# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BLACK IDENTITY

**Xoliswa MTOSE***

**Anass BAYAGA****

**Abstract**

In this article, the authors examine the conceptualisation of Psychology of Black Identity as a multidimensional and a dynamic construct that develops over time through a process of exploration and commitment. The design of the current paper was a conceptual work based on reviewed literature ranging from the early 1930s to present (2010). The authors review research on Psychology of Black Identity and discuss implications of the multiple models considered by various researchers till present. The theoretical framework emanates from: self-hate paradigm, Nigrescence paradigm, Parham's model, Helms's People of Colour, Racial Identity Model, Manganyi's theory of Being-black-in-the-world and Lambley's concept of internalised racism. The authors discuss the components of Black Identity that has been studied within these models. The finding concludes that blackness is seen as troubling encounter with whiteness and encounter with racism. And that both past and present studies have a common understanding that oppression is internalised and subsequently has a psychological element. However, what is missing in literature is the focus on politics, on the history, and on economics in the troubling nature of Blackness.

**Key Words***: Black Identity, Self-Categorisation, Self Hate, Racial Identity, Being-Black.

## Introduction

Psychology of Black Identity (PBI) has continuously be contested yet driven from a sense of peoplehood within a group, culture, and a particular setting of Blacks (Richter, Norris, Pettifor, Yach & Cameron, 2007). Yet, PBI is not merely knowledge and understanding of one's ingroup affiliations. It is argued that the achievement of a secure

* Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare, East London, South Africa
** Correspondence Author: Prof. Dr., Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare, East London, South Africa, email: abayaga@ufh.ac.za

PBI derives from experience, but experience is not sufficient to produce it (Richter et al., 2007). Because, one's identity is constructed over time, the actions and choices of individuals are essential to the process. This suggests that PBI is distinct in some ways from other group identities, such as White Identity. Following these nauseas, the purpose in this current paper was to examine the conceptualisation of Black identity from social psychological and developmental perspectives. Thus, the focus of the current paper was to explore the psychological perspective of identity, which is seen as a dominant way of thinking about Black identity.

### Background of the Study

In a presentation of the literature that demonstrates the psychological impact on Black identity, the literature on the self-hate paradigm is a starting point (Johnson, Lecci & Swim, 2006). The self-hate paradigm describes Black racial identity as a monolithic and static concept. The self-hatred paradigm is followed by the Nigrescence paradigm proposed by Cross (1971). This paradigm attempts to explain how black people come to realise the salience of race in their life and develop a positive racial identity. The author suggests that the negro black conversion experience, and theorises that socialisation in dominant American society caused Blacks to experience self-hate as a result of racial origin (Cross, 1971). Furthermore it was hypothesised that a return to African values would help blacks develop a healthier racial identity. The Nigrescence models are therefore extensions of the self-hate paradigm. The discussions on stage models include the works of Parham (1989), Helms (1994) and Bulhan (1980). The last theory discussed the psychology of being black, which addressed how one can be racist in talking about the psychology of being black (Lambley, 1980).

### Components of Psychology of Black Identity

Any theory that purports to be scientific should account for existing evidence - ideally all of the evidence. It should also give indications of where new evidence could be sought that could test the theory and lead to modifications. A clear theoretical model, therefore, is a necessary foundation for all empirical research.

Both theoretical evidence and empirical evidence suggest that PBI is a multifaceted construct that includes a number of dimensions (Norris et al., 2007). These components tend to be positively correlated (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). But, the available empirical evidence is vague as to what extent different components of PBI constitute a single overarching concept or distinct aspects that need to be considered separately. Furthermore, PBI is dynamic; it thus changes over time and context and must therefore be considered with reference to its formation and variation (Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2005). Any attempt to understand PBI must therefore be based on an examination of both past and current theories and their supporting evidence. Both social psychological and developmental perspectives provide important insights into PBI. Much of the research on PBI has been based on the study of group identity by social psychologists (Combs, Penn, Cassisi, Michael, Wood & Wanner, 2006).

