

Examining Objectification and Dehumanization: The Effects of Race and Sexualization

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ABSTRACT. Dehumanization and objectification have been linked to a variety of harmful consequences. Because such concepts have primarily been explored in relation to singular categories (e.g., race alone), the present study focused on the intersection between sexualization and race. Participants completed measures of objectification, dehumanization, perceived moral worth, and behavioral intentions regarding a model. In Study 1 ($N = 104$), we used a 2 sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized) \times 2 race (Black, White) mixed factorial design. We found a significant interaction between race and sexualization on all dependent variables (e.g., objectification, $F[1, 99] = 5.04$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .05$). Sexualized White women were the most objectified and animalistically dehumanized, nonsexualized White women were the most mechanistically dehumanized, and sexualized Black women were perceived to have the least moral worth. In Study 2, we employed a 2 sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized) \times 2 race (White, Black) between-groups factorial design ($N = 114$) using the same dependent variables as Study 1. We found a main effect of race on multiple outcomes (e.g., animalistic dehumanization, $F[1, 107] = 10.94$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$). Participants dehumanized White models to a greater extent than Black models. Sexualized models were more objectified compared to nonsexualized models, $F(1, 107) = 4.71$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, and animalistically dehumanized to a greater degree, $F(1, 107) = 15.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. We discuss the practical implications of these findings for race and gender relationships.

Keywords: objectification, dehumanization, intersectionality, prejudice against women, sexualization and race



Diversity badge earned for conducting research focusing on aspects of diversity.

The institutionalization of male dominance is a fundamental piece of American history that has resisted resolution, continuing to inflict harm against women (Golash-Boza et al., 2019; Rothe & Collins, 2019). Although great strides have been made toward gender equality, the consequences of the patriarchy still persist (Adams & Lott, 2019). Women (more so than men) are sexualized across virtually every media platform (American Psychological Association,

2007), objectified (Bernard et al., 2020; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and dehumanized (Loughnan et al., 2013; Riemer et al., 2019). Although female sexualization in connection to objectification and dehumanization has been well-studied (Bernard et al., 2020; Loughnan et al., 2013; Riemer et al., 2019), the intersectional nature of this issue needs further clarification.

To fill these gaps, we investigated the influence of race and sexualization on how people objectify and

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dehumanize women, extending the focus to predict behavioral intentions and moral worth. Incorporating perceptions of moral worth—defined as moral concern and value of another person—in relation to both dehumanization and objectification has yet to be done, but has previously been connected to the objectification of women (Loughnan et al., 2013). Analyzing potential connections between perceptions of a target person's moral worth, dehumanization, and objectification may further aid understanding of the complex nature of unique forms of prejudice against women. Furthermore, investigating behavioral intentions in this context poses prospective new insight into how people may behave toward others on the basis of prejudice. By considering prejudice against women in many forms, within the context of race and sexualization, we can better understand how the dynamics of these issues may vary on the basis of identity and appearance.

Objectification

Objectification theory posits that women may be seen as objects or bodies rather than as human beings, and valued for use by others—specifically for the pleasures and sexual desires of men (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification occurs through sexualized media representations and interpersonal exchanges (e.g., nonreciprocated gazes from men, sexual commentary), resulting in self-objectification and a variety of problematic outcomes, such as negative mental health and decreased performance (Szymanski et al., 2011). Objectified women are viewed as less competent, less worthy of moral treatment, more responsible for being raped, and less deserving of help when being mistreated (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Holland & Haslam, 2016; Loughnan et al., 2013). The adversity that objectification inflicts on women makes it a crucial phenomenon to further understand, address, and to create effective intervention methods against it. However, to address the unique negative impacts of objectification, it is crucial to understand it in contrast to another harmful perception imposed on women: dehumanization.

