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Mary Dianne Plummer

Sexual Racism in Gay Communities:
Negotiating the Ethnosexual Marketplace

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A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2007

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Psychology

UMI Number: 3275903

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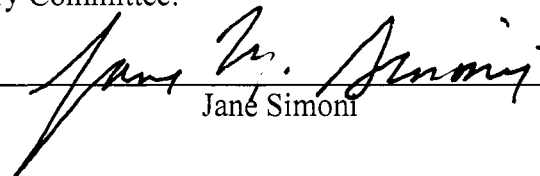
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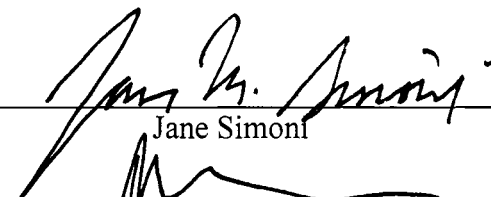

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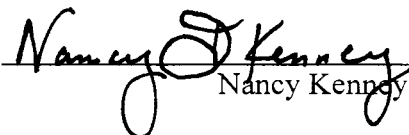
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Abstract

Sexual Racism in Gay Communities: Negotiating the Ethnosexual Marketplace

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This qualitative study was an in-depth examination of sexual racism (i.e., racism occurring in sexual contexts) within the gay community of the Seattle metropolitan area. Data was collected through key informant interviews and focus groups with self-identified gay Asian/Pacific Islander, African American/Black, and White men. Data analyses using a grounded theory approach revealed a variety of social locations in which sexual racism manifests including the internet, pornographic media, gay clubs and bars, casual/anonymous sexual encounters, and romantic relationships. Within these locations, sexual racism was reported to take different forms, manifesting as ethnosexual stereotypes, racial fetishism, and race-based sexual rejection. Participants of color identified internalized sexual racism, decreased self-esteem, and psychological distress as the primary psychological consequences of sexual racism. The data analyses revealed quantitatively and qualitatively distinct racial pressures operating in the gay community in Seattle. Participants estimated that compared to the heterosexual community, their gay community was more racially stratified and exhibited higher rates of sexual racism. They

described the uniquely sexual basis of racial stereotypes and pointed to a skewed set of social norms operating in the gay community which allow greater expression of sexual racism than in the heterosexual community. Finally, the data revealed key differences in the psychological impact of sexual racism reported by Asian and Black gay men. An emergent hypothesis is presented outlining the relationships between experienced sexual racism and its sequelae, as well as protective factors. Theoretical, research, and clinical implications are discussed.

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DEDICATION

For my Mother and Father: your love and faith delivered me here.

And for Lance, dearest friend and inspiration.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

...it's scarred me so deeply internally, like for the rest of my life. I will never forget, never forget the shit that has been done to me here, I mean those few stories I've told you – I could tell you ten more. Like the kind of racism I've seen here in Seattle...for me coming here has been – it's politicized me more than anything. It showed me slavery, colonialism, other systems of oppression. This just re-inscribes those oppressions in an erotic imaginary...It acts itself out even in something you think is objective as sex. It's not objective, it's totally politicized. [API-1]¹

Racism has been recognized as a widespread system of oppression built into the foundation of the United States at its inception, present within its inhabitants, their culture, and larger institutions (Zinn, 2003). Diverse conceptualizations of racism have been presented over time, reflecting the nation's changing political, social, and economic circumstances. Relatively few of these conceptualizations, however, have explored manifestations of racism in sexual contexts, termed sexual racism. As the speaker in the above quotation points out, not only are the bedroom and its various outposts arenas for racism, they can reveal, distil, and exacerbate racial tensions perhaps more than any other domain of intimate interpersonal interaction.

The Legacy of Sexual Racism

For thousands of years, power struggles between people of racial and ethnic groups have been fought in the proverbial bedroom. Throughout documented history we find examples of state-sanctioned ethnosexual invasion in the forms of rape both within and outside the context of war, sexual enslavement of ethnic Others, and overly-sexualized images of ethnic Others in government propaganda (Nagel, 2003a). During the centuries of European imperialism, entire nations were eroticized, exotified, or

¹ Please see Appendix 1 for demographic information on each quoted participant.

defiled. European colonizers and tourists filled scientific journals and sensationalist newspapers with tales of men who “sported gigantic penises and women [who] consorted with apes” (McClintock, 1995, p. 255). Foreign lands and ethnic Others became objects “onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears” (p. 255).