From this perspective, PBI is an aspect of social identity, defined as part of an individual's self-concept which derives from [his/her] knowledge of [his/ her]

membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Combs et al., 2006). This explanation suggests the multidimensionality of the construct. In a recent review from this tradition, there are also sketchy attempts to also identify the major components of group (or collective) identity to provide a useful framework for understanding PBI in its broadest sense. The review is largely an atheoretical overview of existing empirical evidence. However, it is helpful as a basis for examining aspects of PBI. In subsequent sections, we consider components of PBI models that have been identified as well as other researchers (Johnson, Lecci & Swim, 2006). Specifically, we discuss self-hate paradigm, Nigrescence paradigm, Parham's model, Helms's People of Colour, Racial Identity Model, Manganyi's theory of Being-black-in-the-world and Lambley's concept of internalised racism. and consider their theoretical and empirical implications.

### Self-hate Paradigm

An early statement about the psychology of inferiority is one in the late 1930s to 1940s (Clark & Clark, 1939). Additionally, the study wanted to investigate the degree to which Black children would make selections preferring a stimulus representing a Black individual to one representing a White person (Clark & Clark, 1939). They also wanted to measure the extent to which these children would make correct identifications with the appropriate dolls representing Black individuals when asked to do so.

The authors showed pictures consisting of various combinations of a White boy, Black boy, lion, dog, or clown to 150 black children, three to five years old. After the instructions of "show me which one is you," for the boys and "show me which one is …?" using the name of the girl's brother, boy cousin or boy playmate for the girls, they found that, while overall the children made slightly more choices of the Black child, this was not true at each age level (Clark & Clark, 1939: 594).

When the responses were interpreted at separate age levels, the findings showed that the youngest children chose the White child in the picture more often (44% of the time) compared to the Black child (41% of the time) with 15% making irrelevant choices, such as one of the animals or the clown. The percentage of choices for the White child by Black children remained constant at 44% as the children go from three to four years old; however, the children cease to identify themselves in terms of the animals or the clown and consistently identify themselves in terms of either the Black or White children. The Black children chose to identify with the Black child in the picture 55% of the time at age 4, and 45% of the time by age five. As the children grew older, from age three to age five, they increasingly identified with the Black child. Nevertheless, a significant number of Black children continued to identify with the white doll: 45% at age four, and 44% at age five (Clark & Clark, 1939).

Several years later, Clark and Clark (1939) interviewed Black children ages three through seven individually using a set of four dolls, two black and two white. The researchers asked them the following questions; (1) give me the doll that you want to play with (2) give me the doll that is a nice doll (3) give me the doll that looks bad (4) give me the doll that is a nice colour (5) give me the doll that looks like a white child (6) give me the doll that looks like a coloured child (7) give me the doll that looks like a Negro child

(8) give me the doll that looks like you (Clark & Clark, 1947:602). They felt the first four questions measured racial preference, while questions five to seven measured racial self-identification. It was found that Black children preferred white dolls and rejected black dolls when asked to choose which were nice, which looked bad, which they would like to play with, and which a nice colour was (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Clark & Clark, 1939). Clark and Clark (1939) believed this result implied that the children perceived Black as not being beautiful.

The conclusion drawn from this study was that, as a result of the historic and systematic unfair treatment of Black people in the United States (i.e. racism and racial discrimination), Black children had developed contempt for being Black and thus sought to be White. This was referred to as 'wishful thinking' and was associated with wanting to be White both to acquire full personhood and to avoid discrimination.

There are however, several challenges to this paradigm. Firstly, the entire paradigm was based largely on two data (Clark & Clark, 1939). Secondly, these results pertained to African American children and was inappropriately generalised to the wider African American population. Consequently, the self-hate paradigm describes Black racial identity as a more or less monolithic and static concept. We move to the stage models, a paradigm that extends Black identity from the self-hate paradigm to an identity that moves across a series of sequential stages as an individual reaction to social, environmental pressures and circumstances termed as the Nigrescence paradigm.