Dehumanization

Dehumanization refers to the cognitive processes that deny humanness to others (Haslam et al., 2005). Dehumanization is not solely restricted to intergroup conflict, but also occurs in everyday interpersonal interactions. Dehumanization occurs both implicitly and explicitly, revealing the significance of unconscious thought processes in denying others full humanity (Anderson et al., 2018; Goff et al., 2008). This negation of humanity can exist in two forms: a denial of human nature (equating someone to a machine) and a denial of human uniqueness (equating someone to an animal; Haslam

et al., 2005; Haslam et al., 2013); with this understanding, dehumanization can manifest mechanistically or animalistically. Furthermore, dehumanization can bring disturbing consequences. Individuals who dehumanize others have been found to justify harmful actions toward others who they viewed as “subhuman” (Bandura et al., 1975). Dehumanization is linked to greater willingness to torture victims, willingness to engage in discriminatory behaviors, increased endorsement of violence against criminal justice suspects, heightened risk of state sanctioned execution, and tolerance for sexual assault (Goff et al., 2008; Viki et al., 2013).

Whereas objectification and dehumanization are associated in certain situations (Loughnan et al., 2013; Riemer et al., 2019), it is crucial to recognize the differentiation between the two. Objectification emphasizes restricting a person's value to their body, viewing them in terms of their sexual use and equating their worth in terms of sexual pleasure (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gurung & Chrouser, 2007). Dehumanization focuses on the denial of uniquely human attributes, as well as the association of a person analogous to animals (Anderson et al., 2018; Goff et al., 2008). This distinction is important, as dehumanization and objectification are associated with different harmful outcomes. Dehumanization poses the potential for uniquely harmful outcomes on the basis that someone is subhuman, whereas objectification, while still harmful, still preserves the perception of human status. Although objectification and dehumanization are entirely separate processes, two additional factors, sexualization and race, are also important.

Sexualization

According to the American Psychological Association (2007), sexualization relates to an emphasis on a person's sexual appeal, equating their physical attractiveness to sexiness, perceiving someone as a sexual item, and/or inappropriately imposing sexuality upon them. In this study, we focused on sexualization in terms of sexual appeal and appearance. Under this delineation, the term “sexualization” refers to any style of dress that emphasizes sexual body parts (e.g., buttocks).

The easiest way to sexualize a person is to portray them in revealing clothes or with few clothes on. This use of clothing cut and style is perhaps the primary way sexualization is seen in society and the media and is also how most studies on this topic manipulate and operationalize sexualization (e.g., Bernard et al., 2020; Hietanen & Nummenmaa, 2011). Although certain types of clothing can be considered a form of sexualization, individuals do not necessarily dress to sexualize themselves. Rather, others impose sexualization upon them by focusing on certain parts of their body.

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The link between sexualization and objectification is well-established (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2013). Sexualized individuals are more likely to be viewed in terms of sexual utility, equated to objects, and dehumanized by others (Bernard et al., 2020). For example, sexualized women are not only objectified to a greater extent, but are also rated lower on characteristics of competency when presented without directly exhibiting capability (e.g., holding a trophy, doing a math problem; Johnson & Gurung, 2011). In fact, objectification has been identified as a mediator between the sexualization of women and dehumanization in social drinking contexts (Riemer et al., 2019). It is important to note that sexualization is distinct from sexism. Sexism has typically been seen as a reflection of hostility toward women (Glick et al., 1996) and has roots in social and biological conditions such as the patriarchy. The dynamics of sexualization and harmful perceptions toward women have also been associated with negative ramifications for moral perceptions of women and behavioral intentions toward them, which makes it crucial to consider the role of moral worth and behavior as additional factors (Loughnan et al., 2013).

