

Is Sexual Racism *Really* Racism? Distinguishing Attitudes Toward Sexual Racism and Generic Racism Among Gay and Bisexual Men

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Abstract Sexual racism is a specific form of racial prejudice enacted in the context of sex or romance. Online, people use sex and dating profiles to describe racialized attraction through language such as “Not attracted to Asians.” Among gay and bisexual men, sexual racism is a highly contentious issue. Although some characterize discrimination among partners on the basis of race as a form of racism, others present it as a matter of preference. In May 2011, 2177 gay and bisexual men in Australia participated in an online survey that assessed how acceptably they viewed online sexual racism. Although the men sampled displayed diverse attitudes, many were remarkably tolerant of sexual racism. We conducted two multiple linear regression analyses to compare factors related to men’s attitudes toward sexual racism online and their racist attitudes more broadly. Almost every identified factor associated with men’s racist attitudes was also related to their attitudes toward sexual racism. The only differences were between men who identified as Asian or Indian. Sexual racism, therefore, is closely associated with generic racist attitudes, which challenges the idea of racial attraction as solely a matter of personal preference.

Keywords Sexual racism · Gay men · Online dating · Racialized attraction · Racial prejudice · Sexual orientation

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Introduction

Discrimination between potential sexual or romantic partners on the basis of perceived racial identity has been referred to as “sexual racism.” Stember (1978) initially defined sexual racism as, “the sexual rejection of the racial minority, the conscious attempt on the part of the majority to prevent interracial cohabitation” (p. xi). Today, “sexual racism” is popularly employed in media and research settings as shorthand for racial discrimination between sexual or romantic partners. There is contention, however, about whether this is an appropriate label when it comes to understanding something as complex and personal as desired. Indeed, some commentators contend that distinguishing among partners on the basis of perceived race is not racism at all but a justifiable personal preference (e.g., Matheson, 2012). Researchers have sought to unpack the intersections of race and sexuality in our contemporary (and increasingly digital) world (e.g., Lin & Lundquist, 2013; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2008) but very little is understood about people’s attitudes toward sexual racism or whether those attitudes differ from broader racist attitudes.

Early writing on sexual racism focused almost exclusively on heterosexual relationships between Black and White people living in the USA (Hernton, 1965; Stember, 1978) but more recent work has focused on other populations. A study of profile ads found that men looking for other men were more likely than men seeking women to assess the racial characteristics of their partners and that they were more likely to self-describe in racial terms (Phua & Kaufman, 2003). This research also found that men seeking men were more likely to assess other physical features of prospective partners, such as eye and hair color. One interpretation of these findings is that gay and bisexual men are more explicit about the characteristics they desire in a partner, but it is also important to consider how such forthrightness may deliberately or inadvertently reproduce racial discrimination in

Sexual Racism

Josephine Jennie Floyd



Sexual Racism:

Sexual Racism and Social Justice Denton Callander, Panteá Farvid, Amir Baradaran, Thomas A. Vance, 2024 This book brings together a collection of research personal reflection and creative work to provide a comprehensive in depth account of sexual racism from an international and interdisciplinary perspective The volume makes the case that sexual racism is in the very foundations of our societies determining the ideas bodies and systems positioned as desirable From this provocative perspective Sexual Racism and Social Justice offers a new understanding of the relationship between sex and race arguing that to undesignate whiteness is to help undo sexual racism which are essential steps in the meaningful advancement of social justice