**The Nigrescence Paradigm**

While numerous authors have written about the racial identity development of African Americans (Eaton, 2006; Cross, Parham & Helms, 1994), it was in the early 70s, when models of racial identity development were proposed (Cross, 1971; Thomas & Thomas, 1971).

Perhaps the best known and most widely researched is Cross's (1971) model of psychological Nigrescence, which refers to the process of developing a Black identity. This is when a healthy Black progresses from a non-Afrocentric to an Afrocentric to a multicultural identity. Series of studies theorise Black identity in terms of a conversion from 'Negro' to 'Black' (Cross, 1971). While, others suggest that the development of a Black person's racial identity is often characterised by his/her own movement through a five-stage process, the transformation from pre-encounter to internalisation-commitment (Cross, 1971). The five stages are: (a) pre-encounter (b) encounter (c) immersion-emersion (d) internalisation and (e) internalisation-commitment.

The first stage, pre-encounter, is characterised by a Eurocentric identification and denigration of that which is Black. Typically, a person in the pre-encounter stage considers herself or himself to be race neutral; there is little thought about race and being Black is not important. For some individuals, this stage can also be characterised by anti-Black attitudes and sentiments. The person at this stage is most likely to have accepted a deracinated frame of reference, and because their reference point is usually a White normative standard, they develop attitudes that are pro-White and anti-Black. These individuals may subscribe to negative stereotypes about Black people and may wish that

they themselves were not Black. In fact, it has been argued that such a person in pre-encounter has a Eurocentric perspective embracing Western values and culture (Foster, 2006). Such a person is likely to appreciate Western values such as individuality and to prefer the Western ideal of beauty.

The second stage- encounter; assumes that the race-neutral individual experience encounter that forced the individual to realise the importance of race in society (Foster, 2006; Cross, 1971). This stage involves two steps: the first step entails experiencing and personalising the event when the person realises that his or her old frame of reference is inappropriate and so he/she begins to explore aspects of a new identity; and the second step is portrayed by past study as a testing phase during which the individual [first] cautiously tries to validate his/her perceptions and then definitely decides to develop a Black identity (Cross, 1971). This means that an individual's test for new ideas and behaviours relates to insights gained and leads to the development of a Black identity.

In essence, this stage is characterised by a negative social event involving being Black. This is believed to force the individual to re-examine previously held attitudes and ideas regarding racial matters (Foster, 2006; Cross, 1971). In a revision of the Nigrescence model, the author points out that a singular event need not cause an encounter, some various incidents could constitute an encounter (Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon & Finchilescu, 2005; Cross, 1995). The person in the encounter stage feels a great deal of guilt and anger for never having considered the importance of Blackness and for having subscribed to Eurocentric values. A person in this stage may also experience growing anger towards White people.

In the third stage of Nigrescence, the individual attempts to separate herself or himself from Eurocentric values. However, a lack of knowledge of Black values and culture leads them to form a reactionary identity that is anti-White (Steyn, 2004; Cross, 1995). The person may embrace that which they perceive as Black or African, not for its authenticity, but rather for it not being White.

The beginning phase of stage three is characterised by an immersion in Black culture and a rejection of White culture. Individuals take on African-inspired dress and hair styles and use creative means such as poetry, music and art to express their Blackness. The individualism of earlier stages is replaced by a strong group identity and a belief in collectivism (Steyn & Foster, 2008; Cross, 1971). The individual might express the belief in collectivism by being very confrontational and challenging the 'Blackness' of those who are not as militant.

As the individual begins to emerge in the second phase of stage three, dualistic views are replaced by a more complex understanding of African American experience. Not able to sustain the intense emotionality of immersion, the individual seeks to stabilise their emotions. During this stage of immersion much of the hostility of immersion subsides. A sense of pride replaces the guilt feelings evident in the immersion phase. There is also an attempt to increase the depth of their understanding of Black culture (Cross, 1971). A person at this stage begins to identify only with things that are considered

Black and there is also a rejection of things representing Whiteness. Considering the fact that accordingly the person is at the transitional stage, high levels of ambivalence may be present too. The person may vacillate between feelings of rage and depression, power and helplessness, anger and joy, pride and shame. Even towards other black people the person may be alternately embracing and rejecting.