Moral Worth and Behavior

A person's moral worth, in its most simplistic form, is the idea that a person or entity is deserving of others' moral consideration, often on the basis of their perceived moral virtues (Rivera-Castro, 2014). Previous research has found that persons subjected to objectification or dehumanization are also perceived to possess less moral worth (Bastian et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2013). Although such phenomena have been explored separately, there remains a need to explore moral worth in the context of objectification and dehumanization simultaneously. Additionally, perceptions of a person's moral virtues—which inform moral worth—have been found to be a primary predictor of the perceiver's prosocial behavioral intentions toward said person (e.g., help them, cooperate with them; Cuadrado et al., 2020). Recent research has pointed to the importance of the social target's identities, demonstrating that race and ethnicity has been found to impact a person's perceived moral virtues, leading to decreased prosocial behavioral intentions (Cuadrado et al., 2021). However, existing literature on the dynamic of moral worth and behavioral intentions in the context of identity characteristics, must be built upon further. Therefore, the pursuit of understanding potential links between moral worth, prosocial behavioral intentions, and harmful perceptions in the context of appearance and identity poses great importance.

Race and Gender

The selective denial of Black humanness is an undeniable

part of history that sustains contemporary forms of racism (e.g., Goff et al., 2008; Owusu-Bempah, 2017). During the era of slavery in America, the Jezebel stereotype was constructed by White men to warrant the rape and sexual assault of Black women, depicting them as a promiscuous and sexually aggressive deviant (West, 1995). Even today, Black women are objectified and hypersexualized in media to a far greater extent and are subjected to increased sexualization compared to White women (Anderson et al., 2018; Turner, 2011). In addition, Black women have been found to be more implicitly associated with animals and objects, thus being dehumanized to a greater extent (Anderson et al., 2018). Race has been shown to significantly affect the patterns of stereotype endorsement against women, as well as the behaviors of others toward women (Biefeld et al., 2021; Leath et al., 2021). Therefore, a better understanding of harmful perceptions related to such intersectional identity aspects—including objectification and dehumanization—in relation to sexualization requires further exploration.

Intersectionality's theoretical frameworks have conceptual roots in Black feminist activism (Carbado et al., 2013; Cho et al., 2013). The term intersectionality describes the ways that various marginalized identity aspects, such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, “interlock and intersect” to create unique dynamics of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149). This is evident in Black women stereotypes, as it strays from the conventional assumption of submission and modesty placed upon women of other races, portraying Black women as distinctly domineering and licentious (Rosette et al., 2018). Intersectionality is relevant in understanding the disproportionate rates of sexualization and sexual harassment. For example, Black women have been found to be subjected to increased levels of sexualization compared to White women, and have also reported higher rates of harassment stemming from amalgamated sexual and racial harassment (Anderson et al., 2018; Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

The Present Studies

In both of our studies, we sought to provide evidence for the differences between objectification and dehumanization, as well as how these different perceptions may be imposed onto women distinctly based on race and sexualization. Furthermore, we aimed to identify factors that may be related to these harmful perceptions. Existing studies have indicated that Black women are subjected to differential racial stereotypes (West, 1995), hypersexualized media representation (Turner, 2011), and increased implicit dehumanization compared to White women in modern society (Anderson et al., 2018). Additionally, dehumanization and objectification has been linked with discriminatory behaviors toward

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dehumanized/objectified individuals (i.e., Goff et al., 2008; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009). Other factors also influence perceptions. We aimed to control for major confounds: views relating to women as a whole (e.g., sexism) and the perceiver's gender. We opted to control for sexist attitudes toward women, as certain forms of sexism have been associated with denying women uniquely human emotions (Viki & Abrams, 2003), which may pose implications for objectification and dehumanization. Furthermore, gender has been found to influence perceptions. For example, men and women have been found to judge faces significantly differently (Reid et al., 1997), which could influence how participants perceive others.

The present studies examined the intersection of sexualization and race, analyzing both of these concepts in regard to their effect on objectification and dehumanization. We had three main hypotheses. First, we hypothesized that sexualized Black women would be dehumanized and objectified to a greater extent than sexualized and nonsexualized White women. Additionally, we anticipated that greater sexualization and dehumanization would be associated with women being viewed to have less moral worth. We also speculated that sexualized Black women would be subjected to more avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students ($N = 104$) at a midsized, western university in the United States enrolled in introductory psychology courses, participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 18–54 ($M = 25.20$, $SD = 9.74$). The sample was 85.56% women, and 14.42% men, 39.42% first-year students, 18.27% second-year students, 16.35% third-year students, 20.19% fourth-year students, and 5.77% students of another year. Two-thirds (65.38%) of the sample identified as European American, 13.46% as Asian or Asian American, 12.50% as Hispanic or Latino, 6.73% as African American, 0.96% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.96% as another race/ethnicity. Participants' political views were 35.1% extremely liberal, 43.9% slightly liberal, and 12.3% slightly conservative.