Sexual racism arrived on the shores of North America with the first European colonizers. Native Americans and Africans abducted from their homeland became its initial targets via ethnosexual invasion and sexual enslavement (Nagel, 2003b). By the 19th century hundreds of thousands of immigrants had arrived representing unique ethnicities, cultures, and contexts of immigration (Zinn, 2003). These ethnic groups which became differentially racialized² experienced sexual racism manifesting in a variety of dominative forms (e.g., anti-miscegenation laws, state-sponsored eugenics programs, sexualized images of ethnic others in government war propaganda, and state-sanctioned ethnosexual invasion in the forms of rape both within and outside the context of war), each of which facilitating the literal or symbolic performance of conquest, colonization, and domination upon the bodies of ethnic Others. All of these forces have culminated in the prevalence of the “stick to your own kind” ideology rooted so deeply in the American psyche.

Today’s sexual racism has changed and adapted to the current social and legal status quo. Just as dominative racism has been largely replaced by symbolic (Sears, 1998), modern (McConahay, 1989), and aversive forms of racism (Dovidio & Gaertner,

² Differential racialization has been theorized to propagate conceptualizations and stereotypes of different ethnic groups in the service of shifting needs of a society, such as requirements of the labor market or wartime economy

2004a), the face of sexual racism has shifted from the blatant, often violent trappings of the past, to more subtle manifestations such as unconscious biases in attraction, racial fetishization, and reproductions of ethnosexual stereotypes in pornography. Though the forms of sexual racism have changed the underlying ethnosexual stereotypes (e.g., sexually aggressive, well-endowed Black men; submissive and/or de-sexualized East Asian men) have persisted. These ethnosexual stereotypes are both vestiges and reflections of the historical, political, and socio-cultural framework in which they are situated.

Though sexual racism can pervade all sexual spaces (e.g., intra-personal spaces such as erotic desires, fantasies, and identities, as well as interpersonal contexts including erotic behaviors/practices, and aspects of social life with erotic significance), both the non-empirical and empirical literatures have begun to expose a unique venue for its expression within gay male communities. Within popular literature, gay men of color have made public the “private demons” faced by members their community within “the gay marketplace of desire” (Boykin, 1996; McBride, 2005). These authors proposed that in the gay community race can be one, if not the primary, force behind sexual attraction and determinant of one’s value in the sexual marketplace. According to these authors, it is often the racism enacted in sexual transactions that has left the most lasting and prominent scar on their self-esteem and self-worth within the gay community.

Relevant Literature

Despite the clear psychological consequences of sexual racism, researchers have

only recently begun to investigate it. The considerable body of psychological research on various forms of oppression, however, does shed some light on the experience of sexual minorities encountering racism within the gay community. Relevant findings from these literatures

Psychological Impact of Racial Discrimination. While a comprehensive review of this literature is beyond the scope of this paper, some compelling findings deserve mention. Self-reported experience of interpersonal racism has been shown to predict changes in cardiovascular, immunological, and cortisol functioning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Tull, Sheu, Butler, & Cornelious, 2005) general psychological distress (Cassidy, O'Connor, Howe, & Warden, 2004; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004), and emotional responses including anger, paranoia, anxiety, helplessness-hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and fear (Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Jackson *et al.*, 1996; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Research has suggested that racism can adversely affect mental health via three core pathways including 1) institutionalized racism (e.g., decreased socioeconomic mobility, differential access to desirable resources, and poor living conditions), 2) physiological and psychological reactions to experiences of discrimination, and 3) internalized racism which leads to lower self-esteem and impaired psychological functioning (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Other investigations into the route by which racism influences mental health have suggested that, specifically in men, self esteem mediates the relationship between perceived racism and depression (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004).

Psychological Impact of Homophobia. Research has revealed similar findings regarding the psychological impact of homophobia and heterosexism experienced by sexual minorities³. A recent review by Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, & Rose (2001) of gay-related stressors identified in the literature highlighted the wide spectrum of stressors affecting gay men including visibility/“outness” issues, family conflict/rejection, discrimination at work, discrimination in housing and social services, homophobic violence and harassment, HIV/AIDS, sexual orientation conflict, misunderstanding and ignorance about being gay, internalized homophobia (Williamson, 2000), stigma consciousness (Lewis et al., 2001), and exposure to anti-gay politics and electoral decisions (Russell & Richards, 2003). Studies examining the situations in which these stressors are likely to arise have pointed to a similarly wide array including victimization in community settings, emotional suppression in family contexts, discrimination in job searches, and even prejudice encountered while making hotel reservations (for a review, see Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 2003).