In stage four, internalisation, the individual comes to accept a positive view of herself or himself as a black person and accepts the existence of good and bad qualities in both Black and White people. At this stage, the individual resolves conflicts between the old identity and the new worldview. Increased self-confidence and an increasingly pluralistic perspective are characteristics of this stage (Cross, 1971).

In stage five, internalisation-commitment, the person focuses on issues other than themselves and their Black or racial group. They achieve inner security and self-confidence within their Blackness (Cross, 1995). According to past research a person "may be characterised by political activism on behalf of Blacks as well as other oppressed groups, [but] moves towards a plurastic and nonracist perspective" (Cross, 1991:326). This means that a person in this stage may act as an agent of Black issues to other communities. Following the aforementioned assessment, the Psychology of Nigrescence model has gone through various revisions. The first revision to the model was its name; it was originally the Negro-to-Black conversion experience (Cross, 1971). It is also important to note that earlier models of Nigrescence suggested that stage one was characterised by self-hate; the revised model now acknowledges that not all people display this emotion (Cross, 1995). In additional revision, attempt has been made to convey that Nigrescence is not as linear as the stages depict. Moreover, it is not all individuals will progress through the entire model – some individuals will drop out (Cross, 1971). It also acknowledges that it is possible for a person to regress into earlier stages of the model (Cross, 1971). This model is contrary to the author's first linear development theory and similar to Parham's (1989) and Helms's (1994) models of Black identity development.

Cross's (1971) model provides this study with an understanding of the psychological significance of Black identity construction in an encounter with Whiteness and an encounter with racism. However, the nature of development in linear stages as proposed by this model does not provide this study with the tools for understanding the possibilities of change in Black identity in the continuing encounter with racism and the encounter with Whiteness.

**Parham's Model**

Parham (1989) describes cycles of racial identity development as a life-long, continuously changing, process for Blacks. The author proposes that, within the context of normal development, racial identity development is a phenomenon that is subject to continuous change during the lifespan (Parham, 1989). This suggests that identity development may recycle throughout adulthood and argues that the manifestations of Black identity during childhood may be a reflection of externalised parental attitudes or societal stereotypes rather than personal identity.

Parham's (1989) model assumes that there is a qualitative difference between the Nigrescence experience between adolescence or early adulthood, say, middle or late adulthood, because "[a] Black person's frame of reference is potentially influenced by his or her life stage and the development tasks associated with that period of life … [and] within the context of normal development, racial identity is a phenomenon which is subject to change during the life cycle." Parham (1989) posits three different ways in which people deal with their racial identity as they advance through life: stagnation, stage-wise linear progression and recycling.

Stagnation is characterised by maintaining one type of race-related attitude throughout most of one's life time. The second is stage-wise linear progression which refers to movement from one stage to another in a stage-to-stage fashion (i.e. pre-encounter-internalisation) over a period of time in one's life (Parham, 1989). The third stage, recycling, is defined as the reinitiating into the racial identity struggle and resolution process after having gone through the identity process at an earlier stage in one's life.

In essence, Parham theorises that individuals move through angry feelings about Whites and develop a positive Black frame of reference. Ideally, this leads to a realistic perception of one's racial identity and to bicultural success. Parham relates Black identity directly to White people in a way that moves individual Black identity from the unconscious to the conscious. In this regard, Mama (1995:62) says "...the most important advance Parham makes is that he puts forward a theory of the Black person as a dynamic subject." The author adds that it is a theory of subjectivity that moves way beyond the linear stage models of Black identity development (Mama, 1995). In common with Cross (1971; 1995), it can also be argued that this model clearly delineates that when Blacks brush up against White culture and negative differential treatment by others, feelings of difference are triggered; subsequently a consciousness of racial identity is triggered as well. This model also suggests a movement from an unconscious to a conscious racial identity.