Materials

Visual Stimuli. We used four different models pretested to be equivalent in attractiveness and body shape from a previous study conducted by Anderson et al. (2018). All models were pictured standing in front of a plain white background and looking directly at the camera, showing the entire body from the knees up. Both models in the

“sexualized” condition were shown in a bikini, while both models in the “nonsexualized” condition were shown in a casual tank top and slacks (images in Anderson et al., 2018). Within each of the sexualization conditions, one model was Black and the other model was White.

Measures.

Objectification. To measure objectification, participants rated the models based on a set of six descriptor terms: attractive, desirable, promiscuous, sexy, self-respecting, likely to use her body to get what she wants (Johnson & Gurung, 2011). We included five distractor words (i.e., appropriateness of outfit, fit/healthy, high self-esteem, shallow, vain) to obscure the intent of the study. Participants rated models using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Greater levels of objectification were indicated by a higher score. Reliability for the scale was acceptable, Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$.

Dehumanization. We measured dehumanization with the Perceived Human Qualities Scale (PHQS, Riemer et al., 2019). The PHQS measured the extent to which participants denied each target's overall human qualities, with two subscales to analyze distinct patterns of animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization. This 8-item measure consisted of four human uniqueness traits (e.g., This person appears refined and cultured), which equated with animalistic dehumanization, and four human nature traits (e.g., This person appears superficial, like she has no depth), which equated with mechanistic dehumanization. Models were rated on each attribute using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Greater levels of dehumanization were indicated by a higher score. Reliability for the scale was high, Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$ (animalistic) and $.79$ (mechanistic).

Moral Worth. To measure perceptions of moral worth regarding the model, we used a Morality Scale (adapted from Loughnan et al., 2013) with 8 total items regarding moral concern and perceptions of moral value in relation to the target (e.g., How badly would you feel if this person had been taken advantage of). Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*a great deal*) to 5 (*none at all*). Equating someone with greater moral worth was indicated by a higher score. Reliability for the scale was acceptable, Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$.

Avoidant, Exclusionary, and Mistrustful Behavioral Intentions. We evaluated participant avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions using items from Xia (2021), with changes made to the third behavioral subscale to focus on trust behaviors instead of relational hostility. The measure was also shortened, consisting of 3 questions per subscale to avoid participant

survey fatigue while gaining concise information about basic forms of social hostility. Participants rated their likelihood to engage in certain types of behavioral conduct on 9 items, which included questions pertaining to inclusion/exclusion (e.g., Invite this person to hang out with your group of friends), acknowledgement/avoidance (e.g., To talk to this person while waiting for a ride), and trust/mistrust (e.g., Ask this person to keep an eye on your things while you use the restroom) regarding the target. Participants used a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*extremely likely*) to 5 (*extremely unlikely*). More negatively oriented behavioral intentions were associated with a higher score. Reliability for the scale was high, Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$.

Sexism. We used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fisk, 1996) to assess participants' attitudes of hostile and benevolent sexism toward women as a covariate. The ASI consists of a 22-statement list that the participants rated each term on a 7-point Likert scale rating from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). The two subscales of the ASI are hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is outright prejudice and discrimination toward women. Benevolent sexism is a combination of attitudes toward women that come off as positive, prosocial, and seeking intimacy, yet are based on stereotypes and restrictive social roles of the female gender. Cronbach's alpha for each subscale showed acceptable internal reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$ (hostile sexism) and $.62$ (benevolent sexism).