Within-group studies of minority stress processes in sexual minorities suggest that degree of stress predicts severity of mental health problems. For example, gay men who reported feeling more stigmatized experienced a greater sense of alienation and exhibited less self-acceptance (e.g., Frable, Wortman, & Joseph, 1997; Grossman & Kerner, 1998). Likewise, higher levels of internalized homophobia, expectation of rejection or discrimination, and actual discrimination experiences predicted psychological distress in

³Sexual minorities are understood as those individuals whose erotic desires, practices, and identities place them in a disempowered position in society. In the current sociopolitical context, sexual minorities would include those who have same-sex attractions and/or engage in same-sex sexual practices.

a study of gay men in New York City (Meyer, 1995). Other studies have revealed a link between minority/gay stress and sexual problems (Meyer, 1995), substance use (Cochran, Keenan, Schober, & Mays, 2000), suicide ideation (Cochran & Mays, 2000a), conduct problems, and sexual risk behaviors (Rosario, RotheramBorus, & Reid, 1996).

Intersections of Oppression. Though research has examined the psychological stressors associated with racial and sexual minority status, there exists a general dearth of psychological research occurring at the crossroads of race and sexuality. An analysis of the empirical literature concerning sexual minorities of color from 1992 to 2002 revealed that only 124 (less than 1%) of the 14,482 empirical articles published in APA journals included LGB samples, and of those 124 articles, only 6 (.04%) focused on people of color (Jernewall & Zea, as cited in Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004). This small literature has addressed the impact of multiple minority stress upon this community, highlighting the consequences of both homophobia experienced within communities of color and racism encountered in the gay community. Together, the simultaneous rejection and devaluation of two important aspects of identity can blend to create a toxic formula of social isolation and alienation rendering gay men of color more psychologically vulnerable (Greene, 1994).

Homophobia in communities of color. Long-before realizing their own sexual identity, ethnic minority gay men often learn and internalize negative stereotypes about gays and “the gay lifestyle” within their ethnic community, thus complicating the process of sexual identity development (Greene, 1994). As they become more aware of their sexual orientation, they may feel forced to choose between denying their own sexual

identity, remaining closeted or cutting ties with their homophobic ethnic networks. This situation presents hardships as their ethnic community offers much-needed validation, sanctuary and support within the dominant racist society. Those who transcend this choice and move toward identity integration must struggle to jettison their own internalizations of homophobic messages from their ethnic communities while maintaining connections within those same ethnic communities. As difficult as this process proves, integration of oppressed racial and sexual identities has been linked with higher well-being (Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto, 2002). This finding makes sense considering the emotional and social support needed to navigate the rejection and devaluation experienced by so many people of color when entering the gay community.

While homophobia can affect sexual minorities of all ethnicities, it may be particularly salient to men of color whose ethnic communities are often more homophobic and who, at the same time, may depend on support from their ethnic communities to defend against racial stressors (DiPlacido, 1998). These factors often create circumstances in which gay men of color are constantly managing if not completely concealing aspects of their various identities depending on their current context: either minimizing their ethnic identity within the predominantly White gay community, or concealing their sexuality within largely homophobic ethnic networks.

Racism in Gay Communities. Gay men of color have reported racial discrimination occurring within a variety of social gathering spaces including gay clubs, bars, and organizations (Chan, 1992; Gutierrez & Dworkin, 1992; Morales, 1992). Perhaps because the defining feature of the gay community involves sexual partnering,

racial dynamics in the gay community are easily observable in sexual contexts in this community. One of the more innovative and compelling studies occurring at these crossroads examined the racial discrimination gay men of color face on internet dating websites (Phua & Kaufman, 2003). Analysis of 2,400 internet personals ads placed by men-seeking-men and men-seeking-women revealed that gay men were more than twice as likely as heterosexual men to mention race in their ads. Furthermore, regardless of the advertiser's race, men-seeking-men were significantly more likely than men-seeking-women to specify their desired partner's race. White men-seeking-men, in particular, were three times more likely to request a specific race than their heterosexual White counterparts. This study also found that Blacks were the least preferred racial partner in ads placed by men-seeking-men of all other racial groups. Among gay ads, Whites clearly occupied the highest rung of the racial ladder: thirty-one percent of Asian and thirteen percent of Black men-seeking-men specifically requested White respondents in contrast to heterosexual Asian and Black men who requested White respondents only 3 and 5 percent of the time, respectively. These findings suggest there may be substantially different racial pressures and hierarchies operating within the gay compared to that of the heterosexual community. Theorists argue that the simultaneous stress resulting from these unique racial dynamics in the gay community coupled with homophobia experienced within their ethnic communities can blend to create a toxic formula of social isolation, alienation and psychological vulnerability that would challenge even the most resourceful and well-adjusted individual (Greene, 1994).

