest IS mean of all groups (specifically, $-.21$), which supports our general assumptions about the consequences of privilege and our specific hypothesis about white privilege.

The question we now address is whether race and ethnic differences persist under additional controls. In Table 3, the means reported in rows 1 through 16 are adjusted by controlling for SES, gender, and urban vs. suburban residence, plus one additional factor (listed in the row). The tests for statistical significance are based on a comparison of each group mean in a given row with the pooled values for the other three groups. That is, we ask whether a group has a distinctively low or high value when controlling for SES, gender, and urban vs. suburban (from Figure 1), and each of the factors listed in Figure 2.

Controls for School Characteristics

When school composition (not mostly white vs. mostly white), race and ethnic diversity, or school size are individually controlled (Table 3, rows 1, 2, and 3), the results for the four groups are the same as in the baseline models. Black students have significantly higher IS scores compared with all others and white students have significantly lower ones. Controlling for the school's disciplinary climate (row 4) reduces the difference between the adjusted mean for blacks and all others, but whites' adjusted mean is still significantly negative.

Controls for Student Characteristics

In Row 5 of Table 3, each student's own teacher's evaluation is controlled. The difference between blacks and others is no longer significant; the white IS mean remains significantly negative; and the IS means for Hispanics and Asians are not different from the others. Our interpretation for this result is that teachers tend to evaluate black students lowest of all,⁹ and, therefore, the black IS mean becomes insignificant once teachers' evaluations are controlled. In other words, for nonblacks, variation in

⁹ The black mean is $.46$, compared with $.48$ for Hispanics, $.79$ for Asians, and $.61$ for whites.

teachers' evaluations is not as highly associated with variation in IS scores as it is for blacks. In contrast, when GPA (row 6) is controlled, the black adjusted mean is positive and significant at the .001 level. In other words, teachers' evaluations are so confounded with race that controlling for these evaluations reduces the black adjusted mean whereas the more objective indicator of performance, GPA, is not so confounded.

The results in rows 7, 8, 9, and 10 for Hispanics, Asians, and whites are virtually identical to those in the baseline model. On the other hand, blacks do not have distinctively higher IS scores when controlling for 'likes school,' 'grades are important,' and 'grades are important to peers.' This is because these three control variables are positively related to the IS scale, and black students have relatively high scores on these control variables.¹⁰ In other words, blacks' high scores partly depend on their own and their friends' positive attitudes about school and grades. Overall, the factor, parental expectations, has no relationship to the IS scale (Table 2, row 10), but controlling this factor reduces the black adjusted mean, and this is because black parents have relatively high expectations for their teens.¹¹

Parents' involvement in their teens' academic work is largely detrimental to youngsters' regard of integrity (Table 2, row 11), which we interpret as indicating that among high school adolescents such involvement is parental pressure, which encourages cheating. However, such involvement may not be experienced as such by Hispanic youngsters. When this factor is controlled, the adjusted IS mean for Hispanics is the highest. It is important to point out that Hispanic youth have the highest mean on parental involvement (.47, compared with blacks, .38, Asians, .29, and whites, .34). This is consistent with ethnographic studies (e.g., Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995) that show that Hispanic families are exceptionally close-knit, and that parental support benefits youth. Our results also show that Hispanic youth have high levels of parental involvement, and that this is not detrimental, as it is for youth in the other groups. In sum, when we take into account the greater tendency of Hispanic parents to supervise homework and to be otherwise closely engaged in their youngsters' homework, they are more likely to value integrity than others. Parental involvement makes less of a difference for the other groups than

¹⁰ Black students have the highest mean score on (7) 'Likes School' (.62, compared with .56, .60, and .51 for the other groups); and although Asians have the highest mean score on (8) 'Grades are important' (.70), blacks' mean score is .62, which is higher than that for Hispanics (.60) and for whites (.49). Although Asians score highest on (9) 'Grades Important to Peers' (.64), blacks also score high (.62), and the other two groups are relatively low (Hispanics, .56 and whites, .45).

¹¹ Only the Asian mean (.83) is higher on 'Parents' Expectations' than the black mean (.73).

it does for Hispanics. The black mean is positive and significant; the Asian mean remains insignificant and the white mean is significant and negative.