Procedure

Oregon State University institutional review board approval was received prior to data collection. We used a 2 sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized) x 2 race (Black, White) mixed factorial design. We presented

participants with separate images of two women: one Black and one White model, both of whom were either wearing sexualized or nonsexualized clothing. We randomly assigned consenting participants to a condition, where they completed measures pertaining to a sexualized Black and a sexualized White model, or a nonsexualized Black and a nonsexualized White model. With the target remaining on the page, participants completed all measures. Each dependent measure was completed for the Black model, and the White model presented in random order. Participants then completed the ASI, followed by a brief survey for a separate study. Finally, participants completed a block of demographic questions (i.e., age, year in school, gender, race/ethnicity, political views) and read a debriefing form. We recruited participants through the department's research signup website (SONA software). Participants received course credit for their participation, and instructions told them that "this study's purpose is to examine various presentations of women through the perceptions of others" and they were to "fill out a short questionnaire about your own opinions and perceptions of a woman." We used Qualtrics to design and administer the surveys.

Results and Discussion

To test our primary hypotheses, we conducted a series of repeated-measures multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) using sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized) as a between-subjects factor and race (White, Black) as a repeated factor. We tested for differences in objectification, two forms of dehumanization (animalistic and mechanistic), perceived moral worth of the model, as well as avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions. We used gender and sexism subscale scores (hostile sexism, benevolent sexism) as covariates.

Multivariate analyses showed no main effect of race or sexualization in any analyses but significant interactions between race and sexualization. For objectification, $F(1, 99) = 5.04, p = .03, \eta^2 = .05$, participants objectified sexualized White women the most, followed by sexualized Black women, nonsexualized Black women, and nonsexualized White women. No covariates were significant in the analyses. See Table 1 for means and standard deviations.

We found a significant interaction between race and sexualization, $F(1, 99) = 10.86, p = .001, \eta^2 = .10$, on animalistic dehumanization, with benevolent sexism a significant covariate, $F(1, 99) = 8.13, p = .005, \eta^2 = .08$. Sexualized White women and nonsexualized White women were the most animalistically dehumanized, followed by sexualized Black women and nonsexualized Black women. Likewise, we found a significant interaction predicting mechanistic dehumanization,

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Model Ratings Study 1

	Black				White			
	Sexualized		Nonsexualized		Sexualized		Nonsexualized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Objectification	18.30 ^a	2.93	17.92 ^a	3.03	18.72 ^a	3.02	17.35 ^b	2.92
Mechanistic dehumanization	10.26 ^a	3.43	7.75 ^b	2.49	11.30 ^a	1.23	11.59 ^a	1.87
Animalistic dehumanization	9.11 ^a	3.24	6.67 ^b	2.29	11.17 ^a	1.88	10.86 ^a	1.63
Moral worth	30.85 ^a	4.56	32.88 ^b	4.12	31.28 ^{ab}	4.80	31.06 ^{ab}	4.67
Behavioral intentions	35.18 ^a	5.91	37.42 ^b	6.02	38.04 ^b	5.09	36.34 ^a	6.96

Note. Independent variables are race (Black, White) and sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized). Means with different superscripts are significantly different from each other.

$F(1, 99) = 19.21, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$, with both benevolent sexism, $F(1, 99) = 10.01, p = .002, \eta^2 = .09$, and hostile sexism, $F(1, 99) = 5.13, p = .03, \eta^2 = .05$, as significant covariates. Participants mechanistically dehumanized nonsexualized White women the most, followed by sexualized White women, sexualized Black women, and nonsexualized Black women. To explore the nature of the significant covariates, we performed a post-hoc partial correlational analysis between the two sexism scales and dehumanization controlling for condition. Participants high in benevolent sexism dehumanized Black models less, $r = -.21, p = .04$ (animalistic), and $r = -.22, p = .02$ (mechanistic). Participants high in hostile sexism dehumanized White models more, $r = .25, p = .01$ (animalistic), and Black models more, $r = .30, p = .002$.

For perceived moral worth, there was a significant interaction between race and sexualization, $F(1, 99) = 12.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$, with no covariates significant. Contrasts showed that sexualized Black women were perceived as having the least moral worth, followed by nonsexualized White women, sexualized White women, and nonsexualized Black women.

