

The Influence of James Jackson and PRBA on My Research Agenda

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A Busy Postdoc Experience

▶ PRBA

- ▶ Arrived in 2003 (thanks Toni!)
- ▶ NSAL had just come out of the field
- ▶ Cleo and James encouraged me to analyze the adolescent supplement given my interest in racial discrimination

▶ Rob Sellers' Lab

- ▶ Rob connected me with his postdoc, Tiffany Yip
- ▶ Rob encouraged us to analyze his adolescent, college student and adult data given my interest in racial identity

Specific Influences on My Research



Theoretical Influences

- ▶ Intersectionality Framework
 - ▶ One of my NSAL manuscripts sparked this interest¹
 - ▶ I examined whether the intersection of age, gender and race/ethnicity moderated the relation between discrimination and mental health
 - ▶ Older Caribbean Black females seemed to be more at risk from discrimination experiences compared to older African American males
 - ▶ The Intersectionality framework argues that domains of societal oppression (e.g., racism and sexism) are not independent, but create "intersections" of multiple forms of oppression²

¹Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers & Jackson (2010)

²Crenshaw (1991)

Theoretical Influences

- ▶ Intersectionality Framework
 - ▶ I completed a qualitative study examining the intersection of gender and racial discrimination experiences among African American adolescents
 - ▶ Two discriminatory incidents occurring at the nexus of race and gender disproportionately impact adolescent females¹
 - ▶ Hair scrutiny includes unwelcome experiences (e.g., touching, comments and questions) related to Whites' curiosity about their natural hair style and texture
 - ▶ Adolescent females lack the interracial dating options of their Black male counterparts despite both males and females espousing a color-blind dating ideology

¹Seaton & Tyson (2017)

Methodological Influences

▶ Racial Discrimination

- ▶ My first NSAL manuscript examined the frequency of discrimination experiences among African American and Caribbean Black youth¹
 - ▶ The majority of African American (87%) and Caribbean Black (90%) youth felt discriminated against at least once in the prior year
 - ▶ Youth reported an average of 5.2 discriminatory incidents in the prior year
- ▶ This facilitated an interest in assessing how often youth experience racial discrimination

¹Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers & Jackson (2008)

Methodological Influences

▶ Frequency of Racial Discrimination

- ▶ I completed a study examining the frequency of racial discrimination experiences using the daily diary technique among African American adolescents¹
 - ▶ This technique examines within-person and between-person variation such that assessments are collected over several days or weeks, or several times a day
 - ▶ During the two-week period, 97% of adolescents reported at least one racial discrimination experience
 - ▶ Adolescents reported a daily average of 2.4 racially discriminatory experiences

¹Seaton & Douglass (2014)

Methodological Influences

▶ Racial Identity

- ▶ My initial manuscripts examined racial identity among African American adolescents, college students and adults
 - ▶ Some adolescents exhibited atypical developmental patterns in racial identity, which influenced their mental health¹
 - ▶ Content changes in racial identity were influenced by age and racial discrimination experiences among adolescents²
 - ▶ African American adolescents exhibited less developed racial identities than college students and adults³
- ▶ This sparked an interest in understanding daily changes in racial identity

¹Seaton, Scottham & Sellers (2006)

²Seaton, Yip & Sellers (2009)

³Yip, Seaton & Sellers (2006)

Methodological Influences

▶ Racial Identity

- ▶ Using the diary data, I examined racial identity, racial discrimination and mental health outcomes among African American youth^{1,2}
 - ▶ Racial centrality and private regard levels did not change over the course of two weeks, but public regard levels became more positive over the two week period
 - ▶ Daily racial centrality, private regard and public regard levels exacerbated, rather than buffered the relation between daily racial discrimination experiences and daily depressive symptoms

¹Seaton & Cook (2017)

²Seaton & Iida (2017)

Content Influences

- ▶ Pubertal Development and Racial Identity
 - ▶ This interest arose from the NSAL finding that some adolescents attributed discriminatory experiences to physical appearance such as height and weight¹
 - ▶ I have been investigating the intersection of pubertal development and racial identity
 - ▶ Racial identity moderated the relation between pubertal timing and adverse outcomes among African American boys and girls²
 - ▶ Racial identity moderated the relation between pubertal timing and depressive symptoms among adolescent African American adolescent girls attending predominantly White schools not predominantly Black schools³

¹Seaton et al., (2010)

²Carter, Seaton & Rivas-Drake (in press)

³Seaton & Carter (in press)

Content Influences

- ▶ Racial Discrimination and Biomarker Indicators
 - ▶ This interest arose from the hypothesis that Black people preserve their mental health by engaging in behaviors that compromise their physical health to cope with the social stressors (e.g., racism and racial discrimination) in American society¹
 - ▶ I am completing a pilot project examining daily racial discrimination experiences, HPA activity and mental health outcomes among 100 Black college students
 - ▶ Does HPA activity mediate or moderate the daily relation between racial discrimination experiences and mental health outcomes?

¹Jackson, Knight & Rafferty (2010)

Overarching Influences

- ▶ Developmental trajectories
 - ▶ I approach adolescence as a critical developmental period
 - ▶ My guiding hypothesis assumes that racial discrimination negatively alters the developmental trajectories of Black youth
- ▶ Intra-group variability
 - ▶ My postdoc experience opened my eyes to the variation that exists within the “Black” community
 - ▶ In all of my studies, I provide racial labels for youth so I can examine differences based on those labels
- ▶ Studying Black youth
 - ▶ I have been told many times that I need a “White control group”
 - ▶ My experience at PRBA and Sellers’ lab affirmed my belief that it is okay to exclusively study youth of African descent

Thank You!

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