Another study investigating these unique racial dynamics employed critical discourse analysis to examine internet personals ads placed by gay Asian and White men in Hong Kong and American publications (Jones, 2000). The author concluded that race was a highly salient feature in personals ads placed in American publications for gay men, with 43% of the authors referring to their own race and 11% referring to the race of their ideal partner. Race was determined to be the primary dimension of self-commodification in Hong Kong gay personal ads, with 93% of the authors stating their own race and 41% specifying the race of their target – a characteristic more frequently cited for both author and target than any other physical and personality characteristic.

The Current Study

Both studies described above made inroads into the phenomenon of sexual racism as manifested in personals ads. Although these ads offer a rich and accessible fount of data, the full spectrum of social locations in which sexual racism is expressed remains largely unexamined in academic literature, as are the myriad forms, sources, and sequelae of sexual racism. The purpose of this qualitative study, therefore, was to develop an understanding of the contexts in which sexual racism occurs, the various forms in which it manifests, and the nature of its psychological impact on Black and Asian/Pacific Islander gay men residing in a predominantly White metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest.

Study Delimitations

While it is clear that sexual racism crosses all sociodemographics boundaries, data collected from gays and lesbians in a qualitative pilot study in Washington State (Plummer, Balsam, Yoshimoto, & Fieland, 2005) in addition to anecdotal evidence, lay literature, the and the limited academic literature suggest that sexual racism is a particularly salient stressor for gay men of color. Restrictions were therefore imposed on the present study to narrow its scope to the gay community. Although it will be important to eventually examine the impact of sexual racism within all racial and ethnic groups in the gay community, the current exploratory study sample was restricted to self-identified gay Asian & Pacific Islander [A&PI], Black/African American⁴, as well as White men. These groups were chosen for a number of reasons: 1) academic, popular, and anecdotal sources regarding sexual racism in gay communities suggested these two racial minority groups were most frequently the targets of sexual racism, and 2) due to the demographics of the Seattle metropolitan area (summarized below), A&PI and Black gay individuals are more visible and therefore more likely to be stereotyped and fetishized in the region's gay community.

It is important to acknowledge that the A&PI categorization includes a vast and heterogeneous array of ethnicities representing more than 60% of the current world population. The broad categorization of A&PI was chosen for the study because, despite the immense diversity within this category, its members report facing common forms of sexual racism in the gay community which tends to homogenize ethnic Others. When

⁴ Participants who self-defined African-American or Black will be referred to as Black as this is the more inclusive label.

important distinctions arise within the data between gay men of South versus East Asian descent, they are so noted.

Political Considerations

Unpacking racism within an already marginalized community presents political complications. One must consider what it means for gay men to reveal problems endemic to their community within the public and largely heterosexual domain of academia. I am aware of the potential ramifications inherent in bearing witness to this collection of hushed voices – hearing their complaints, confessions, and appeals, and constructing a narrative about the causes, derivatives, and consequences of sexual racism. As a White lesbian, I risk being labeled a traitor to my own queer community for making public the private journeys around which the gay community maintains a code of silence, or for policing queer sex. Yet, a complete query of sexual racism requires sojourns into the most hidden sexual transactions in the community. Misunderstood or misapplied, this work could be used to substantiate existing stereotypes of gay men as hyper-sexual or deviant, and could possibly contribute to new stereotypes of a uniquely racist gay community. The potential benefits gained from airing these voices and stories, however, reassure me that this territory must be traversed and mapped.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Given the dearth of empirical research at this particular juncture of race and sexuality, a qualitative design was chosen which would allow this relatively unexamined territory to be explored in depth without a priori categories or hypotheses. A modified grounded theory approach was chosen as it would allow theory to emerge from an iterative data collection process guided by the concerns and themes put forth by community members. (Please see Appendix E: Dissertation Proposal for a detailed discussion of grounded theory methodology and the rationale for its use.)

