



# Social Media, Racial Identity, and Adolescents

How does social media influence an adolescents' racial identity?

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# How does social media influence an adolescents' racial /ethnic identity?

- Social media and digital platforms are now part of everyday life -- from school, news outlets, points of socialization -- adolescents interact inside and outside the media in every aspect of thier life
- Similarly, youth of color are implicitly forming idaes about their racial identity as they interact with their communities and socio-political institutions
- This intersection interests me because social media introduced me to new spaces of activism even before I explicitly faced the complexities of my own racial/ethnic identity.

# Background Information

## Context:

- Online Learning and Spaces
- RE Identity through an online space
- Social Media in an academic space and how can those be intertwined

## Key Terms:

- Racial/Ethnic Identity
- Digital Spaces

## Source Overview

- Role of Racial-Ethnic Identity in Social Media
  - How does social media interacts with one's RE identity and how does that further influences their well-being?
- Social Media as a formation and disruption of bias of RE adolescents
  - What are the unique experiences faced by Black girls in social media?
- Technologies of Living of Black Youth
  - How do Black adolescents use social media to reconstruct narratives about their communities?

# **Conceptualizing the role of racial- ethnic identity in US adolescent social technology use and well- being**

**Hernandez, J. M., Charmaraman,  
L., & Schaefer, H. S. (2023).**

## **Research Question and Hypothesis:**

- What is the importance of racial identity adolescents explore various social settings, specifically in the context of social media technologies?
- An adolescents' RE identity would become significantly more important on their well-being in online spaces

## **Methods:**

- Required participants to evaluate the importance of thier identities in comparison to other social identities.
- Indicated how relationships have changed since the pandemic
- Rate thier relatability to 8 possible online behaviors.

## **Results:**

- Asian and Multicultural students check social media less often
- Higher importance in RE identity linked to higher usage of prosocial social media use
- Black youth reported enjoying social media more than other ethnic groups

## **Relevance to Project:**

- Prosocial Media Use
- Platform for these adolescents to engage in social conversations

# **Examining youth participatory action research as a context to disrupt implicit bias in African American adolescent girls**

Duke, A. & Fripp, J. (2022).

## **Overarching Theme:**

- Social media gives access for Black girls to witness and experience stereotypes, cyberbullying, and community resistance which all have an impact on their understanding of their racial/ethnic (RE) identity.

## **Main Point 1:**

- Social media is an integral factor in all spaces of the ecological-systems-theory, lays out that social media influences the perspectives, relationships, and exposure about their identities in different contexts.

## **Main Point 2:**

- Intersectionality between race, class, and gender impact how young Black girls interact in social media

## **Relevance to Project:**

- Analysis of how outside factors intertwined with RE identity influence why Black youth engage in social media and the unique challenges faced throughout

# **Left to Their Own Devices: Black Youth, Religion, and Technologies of Living**

**Michael Brown McCormack (2022).**

## **Overarching Theme:**

- Black youth recreate digital spaces to navigate their racial/ethnic identity that often conflicts with socio-political systems

## **Main Point 1:**

- Social media has been used to build community which has allowed these adolescents the ability to increase the “possibilities for surviving and thriving.”
- Social media allows Black youth to engage in discourse around larger socio-political experiences and issues

## **Main Point 2:**

- Although social media can be a reaffirming space to construct identity, it also serves as a platform to display grief and frustration because of the violence towards the Black community

## **Relevancy to Project:**

- Social media is a platform for community expressions
- Allow Black youth to respond to violence against their racial/ethnic identity communities

# Emerging Themes

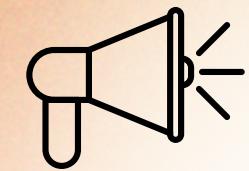
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An adolescent's RE identity influences how they choose to interact in digital spaces.



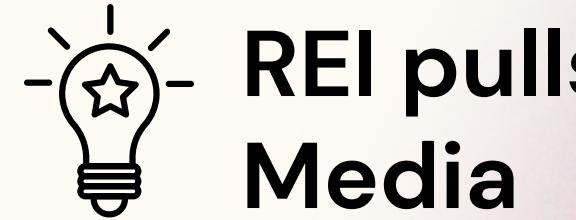
Black youth face negative perceptions about their RE identity that reconstruct the social context of their identities.



Social media is a platform for community expression and advocacy.

# Examples

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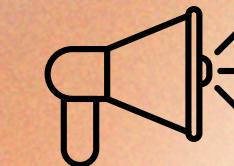
## REI pulls to Social Media

- Adolescents of Asian identities check social media less frequently
- Black adolescents are more likely to enjoy social media usage
  - Socio-economic factors also pull Black youth into the digital sphere
- Space of survival
  - Allows Black youth to reimagine where their community is found



## Reconstructing Identities

- Asian and Black adolescents reported having higher interaction with hate speech
- Intersection between technology, art, and Black culture show how social media platforms allow Black youth to “reclaim, rewrite, and rethink” history



## Community Expression and Advocacy

- Social media gives underrepresented adolescents a space to explore and rebuild their communities
- Social media has given a platform for Black adolescents to lead social movements
  - Black Lives Matter Movement
  - Breonna’s Garden

# Implications and Recommendations

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## **Educators + Community Members**

- Digital Media Literacy + Social Media Hygiene curriculum in schools
  - Intervention strategies for schools and families to monitor healthy online spaces
- Acknowledge the platforms Black adolescents use to engage in RE conversations amongst their community
  - Addressing the unique experiences and challenges of marginalized youth

## **Researchers + Policy Makers**

- Emphasis on the digital sphere can serve as a space to empower youth perspectives as we collectively attempt to dismantle race-based disparities in education and provide resources to support the development of RE identities
- Understand what factors push away certain RE identities in adolescents as well as the if and how schools are adapting these spaces for educational purposes

# References

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- McCormack, M. B. (2022). Left to Their Own Devices: Black Youth, Religion, and Technologies of Living. *Black Scholar*, 52(3), 52–62.

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# Thank you!

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EDPSY 404 - Adolescent Development