Sexual Racism Charles Herbert Stember, 1978 Racial Erotics C. Winter Han, 2021-07-16 Finalist for the 2022 Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ Studies Finalist for the 2022 Randy Shilts Award sponsored by The Publishing Triangle Honorable Mention for the 2024 John Leo and Dana Heller Award for Best Single Work Anthology Multi Authored or Edited Book in LGBTQ Studies sponsored by the Popular Culture Association Exposes a racial hierarchy of desire that centers whiteness in queer social worlds Sexual desire often understood as personal erotic preference is frequently seen as neutral natural or inevitable Countering these commonplace assumptions Racial Erotics shows how sexual partnering within communities of gay men is deeply embedded within larger social structures that define whiteness as desirable and normative while othering men of color In queer erotic economies this othering may take the form of sexual rejection or fetishization of men of color but C Winter Han argues that the real danger of sexual racism is that it creates a hierarchy of racial worth that extends outside of erotic encounters into the everyday lives of gay men of color In this way sexual racism perpetuates a larger project of racial erasing that equates gayness with whiteness to secure acceptance for gay white men at the expense of queers of color With vivid examples from interviews media representations and online dating sites Han highlights the creative means through which gay men of color cordoned off in spaces both gay and straight produce alternative frameworks to combat dominant narratives Racial Erotics offers a new paradigm for understanding the connection of race and queer desire demonstrating how race profoundly shapes sexual desires among men while racialized notions of desire construct beliefs about belonging

Sexual, Racial and Political Faces of Corruption Bernard Braxton, 1977 *Not My Type* Apryl Williams, 2024-02-06 In the world of online dating race based discrimination is not only tolerated but encouraged as part of a pervasive belief that it is simply a neutral personal choice about one's romantic partner Indeed it is so much a part of our inherited wisdom about dating and romance that it actually directs the algorithmic infrastructures of most major online dating platforms such that they openly reproduce racist and sexist hierarchies In *Not My Type* Automating Sexual Racism in Online Dating Apryl Williams presents a socio technical exploration of dating platforms algorithms their lack of transparency the legal and ethical discourse in these companies community guidelines and accounts from individual users in order to argue that sexual racism is a central feature of today's online dating culture She discusses this reality in the context

of facial recognition and sorting software as well as user experiences drawing parallels to the long history of eugenics and banned interracial partnerships Ultimately Williams calls for both a reconceptualization of the technology and policies that govern dating agencies and also a reexamination of sociocultural beliefs about attraction beauty and desirability

Sexual, Racial, Educational Differentials of Cohort Occupational Distributions Josephine Jennie Floyd,1973

Sexual racism Charles Herbert Stember,1976

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Margaret S. Stockdale,1996-03-12

Sexual harassment is now a universally recognized topic of concern for employers as well as employed women The contributors to this volume provide a comprehensive look at what we know about sexual harassment Their findings are grounded in theory research and practice

Black Sexual Politics Patricia Hill Collins,2004-08-02 In *Black Sexual Politics* one of America's most influential writers on race and gender explores how images of Black sexuality have been used to maintain the color line and how they threaten to spread a new brand of racism around the world today

[The Dating Divide](#) Celeste Vaughan Curington, Jennifer Hickey Lundquist, Ken-Hou Lin,2021-02-09 The data behind a distinct form of racism in online dating *The Dating Divide* is the first comprehensive look at digital sexual racism a distinct form of racism that is mediated and amplified through the impersonal and anonymous context of online dating Drawing on large scale behavioral data from a mainstream dating website extensive archival research and more than seventy five in depth interviews with daters of diverse racial backgrounds and sexual identities Curington Lundquist and Lin illustrate how the seemingly open space of the internet interacts with the loss of social inhibition in cyberspace contexts fostering openly expressed forms of sexual racism that are rarely exposed in face to face encounters *The Dating Divide* is a fascinating look at how a contemporary conflux of individualization consumerism and the proliferation of digital technologies has given rise to a unique form of gendered racism in the era of swiping right or left The internet is often heralded as an equalizer a seemingly level playing field but the digital world also acts as an extension of and platform for the insidious prejudices and divisive impulses that affect social politics in the real world Shedding light on how every click swipe or message can be linked to the history of racism and courtship in the United States this compelling study uses data to show the racial biases at play in digital dating spaces

Physical Attractiveness and the Theory of Sexual Selection Doug Jones,1996-01-01 In this fascinating study of five populations author Doug Jones explores the possibility that hardwired into the human psyche are standards of beauty that are really preferences and signals for good health

Umoja ,1980

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