Finally, for avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions, there was a significant interaction between race and sexualization, $F(1, 99) = 15.99, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, with no covariates significant. Participants expressed the least avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions toward sexualized Black women, followed by nonsexualized White women, nonsexualized Black women, and sexualized White women.

In contrast to past research, we did not find a main effect of sexualization or race, but we did find a significant race by sexualization interaction. These results both follow and stray from the existing literature. Whereas we did find that objectification was related to sexualized clothing, in many of our analyses, Black women were rated more positively than White women. It is no surprise that sexualized clothing increased the objectification of women, but our results did not find differences in objectification or dehumanization by race, which fails to align with the general consensus of recent research. For example, Anderson et al. (2018) found that Black women are subjected to increased objectification and dehumanization compared to their White counterparts. Given that this study was conducted in the wake of George Floyd's murder, it is possible that participants worked consciously to avoid a racial bias, something more likely given the repeated measures decision where both races were visible. Participants could have inferred that we were investigating a racial comparison. We modified our design to a between-group design to better isolate independent variables.

Study 2

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 114$) included undergraduate students at a midsized, western university in the United States enrolled in introductory psychology courses. Participant ages ranged from 18–53 ($M = 24.75, SD = 8.59$). The sample consisted of 73.6% women, 24.5% men, and 1.8% nonbinary/third gender individuals. Participants' class standing included 27.3% first-year students, 16.4% second-year students, 22.7% third-year students, 23.6% fourth-year students, and 10% students of another year. The sample was 69.1% European American, 18.2% Asian or Asian American, 5.5% Hispanic or Latino, 2.7% African American, and 1.8% Native American or Alaskan Native, 0.9% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 0.9% Russian, and 0.9% of another race/ethnicity. Participant political views were 25.5% extremely liberal, 51.8% slightly liberal, 17.3% slightly conservative, and 5.5% extremely conservative.

Materials and Procedure

An institutional review board approval was received prior to data collection. This study was a 2 sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized) \times 2 race (White, Black) between-groups factorial design. We presented participants with separate images of a Black or a White model, who was either sexualized or nonsexualized. We used the same images, measures, and procedure as Study 1.

Results and Discussion

Similar to Study 1, we tested for differences in objectification, two forms of dehumanization (animalistic and mechanistic), moral worth, as well as avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions. We hypothesized that sexualized Black women would be dehumanized and objectified to a greater extent than sexualized and nonsexualized White women. We also anticipated that greater sexualization and dehumanization would be associated with women being viewed to have less moral worth. Finally, we speculated that sexualized Black women would be subjected to more avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions. We used five ANCOVAs with gender, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism as covariates. Gender was reduced to two categories due to the small number of participants who indicated being nonbinary or a third gender.

Results indicated a main effect of race on animalistic dehumanization, $F(1, 107) = 10.94, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$, mechanistic dehumanization, $F(1, 105) = 23.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$, avoidant, exclusionary and mistrustful behavioural intentions, $F(1, 107) = 6.82, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$, and

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moral worth, $F(1, 107) = 5.01, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .05$. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations. Participants dehumanized White models to a greater extent than Black models both animalistically and mechanistically, expressing more avoidant, exclusionary and mistrustful behaviors toward White women compared to Black women, and rated White women as having less moral worth compared to Black women.

We also found a main effect of sexualization on objectification, $F(1, 107) = 4.71, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .04$, animalistic dehumanization, $F(1, 107) = 15.25, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$, and avoidant, exclusionary and mistrustful behavioral intentions, $F(1, 107) = 4.40, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Sexualized models were more objectified, dehumanized (animalistic) to a greater degree, and more likely to be avoided, excluded, and mistrusted compared to nonsexualized models.

Hostile sexism was a significant covariate of moral worth, $F(1, 107) = 8.38, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .07$. We performed post hoc partial correlational analyses between the two sexism scales and avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions controlling for condition. Avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions negatively correlated to both benevolent, $r = -.34, p < .001$, and hostile sexism, $r = -.24, p = .01$. Participants lower in sexism were more positive regarding intentions.