**Helms's People of Colour Racial Identity Model**

Helms (1994) developed one of the first White racial identity models. The author's model presupposes the existence of White superiority and individual, cultural and institutional racism (Helms, 1994). The author's racial identity model is derivative of previous model in the 70s (Cross, 1971). Helms (1994) maintains that the racial identity stages posited by Cross suggests that ones' level of racial identity development (one's racial identity stage) guides one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

While, the individual levels of development in the Helms model shares commonalities with Nigrescence, the model as a whole has many distinctions. In making this distinction, it was explained that the cognitive process of the individual engaged in racial identity development is more flexible than a stage might imply. Being of a certain status, a person's cognitive process is most influenced by the schema associated with that status. However, the person might still act on modes of thinking from more advanced or from prior statuses

A second distinction is the assertion that "the general developmental issue for people of colour is surmounting internalied racism" (Helms, 1995: 184). What this means is that the more prevalent the racial identity attitudes, the greater their influence on a person. Similar to Nigrescence, the People of Colour Racial Identity Model is composed of five stages of development. These are 1) pre-encounter 2) encounter 3) immersion-emersion 4) internalisation; and 5) internalisation-commitment. The pre-encounter stage is considered to be the least sophisticated. Each subsequent stage represents increasing levels of maturity. The most sophisticated is the internalisation-commitment stage.

The racial identity attitudes at the pre-encounter stage are characterised by an idealisation of Whiteness and a denigration of Blackness. A person with a preponderance of pre-encounter attitudes identifies with a White American worldview and may be oblivious to socio-racial concerns. Pre-encounter racial identity attitudes reflect external definitions of self that are based on negative stereotypes of Black people (internalised racism) and positive stereotypes of White people. This positioning suggests that Black identity may be ambiguous in the discourse of wanting to be White.

In the encounter stage, Blacks experience a personal and social event or series of episodes that conflict with or challenge their previously held view of race. The White worldview is no longer seen as valuable and another identity based on a Black perspective is sought out. Individuals in this stage may experience guilt, anger and anxiety over having previously espoused a worldview that did not consider the value and significance of being Black.

The immersion-emersion stage is characterised by a dichotomised worldview in which Black identity is idealised and Whiteness is denigrated. Blacks with a prevalent immersion-emersion racial identity withdraw psychologically and physically into Black experience. This results in exclusive participation in Black activities and organisations.

The internalisation stage is categorised by the development of personal strength. Individuals at the internalisation stage are characterised by greater levels of calm and self-control. Flexibility in thinking and a decline in the denigration of Whites are also characteristic of this stage. Blacks may renegotiate relationships with those Whites that they believe are worthy of such relationships. The internalisation of racial identity attitudes represents the use of internal criteria for self-definition (Helms, 1994).

The last stage, known as internalisation-commitment, is depicted by a sustained interest and commitment to the Black identity in the form of social and political activism. The Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS-B) measures the racial identity attitudes of the first four stages. The last stage, internalisation-commitment was not operationalised because it contained attitudes that did not appear unique to one stage (Helms, 1994).

In contrast to the self-hate paradigm, the psychology of Nigrescence refers to the process of one developing a uniquely African American psychology. In general, this paradigm considers racial identity to be a "psychogenic process". All the racial models suggested by Cross, Parham and Helms discuss what can be described as an intersection between the racial perceptions of others (racism) and the racial perception of self (racial development). Underlying all these stage theories is the common theme of a deficit model,

Blackness as self-hate, and individual responsibility to overcome the 'problem' of being Black. These stage models are to a large extent closely related to Cross (1971).

### Manganyi's theory of Being-black-in-the-world

The authors work was aimed at addressing what is referred to as the Black "experience in South Africa" (Couve, 1984: 90). It argues that there are similarities between the body image of healthy Black subjects and paraplegic Black subjects. The theory build's on the idea that healthy Black subjects exhibit the same internal psychological malady as hospitalised paraplegics. This includes body images with diffused boundaries, usually associated with passive-submissive and non-coping life strategies. The psychological disorder is attributed to the level of racist socialisation of the black body.

