sal are, indeed, found in other cultural groups and operate in the same fashion. Toward this end, it may be necessary to delineate culture-specific representations of the variables of interest and develop parallel assessments for children from different cultural groups.

In the United States at this time, the diversity of cultural groups represented and disadvantaged status of children from certain ethnic minorities suggests a need also to understand more fully the unique processes that operate in a culture. For instance, a number of scholars have emphasized the role of traditional African values such as spirituality, communalism, and harmony, and attempted to delineate developmental models that account for these aspects of fundamental culture for African American children and youths (e.g., Boykin, 1983; Nobles, 1974). Traditional ethnographic methods used by anthropologists can illuminate the emic variables in a particular cultural group. Such procedures can also reveal potential instrumentation and methodological threats to validity, including differences in language, meaning, and styles of responding, as well as problems related to how assessments should be conducted to maximize participation and accuracy of responses.

In all cases, researchers must exercise care in the classification of individuals in terms of cultural group membership. As we have discussed, culture is particularly important in the assessment process because of its role in providing individuals with a framework for making sense of the world. Although ethnicity is a convenient marker for an individual's cultural framework, its utility is compromised greatly when variables such as ethnic identity and acculturation (in the case of Latinos) are not considered simultaneously, and when factors such as gender, age, religion and social class are overlooked.

REFERENCES