Unlike Study 1, we found both race and sexualization emerge as significant predictors. Our findings on sexualization were consistent with past research demonstrating the negative effects of being seen in revealing clothing. Our findings on race were inconsistent, mostly favoring Black women. Unlike results from Study 1 and counter to our expectations, we did not find a significant interaction between race and sexualization. Research on intersectionality predicted such an interaction but a

failure to find it might have resulted from national events relating to race taking place at the time.

General Discussion

Examining both objectification and dehumanization in the same study revealed the gravity of their important distinction. Together with some evidence for the interaction of race and sexualization, we also see how Black women's perceived moral worth may have ties to more covert forms of contemporary racism (Study 1) and evidence of how race factors into certain types of prejudice against women (Study 2). Harmful biases toward women on the basis of their clothing were also evident, with clear-cut differences in how women in more revealing attire were viewed in comparison to those in more modest clothing.

Our results did not support our first hypothesis, which predicted that sexualized Black women would be dehumanized and objectified to a greater extent than White women. Although we failed to find consistent interactions between sexualization and race across studies, race did demonstrate a main effect regardless of sexualization in Study 2. White women were more dehumanized, which emphasizes the prominent influence of race on perception. Although not entirely reflective of Study 2's results, Study 1 demonstrated that sexualized Black women were judged to have the least moral worth, which underscores how race and sexualization can act as intersecting influences in bias against women.

Our findings regarding objectification and race did not support our hypotheses, yet they did emphasize the important distinction between objectification and dehumanization, and how women can be subjected to unique forms of prejudice when race is considered. Because our results demonstrated a clear difference between objectification and dehumanization, it is possible that Black women were subjected to entirely different harmful perceptions in comparison to White women. It is also possible that our largely White female sample may be why race was not significant in objectification, and that sampling more men—especially men of different races—would alter these results. Men have been found to objectify women more than women objectify other women (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). However, existing literature has primarily centered on White men and women. Future studies should seek to analyze this phenomenon with a more diverse participant pool to better understand variations in prejudice against women when race and sexualization is considered.

Our second hypothesis—that sexualized Black women would be subjected to more avoidant, exclusionary, and mistrustful behavioral intentions—was contradicted by our results. Our findings in Study 2 indicated that participants demonstrated more avoidant

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Model Ratings Study 2

	Black				White			
	Sexualized		Nonsexualized		Sexualized		Nonsexualized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Objectification	23.28	2.48	20.66	2.79	21.07	4.27	20.68	4.20
Mechanistic dehumanization	9.69	2.35	8.41	2.85	11.56	3.72	11.96	3.08
Animalistic dehumanization	9.38	2.80	6.62	2.35	10.14	2.27	9.07	3.23
Moral worth	30.31	4.41	30.86	4.17	28.68	5.75	28.32	4.75
Behavioral intentions	19.90	5.78	16.03	5.87	22.29	9.37	20.64	6.06

Note. Independent variables are race (Black, White) and sexualization (sexualized, nonsexualized).

and exclusionary behaviors toward White women compared to Black women. In Study 1, sexualized Black women were subjected to most overall positive behavioral intentions. These results, although unexpected, do align with other behavioral studies exploring racial implications on interpersonal interaction. For example, there is evidence of exaggerated positive responses from White participants toward Black participants, which relates to bias (Mendes & Koslov, 2013). White individuals who exhibited more smiling, laughing, and other seemingly positive behaviors also demonstrated the greatest amount of psychological threat from their Black partners. Because our participant sample was predominantly White women, such a phenomenon may explain why we found that Black women were seen as having the least moral worth, yet subjected to more inclusive behavioral intentions by participants. Future research should take a deeper look at these dynamics between women when race and sexualization is involved to better understand relationships between bias and different behaviors.