Similar to Clark and Clark's self-hate theory, the theory recognises the body as having a central position in existence, because the author assumes that individuals make approaches to the world through their bodies. In this regard, the author suggests that "[t]he body is a movement inwards and outwards" (Manganyi, 1973:6). Individuals are in dialogue with the environment because they exist in the environment. If the body is the nexus of almost all essential relations which an individual develops with others and the world, it can also be said that it is intrinsic to the experience of being-Black- in- the- world. Thus, taking dialogue as guiding principle of the theme of Black identity in relation to White identity.

### Individual in Society

This theme shows the troubling of Black identity as a result of racism, even though its focus is on the family and community relationships. This theme sees the colonial conquest resulting in the eradication or, at least devaluation, of African cultural features such as communalism (Manganyi, 1973). Consequently, this resulted in Black people having to relinquish important aspects of their ontology, replacing a traditional African approach to society by individualism and materialism. It is commented therefore that "the rise of the individualistic and materialistic ethic is something which is essentially alien to being-Black-in-the-world" (Manganyi, 1973:31).

### Being-in-the-world-with-objects/things

At this level of being-in-the-world-with-objects/things, one portrays Black identity as wanting to be White (Manganyi, 1973). This desire is perpetuated by being in a world that has been different for Black people and White people. Thus, Black people who internalise White values may emulate Whites by idolising material possessions, although the difference for them is that most often they are deprived of the economic means of actualising such aspirations. Black people begin to judge themselves according to the objects they possess.

This work also illustrates Manganyi's interest (from a psychological perspective) in the exploration of what he terms "false consciousness", a condition whereby Black people assume a White identity and consequently become alienated from self and their community. Hence the assimilation of White culture provides the Black person with a false identity because it requires the substitution of his/her African culture for a White culture (Manganyi, 1973). Furthermore, this substitution is unequal because it does not yield what

it promises, but having accepted the White culture, the Black person becomes trapped in the culture that assigns him/her inferior status.

In sum, Manganyi seems to be preoccupied with, and deeply distressed by, the ways in which the legacies of colonial domination create a paralysing inferiority complex for black people and their abject idolisation of whites as their role models. His approach is progressive and individualistic in that he hypothesises that a regeneration of community feeling and the active promotion of creative, experiential and attitudinal values which do not support individualism and materialism should be the cornerstone for the development of a trouble-free Black identity.

So far the literature on the psychological model talks about the implicit notion of pathology and the personal quest for development. Now we include Lambley's work to show the kind of racist reading in this psychological framework (Lambley, 1980).

**Lambley's Concept of Internalised Racism**

It is of the view that colonialism results in an 'internalised oppression'. This concept of internalised racism has the potential to pathologise oppressed people (Lambley, 1980). In this regard, in South Africa, individuals living under apartheid are essentially living in a context of 'normalisation' or 'ordinary' 'pathology.' Additionally, all dominated racial groups in South Africa exhibited a generalised avoidance of apartheid which manifested in the ways that they tried to avoid confronting and dealing with the system of apartheid in their daily lives. Thus, other ways that Black people deal with oppression include subtle forms of self-deception or blaming others for oppression.

The unwillingness to assume responsibility for their conditions allegedly results in an 'inverted' morality (i.e. the belief that it is alright to be deceitful to Whites when necessary). It is asserted that pathology has become institutionalised at every level of South African society (Gibson, 2006; Lambley, 1980). The authors argue further that the victims of apartheid (Blacks) exhibit callousness, indifference and manipulativeness in order to insulate themselves from their inner feelings (Lambley, 1980). Accordingly, expecting that 'ordinary' human emotional responses to apartheid would include upset, concern, shock, fear, sympathy and a sense of fairness. Instead, amongst Black adults he discovered across the board what he refers to as a curiously inverted sense of unity and charity. It is reported that it is common to observed among Blacks differential use of high-risk behaviour such as reckless driving, drinking and cheating; maladaptive behaviours such as being truant from school or missing work, indiscriminately engaging in sexual acts, and being physically abusive or aggressive (Lambley, 1980).