Sampling and Participants

Setting description. Participants were recruited from the metropolitan area of Seattle, Washington. According to census data collected in 2006, the metropolitan area population was estimated at 3.3 million, 69% of which were White, 14.4% Asian, and 8% Black/African American (US Census Bureau, 2006). The city ranks second in the nation with regard to gay and lesbian population density, at 12.5% (Turnbull, 2006).

Key informants. A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify key informants which utilized the researcher's knowledge of the community augmented by nominations made by research consultants and key informants. The final sample of key informants consisted of 3 Black, 3 A&PI, and 2 White gay men who were chosen for their central or unique roles in their respective communities. This group included community leaders, organizational administrators and directors, academicians, mental health service providers, and artists whose work addressed the issue of sexual racism.

Focus group participants. Focus group participants were recruited using convenience and theoretical sampling techniques augmented by snowball recruitment strategies. Advertisements were e-mailed to community listservs; placed in community gathering places (e.g., cafes, bookstores, organizations); and posted on internet dating websites (e.g., “men seeking men” pages at www.craigslist.com & www.manhunt.com). Those who responded to advertisements were screened and deemed eligible if they 1) were age 18 or older, 2) resided in the Seattle metropolitan area, 3) were English speaking, and self-identified as 4) gay (including queer, MSM [“men who have sex with men”], and same-gender-loving), 5) male, 6) and either Black (including African American and Caribbean American); Asian/Pacific Islander (including Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander); or White/Caucasian. Eligible respondents then completed a brief phone interview used to gather demographic information useful in the final theoretically driven selection of focus group participants.

Out of the 106 individuals who responded to advertisements, a total of 68 respondents were deemed eligible for participation in focus groups and completed the brief demographic interview. Of these, 38 were selected for participation in focus groups based on the demographic diversity they would contribute to their focus group. The 12 selected A&PI participants ranged in age from 22-47 years old, had identified as gay between 2-44 years, and reported individual annual incomes ranging from under \$10,000 to over \$80,000. Fifty percent of A&PI participants were born outside the United States. The 9 selected Black participants ranged in age from 21-54 years old, had identified as gay between 7-50 years, and reported individual annual incomes ranging from under

\$10,000 to over \$80,000. The 17 White participants ranged in age from 21-60 years old, had identified as gay between 5-46 years, and reported annual incomes ranging from under \$10,000 to over \$60,000.

Procedure

Key informant interviews. Key informant interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting with the researcher, a White lesbian. Before beginning the interview, key informants were asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire. In-depth, semi-structured 2-hour interviews were facilitated using interview guides which emerged from collaborations with gay men on the research team and were informed by the limited academic and lay literature on sexual racism. These interview guides were further shaped by the key informants themselves as new themes and questions were identified. Interview guides addressed issues of identity, general race dynamics in gay communities, dating/sex, sexual racism, the psychological and social impacts of sexual racism, as well as coping strategies and future outlook. Key informants were asked to review the content and language of focus group guides for their racial group and to suggest questions and appropriate language based on their personal understanding of racial dynamics in gay communities, thus helping to contribute to the accessibility, credibility and authenticity of the guide. Key informants were compensated \$20 for their time and offered the opportunity to be contacted in the future as Community Consults to critically review the researcher's work after all data had been collected and analyzed. Key informant interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by trained research assistants. Each transcript was checked for accuracy by the investigator and an additional member of the

research team.

Focus groups. As the key informant interviews came close to completion, focus groups for each racial group – A&PI, Black, and White – were scheduled. These in-depth, semi-structured focus groups lasted 2 hours and were facilitated by trained, race-matched gay men on the research team. During focus groups, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions followed by prompts to deepen or focus the discussion as dictated by the focus group interview guides. These questions addressed participants' identity, their perceptions and experiences with regard to racial dynamics within the gay community, their attractions, how race impacts dating and relationships as well as casual/anonymous sexual encounters, ethnosexual stereotypes, and personal experiences with sexual racism. For instance, participants were asked "What sexual stereotypes or myths are you aware of regarding men from different racial groups?" and "What stands out to you about your dating or sexual experiences with men from other racial backgrounds?" Questions and probes changed over time as the incoming data revealed emergent themes. Participants were compensated \$20 for their time and offered the opportunity to serve as Community Consultants to critically review the researcher's work after all data had been collected and analyzed. Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the investigator and members of the research team. Focus groups were conducted until theoretical saturation was reached, by which point two A&PI, two Black, and three White focus groups had been completed.