Controls for “Good Character” Factors

In the final panel, we present results when controlling factors that are conventionally considered, at least in public discourse, to be behavioral indicators of good or bad “character,” namely participation in sports, holding a job, religiosity, and using drugs. As is evident in Table 2, participating in sports, holding a job, and using drugs accompany low scores on integrity, whereas religiosity is associated with high scores. The major contrasts in rows 12, 13 and 14 in Table 3 are between whites and others, and the black adjusted mean is no longer significantly higher in any of these comparisons. The reason why the contrast between whites and others remains negative and significant is that whites are most likely to participate in school sports and to work, and both are associated with low IS scores (Table 2, rows 12 and 13). On the other hand, religiosity is positively related to IS (Table 2, row 14), and for black teens, integrity scores and religiosity are so highly confounded that their adjusted IS mean is insignificant.

The final two variables pertain to using specific drugs: marijuana (row 15) and cocaine (row 16). When either marijuana or cocaine is included as a control, whites’ scores are significantly lower than the other groups combined, and this is because white students are most likely to use marijuana and more likely than Asians and blacks to use cocaine.¹² This result for whites, especially in comparison with blacks, is consistent with the conclusions of a multi-agency national report (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 1997) and studies by Males and Macallair (1999) and the Applied Research Center (1999, 2000). Because using drugs is associated with low IS scores (Table 1), and white students are most likely to use drugs (see note 12) white students’ scores on IS are lower than others’ scores when either drug is controlled. On the other hand, because Asians are very unlikely to use cocaine, controlling for it in row 16 increases Asians’ IS mean relative to the other groups.

Conclusions

This study should be considered exploratory in that we use data from a survey that was not explicitly designed to study integrity norms. In-depth ethnographic studies would be useful to further probe teens’ evaluations

¹² The respective means for ‘Marijuana’ and ‘Cocaine’ are: blacks, .15, .02; Hispanics, .19, .06; Asians, .08, .02; and, whites, .25, .04.

of honesty and integrity, and their actual behavior. We suspect, however, that measurement error in our study is low because the items we use were not part of a study related to morality or honesty, but instead were embedded in a long questionnaire dealing with schooling and education, and, therefore, elicited frank responses.

One objective of this research was to examine how teen variation on this scale relates to the characteristics of the school they attend and their own characteristics. Rather than summarize these results, it is useful to highlight a few of them. First, students who attend large and predominantly nonwhite schools have high IS scores. Second, students who do well in school, value academic achievement, and have peers who value academic achievement, tend to have high IS scores. Third, although participating in sports and holding a job do not accompany high IS scores, religiosity and abstaining from drugs do.

The main set of results relate to race and ethnic differences on the scale. These results show that white teens have the lowest scores, whereas blacks, Hispanics and Asians have higher scores, but when taking into account a variety of other factors, black teens have the highest scores. These results are contrary to predictions based on perspectives on delinquency (e.g., Hagan and Peterson 1995), oppositional culture (e.g., Ogbu 1978), and socialization (e.g., Kohn 1969). Although the comparisons between whites and nonwhites are consistent with recent analyses dealing with variation in cultural values (for example, Coll, Meyer, and Brillon 1995; Zhou 1997), the result that black teens' IS mean is the highest, when a variety of variables are controlled, deserves attention. Our results are consistent with the conclusions of others about the consequences of what we might term, *racialized social spaces*, on adolescents. For example, Feagin (1991) and Wellman (1993) show that black youth are more circumspect about integrity and honesty than others are because their actions are more often under scrutiny. Shopkeepers and merchants carefully watch black teens, and black youth are often regarded suspiciously on city streets, parks and other public places. As we noted, "Robinson's Rule" imposes the obligation on blacks that they hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct. Our results underscore the extent to which African American families and communities have inculcated among youth high moral codes of conduct and responsibility, and yet African American teens routinely experience encounters with strangers who regard them with suspicion.

The other conclusion of our study relates to whites' low regard of integrity. Being white in American society has traditionally accompanied having exemptions and privileges, and whites may fear losing these advantages as the nation becomes increasingly diverse. Our research suggests that white teens may have difficulties reconciling family values

that emphasize achievement and individualism with cultural pluralism and social diversity. At least the results show that white students are claiming exemption from traditional school norms, and a plausible conjecture is that increasing societal pluralism and diversity are underlying factors that might account for this.

This study raises questions that we cannot answer using survey techniques. However, we hope we are persuasive in suggesting that quantitative research can be useful in complementing more theoretical and qualitative approaches. We pose the following as important questions to pursue: How is individual conscience rooted in cultural and group experiences? How does social context affect people's ideas about right and wrong? Do cross-cultural experiences enhance individual conscience? What school practices foster and enhance the development of conscience? We can only raise, but not answer, such questions.

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