Our final hypothesis that predicted greater sexualization and dehumanization would be associated with being viewed to have less moral worth was not supported by our findings. We did not find that sexualization nor dehumanization was linked to less perceived moral worth, however, our findings may have implications related to race and sexualization. In Study 1, we found that sexualized Black women were perceived to have the least amount of moral worth. As aforementioned, White people in the United States have historically imposed stereotypes—such as the hypersexualized Jezebel—on to Black women to strategically diminish their moral worth (West, 1995). Such stereotypes may persist, potentially leading to the decreased perceived moral worth of Black women in our studies.

Our results add to the large volume of research showing the effects of objectification and dehumanization as they both interact with sexualization and race (Anderson et al., 2018; Bernard et al., 2020; Riemer et al., 2019). Whereas the majority of the literature has focused on these topics individually, it is critical to examine how these factors may interact. Especially given a growing focus on the effects of having multiple identities and research on intersectionality, combining both gender and race in the equation expands previous studies only looking at one or the other. The complexity of combining these factors is seen in how the direction of our results are not the same for all variables. One race may be objectified more but dehumanized less, or viewed to have less moral worth. Our studies emphasize the need to better understand how these processes work together.

Limitation and Future Directions

It is important to note the limitations that present themselves within the context of these studies. First, our mixed factorial design (Study 1) might have unintentionally introduced the opportunity for participants to make inferences about information we were attempting to collect. We addressed this concern in Study 2 using an independent group factorial design, and found different results urging caution in the interpretation of Study 1 findings. The between-groups factorial design of Study 2 reduced potential issues of participant inferences and racial bias, as they were only presented with an image of one woman. This may be an explanation for the different results between the two studies. Future research should set intentions to consider the social context under which said perceptions may occur, as this may pose implications for chosen experimental design. Furthermore, the number of models used was limited to one woman per condition. More comprehensive results would be better informed by the use of multiple women of the same race and sexualization level for each condition to aid generalizability. It is also important to acknowledge that researchers cannot escape the potential of historical factors influencing the validity of the measure of the dependent measures. Both studies took place within a year of the tragic murder of George Floyd, which might have influenced the results. Conducting the study after more time has passed from that event may yield different findings.

Another important point of consideration across both studies was our predominately White, liberal, female sample of participants. These demographic characteristics may be a contributing factor to our findings given the relationship between White liberalism and patronization on the basis of racial stereotypes (Dupree & Fiske, 2019). Such a shift in self-presentation on the basis of race may be driven by implicit stereotype association within our sample, driving well-intentioned yet performative inclusive behavioral intentions. Furthermore, our skewed sample may also demonstrate dynamics of objectification, dehumanization, and behavior that are unique to liberal White women. Manifestations of these variables may vary participants with different identity characteristics and political beliefs. Future studies should examine these with a more diverse participant sample.

Our findings can serve as a basic step toward the consideration of objectification and dehumanization of women who hold identities outside of the mythical White, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied norm that often serves as the focal point of research. Few studies have examined both dehumanization and objectification, and this was one of the first studies to show clear-cut

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differences in perception across these two related but different variables. Although we only examined race and clothing, future studies should examine the interaction of additional demographic aspects, such as being cis or trans, sexual orientation, darkness or lightness of skin, religious beliefs, disability status, etc., in relation to the unique kinds of harmful perceptions women are subjected to on the basis of identity.

We encourage future research on perceptions regarding the combination of sexualization and other racial categories. Women of different races are often associated with different stereotypes, and this may lead to implications in the distinct types of harmful perceptions imposed on them by others (Biefeld et al., 2021). We hope to see ensuing studies prioritize building on the limited existing literature regarding intersectional identity, perception, and behavior. By amplifying the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals within future work, scholars can further the ambition to create a more equitable culture of representation and consideration in research.

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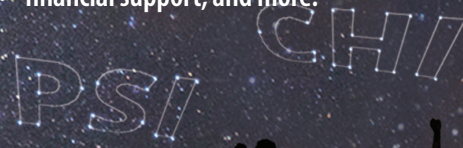
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