Data Analysis

Development of codebook. Analysis began with the researcher listening to and reading interviews 1-2 times in order to discern salient themes and new ideas which were recorded in memo notes using ATLAS-ti software. From these themes and memos emerged the initial code book which expanded over the course of data collection. As codes and code definitions developed and were refined, they were grouped together into broader categories which corresponded to larger themes in the data.

Open, axial, and selective coding. Each transcript was coded in three phases: open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During open coding, text from interviews and focus groups was selected for its relevance to the research concerns and tagged with appropriate descriptive codes. This phase of coding was conducted independently by the investigator and members of the research team. These independently coded transcripts were then compared in order to safeguard against researcher bias (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding involved identification of repeated ideas (e.g., similar experiences, patterns, words, and phrases) and distillation of themes or implied organizing topics. Selective coding began with printing all coded text and reviewing codes/code families and themes for consistency and patterns. Themes were then grouped into theoretical constructs and integrated around the central phenomenon of sexual racism in terms of its various manifestations and psychological consequences.

Evaluation of Research Findings

Grounded theorists argue that the ultimate value of the research process rests upon the researcher's ability to keep the raw data, selected text, codes, interpretations, and resulting conclusions grounded as deeply as possible within the reality from which they came. These objectives constitute the qualitative equivalent of reliability and validity in quantitative design (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In grounded theory, reliability and validity can be evaluated along a number of different dimensions including: transparency (can other investigators know and check what was done?), communicability (do the codes and categories make sense to participants and other investigators?), and coherence (are the codes and categories internally consistent and do they accurately reflect both the trends and inconsistencies within the population?). Towards these ends, coding questions and decisions were documented in memos, the research team met frequently to evaluate the ongoing process of coding, and data were triangulated (i.e., themes and emergent theory from data collected for the study were cross-checked against data from a variety of outside sources including internet personal ads, erotic media, and lay literature on sexual racism. Some of these outside sources of data are discussed in the paper as additional points of reference. As a final step in the verification of researcher's work and conclusions, an additional focus group was scheduled with "Community Consultants" - gay men of color who had volunteered for the opportunity after participating either as key informants or as part of a focus group. During this focus group the researcher presented and solicited critical feedback regarding the major findings of the study organized into themes and relationships.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS I: DEFINING SEXUAL RACISM

Participants readily described sexual racism they had encountered in their lives, disclosing what had occurred, when and where it had occurred, and who was involved. These aspects of the phenomenon parceled into the broad categories of locations and manifestations. This chapter explores both of these dimensions in a theoretical analysis of the participants' own words.

Locations

It's everywhere. It's in our organizations, it's in social work, it's just there. I take it for granted that it's there. In the gay community it's very right there. Like they'll say, 'I'm not into you. I don't like Asian guys.' It's apparent in the media, it's on people's profiles, it's on Craigslist. It's everywhere. [API-2]

Participants identified sexual racism in virtually every sexual context in the gay community including personal ads and internet dating/"hook up" websites, pornography, within gay clubs and bars, casual or anonymous sexual encounters, as well as romantic relationships. Each of these contexts is examined below, concluding with participants' depictions of their geographic location of Seattle, WA as a site of sexual racism.

Personal Ads & the Internet

Consistent with previous research findings (McFarlane, Bull, & Rietmeijer, 2000), the majority of participants referred to the prominence of internet personals and "dating" websites as venues for meeting sexual partners. These websites, such as "Craigslist" (<http://seattle.craigslist.org/m4m>), "Manhunt" (<http://www.manhunt.net>), and "Adam4Adam" (<http://www.adam4adam.com>) were described as primary sites for

solicitation of anonymous and/or casual sexual encounters, particularly among younger cohorts who are more facile with computers and the internet.

Participants reported that articulations of desire and fantasy were less inhibited under the veil of cyber-anonymity and felt therefore beyond the purview of political correctness: *"I feel like under the wires I can say anything I want to. I feel protected, because I don't know who they are"* [API-3]. In this corner of the marketplace, the subject enters a space where racial preferences, fetishes, and stereotypes can be expressed directly, unapologetically, and without fear of social retribution. Examples extracted from "Craigslist" corroborate with participants' reports of the uninhibited language and content of internet personal ads:

"I OPEN MY MOUTH FOR Black COCK – 32y/o" I am horny as hell tonight. It has been way too long since I have sucked cock and I want nothing but the best tonight: black cock. I want to drop to my knees in front of a hung black cock and devour it however long it takes to get a load of cum dumped down my throat.