Despite these descriptions, it is not clear from the empirical literature what characteristics Black people have internalised in response to apartheid. What is implicit is that the encounter with racism and the encounter with Whiteness do trouble Black identity construction. The avoidance of the encounter with racism and encounter with Whiteness impacts negatively on Black identity development. The battle of Black identity takes place in the mind and, because oppression is internalised, it always finds ways to construct a negative image of Black identity (Lambley, 1980).

However, this view has been challenged by other authors (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). It is argued that for the most part, Black South Africans have not been devastated by oppression, because of numerous buffering forms and an active sense of identity that operates to negate psychological damage. The authors see racial identity and Blackness as multiple and contradictory (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). Although, they admit that Black South Africans carry traces of the (negative) mark of oppression, they contend that self-protection strategies (resistance and protection) have operated effectively to the advantage of the Black South African's psyche and identity.

**Discussion of Literature**

Self-hate paradigm has been used as a starting point to show how this dominant psychological approach has influenced the way of thinking about Blackness as troubling and problematic (Tredoux & Dixon, 2009; Clark & Clark 1939). It seems that the other literature on the psychology of Black identity draws and echoes Clark and Clark's (1939) self-hate paradigm. For example, the stage models as proposed theorises that the socialisation in a racist society causes Black people to experience self-hate as a result of racial origin (Wale & Foster, 2007; Cross, 1971). As regards the stage models, it is further hypothesised that a return to traditional African values would help Black people develop a healthier racial identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Manganyi, 1973). In addition to this literature it is been shown how racist one can be when thinking about the PBI (Eaton, 2006; Lambley 1980).

One thing that is clear about this literature is that Blackness is seen as troubling in encounter with Whiteness and encounter with racism. The understanding of the troubling nature of Blackness in psychological literature is psychological neurosis. Even as late as the 1930, sense of black identity is portrayed as something wrong because of the history of racism (Swartz, 2007; Clark & Clark 1939). The understanding of the troubling nature of Blackness in this literature is a psychopathological frame, the trouble is self-hate.

There is another picture in this literature that unifies it, that is, the sense that the trouble is experienced by the individual Black person. In other words, the psychological Black identity literature is overwhelmingly individualistic. Underlying all the stage models from the past study is the common theme of the deficit model (Parham, 1989; Helms, 1994; Bulhan 1980; Cross, 1971). Therefore, Blackness is a quest for an integrated personality to overcome the spectre of race and self-hate. It is also individual pathology and that is what the individual must overcome in terms of the stage models. This means that the unit of analysis is an individual Black person in their development through tensions and progress. In the stage models it is clearly evident that it is the individual's responsibility to overcome the problem and the challenge posed by blackness. The limitation of the psychological literature is the focus on the individual and the focus on stages. It becomes non-functional, depending on stages to progress to becoming fully rounded and psychologically well. It predicts that given the right conditions Black people can shake off the psychology of oppression through psychological maturation. This is similar to Biko who anticipated that under the right conditions Black people would eventually shake off the psychology of oppression through political liberation (Biko, 1973).

Both past and present literatures have a common understanding that oppression is internalised and subsequently has a psychological element. What is missing in this literature is the focus on politics, on the history, and on economics in the troubling nature of Blackness.

### Conclusion

In this article, we have provided general orienting models that can guide the thinking of researchers about PBI, sensitise them to the kinds of data that are needed to study PBI and suggest fruitful lines of analyses. Because, PBI is a multidimensional construct, no single measure can assess it in all its complexity. Therefore, we reach three conclusions (1) both racial and PBI involve a sense of belonging to a group and a process of learning about one's group (2) both identities are associated with cultural behaviours and values, with attitudes toward one's own group, and with responses to discrimination (3) they both vary in importance and salience across time and context. Thus, models that describe this process must be functional and dynamic.

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