THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RACIAL TAPESTRY:
BLACK ADOLESCENTS’ PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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WHY THIS RESEARCH TOPIC?

“Our self-perceptions are shaped by the messages that we receive from those around us, and when young Black men and women enter adolescence, the racial content of those messages intensifies” (Tatum, 1997, p. 54).
**Racial Identity in Research on Adolescent Identity Development**

* Racial Identity
  * **Who am I?** (Sharma & Sharma, 2010; Sadler, 2017)
  * **Who am I racially?** (DeCuir-Gunby, et al., 2012)
  * **What is my relationship to my ethnic/racial group membership?** (Peck et al., 2014)

* Black Racial Identity Theories and Expanded Models
  * Cross Nigrescence Model (Cross, 1971)
  * Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (Parham and Helms, 1981)
  * Cross Racial Identity Scale (Vandiver et al., 2000)
  * Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Sellers et al., 1998; Scottham et al., 2008)
THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)

- **Salience**
  - Defines oneself in terms of race at a particular moment or in a particular situation

- **Centrality**
  - Defines himself or herself with regard to race overall

- **Regard**
  - Feels positively or negatively about membership in African-American community
    - **Public** 
      - Feels positively about his or her race
    - **Private** 
      - Feels that others view African Americans positively or negatively

Sellers, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous, 1998
**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STUDY DESIGN**

- **RQ1**: How do African American high school students attending independent schools identify racially and ethnically?

- **RQ2**: How do African American high school students experience independent schools as sites for racial identity development?
Participants defined their self-concept and sense of belonging to their racial group.

Participants’ attitudes toward their own race were influenced by their interactions with and observations of the attitudes of those in school.

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) dimensions elucidated participants’:
- Beliefs → Centrality
- Understandings → Salience
- Interpretations → Racial regard (public & private)
Implications

1. School Administration/Educators
   - Implement race based **affinity groups**
   - Facilitate students’ **social networks and interactions** with other peers and adults of similar ethnic and racial backgrounds
   - Promote **youth involvement in the school community**
   - Hire **teachers and staff of color**
   - Allocate resources to create **programs that focus on identity exploration**

2. Black/African American Racial Tapestry
   - **A new model**
     - Explores the weaving of racial, ethnic, and cultural identities that weft thread, African descendants, and multi-ethnic Blacks, piecing together their intricate, and complex experiences in societies and institutions, to encompass their multidimensional Black realities:
       * Family background
       * Racial-ethnic self-identification
       * Knowledge
       * School relationships

3. How has what I’ve learned affected me on the job and in my life?

Facebook, Prejudice, Privilege, Race, Racism, Understanding, White Privilege