(Posted and retrieved June 16, 2007 from <http://seattle.craigslist.org/m4m/>)

"Ethnic Cum Wanted Thursday Early Afternoon – 45" Home alone and hosting for an afternoon taste of sweet cum. I enjoy being with younger, smooth, and affectionate guys, Black, Latino, Asian, step to the head of the line, and of course white guys as well.

(Posted and retrieved June 14, 2007 from <http://seattle.craigslist.org/m4m/>)

"Yet another Asian seeking his daddy – 28y/o" After perusing the multiple postings on this site, I realize I'm not the only Asian who's attracted to white guys who're a little older and more experienced than I am. So what do I have that's different from all the other Asian boys looking for his daddy? Smooth skin. Check. Slim Asian body. Check. An incurable case of nymphomania? Fortunately, no, or else instead of DDF⁵ I would've been found meth'ed out in a ditch. Well, I guess I'm not all that different after all, but I do enjoy the intimacy and touch of another masculine guy, so I'm mainly looking for a regular fuck buddy and more if that ever elusive "the one" comes along.

(Posted and retrieved June 18, 2007 from <http://seattle.craigslist.org/m4m/>)

These personal ads contain a wealth of information about how race is commodified and

⁵ DDF indicates "drug and disease free"

given meaning and value in the gay marketplace of desire. Whether race is being fetishized by White men as in the first two examples, or used as enticement in the latter example, these ads reflect, recreate, and advance the popular consciousness of the gay community situated within mainstream ideologies of racial dominance and paternalism. In the first ad what is sought is not a person, but the objectified, mythical “...*the best: black cock.*” Although the White ad writer seemingly wants to sexually satisfy this object, his language reveals intentions of personal gratification in concluding with “...*to get a load of cum dumped down my throat* [emphasis added].” The language in the second ad again points to the reduction and objectification of gay men of color accomplished by the language “*ethnic cum.*” It also reveals dynamics in the gay ethnosexual hierarchy, as the writer requests that “*Black, Latino, Asian, step to the head of the line, and of course white guys as well* [emphasis added].” Ads by gay men of color, particularly A&PI men as in the third ad, often solicit White interest by highlighting their most valued commodity, i.e., race, for consumption by White gay men. This requires the ad writer to engage in self-objectification, sacrificing their individuality and offering their bodies up for symbolic colonization.

Focus group participants varied in their emotional response to sexual racism on the internet. While many A&PI gay men reported feeling “*objectified... like someone’s fetish. It’s a little disturbing because I would rather have someone who saw me as an individual and not by my race, so it’s frustrating*” [API-4], overall the Black gay men interviewed voiced less disturbance, some having “*come to accept and be okay with it*” [B-1]. This difference is likely due to the divergent sexual stereotypes assigned to A&PI

versus Black gay men, which serve to emasculate the former and substantiate the hyper-masculinity of the latter.

Pornography

Many participants described gay pornography as an audio-visual repository of ethnosexual stereotypes and dynamics in the gay marketplace. Although the White-dominated gay pornography industry typically focuses its gaze upon the White body, “*when they do portray people of color it’s through a stereotype*” [API-1] which dictates the relatively circumscribed roles in which “ethnic” bodies are to be consumed.

Pornographic video titles (e.g., *Mandingo Men*, *Black Tricks White Treats*, *Black Drills White Holes*, *5 Bros on Whitey Boy*, *Black Cops White Robbers*, *With Sex You Get Eggroll*, *Daddy’s Boi Blow Jobs: Ang Lei*, and *Geisha Boys*) rely on ethnosexual stereotypes and roles as primary marketing tools. Specifically, Black men are chiefly cast as well-endowed, hyper-sexual, hyper-masculine “tops”⁶ who paradoxically cater to the sexual fantasies of their White co-stars and audience. Those cast in the limited Asian porn genre, who participants felt were virtually all from East Asian countries such as “*Taiwan and Thailand, and Japan, [and] don’t speak English*” [API-4], appeal to “*the fantasy of the submissive, doggie style, ... geisha guy*” [API-5]. Such portrayals were perceived as restrictive and demeaning by A&PI study participants, one of whom

⁶ ‘Top’ and ‘bottom’ signify the positions of the penetrating partner (‘top’) and the receptive partner (‘bottom’) in gay anal sex. These words are used to indicate gender performances along the axis of masculinity/dominance and femininity/submission.

explained “*When I get together with a lot of my Asian American and other minority friends we talk about why we feel second class...I think we’ve come to this decision that it’s because the models out there... especially in pornography*” [API-5]. Furthermore, because gay pornography is often sought out by men early in their coming out process as a form of anticipatory socialization into the gay community (Fong, 2003), it adopts a powerful normalizing function: “*gay men are so overpowered by what’s in pornography and what’s normalized by pornography that we tend to habitually play out these racial fantasies*” [API-6].

The Gay Club and Bar Scene

Not surprisingly, participants of color reported less blatant sexual racism in public spaces including gay discos and bars where interactions are face-to-face. Instead, they described the ubiquity of racial segregation among and within these spaces, citing as an example that “*all along the back wall - that’s where a lot of the gay Asian men would congregate. I remember somebody actually referring to it... as ‘The Rice Paddies’*” [API-7]. Once again, a pattern emerged in the data of A&PI men expressing frustration or distress around the sexual fetishization apparent in these spaces, as well as the sense of intra-ethnic competition among A&PI men over the limited number of White men who might be interested in them. Black participants more often emphasized a feeling of invisibility in mainstream gay White spaces, and discussed their conscious decisions to patronize social venues that drew a larger Black faction.

In the Bathhouses and Bushes: Casual/Anonymous Sexual Encounters

It was in reference to casual/anonymous sexual encounters, more so than any other context, that participants reported encountering blatant sexual racism. Under the shield of anonymity and exemption from mainstream social norms, racially oriented sexual fantasies and fetishes as well as racial preferences and hierarchies easily emerge from the subconscious. Whether a sexual encounter is the result of a spontaneous meeting or arranged via an online personals website, what occurs in interracial anonymous encounters can involve “*some crazy shit with people saying something that is racially insensitive in the middle of the act*” [API-1]. Gay men of color offered numerous examples, from “*acting out...a certain racial fantasy, whether it’s aggressive or hostile, or eroticized,*” to being instructed by an anonymous White sex partner to say “*fuck my Filipino ass*” [W-1] while “bottoming” for him. Furthermore, casual/anonymous sexual encounters can allow one or both partners to enter sexual terrain that would otherwise be considered off-limits. One White participant offered the example of a White friend who frequently engages in anonymous sex with Black men, with whom

“...it could never work to be together – like, they’re just socio-economically different.... It’s more forbidden to him - and there is something [that makes it] very alluring. He looks for really tough street guys. Just these people I could never imagine actually seeing more than a few times.” [W-2]

If, as this participant suggests, it is the allure of the highly stereotyped socially forbidden sex partner that eroticizes the anonymous sexual encounter for some gay men, it is unsurprising that racially charged fantasies, sexual expectations, and roles would be expressed and enacted more frequently in casual sexual encounters.

Sex clubs and bathhouses, in which anonymous sexual partnering is the primary objective, were described as microcosms of the larger gay community, revealing and in some cases magnifying patterns in partner attractions, the ethnosexual hierarchy, and sexual privilege. One participant depicted racial patterning that takes place in bathhouses: *“You definitely find that it’s very, very segregated. The White people stick with the White people, only talk to White people, only do whatever they’re going to do with White people, and the Black people just stick with Black people but are trying to chase the White people...”* [B-2]. Sexual racism can be exacerbated in the bathhouse/sex club context as these spaces are by definition exempt from mainstream social norms and values.

Romantic Relationships

Sexual racism in the context of short- or long-term interracial romantic relationships was depicted by some participants of color as common if not inevitable, particularly in the domains of initial partner attraction, selection, and assumed roles. Both A&PI and Black gay men discussed how their race often interfered with their ability or desire to form romantic relationships with White gay men. This was attributed to White men either being disinterested in them, only willing to engage in casual sexual encounters, or because they themselves were so wary of encountering sexual racism and/or being rejected that they avoided White gay men altogether. One participant, a 27 year-old first-generation Filipino American who dated primarily White men noted that many White men *“automatically assume... that I am going to be a bottom and be submissive”* [API-2]. In discussing the meaning of these assumptions, the same

participant claimed *“If it were a little White guy, it’d be different. But because I’m a person of color, it’s racist. The fact that I’m brown racializes it”*. He added that his last White partner *“did not want to talk about it, he would always go on about how race isn’t an issue. But whether or not you think it’s an issue... you’re in a relationship with a person of color and that makes it an issue.”* In addition to the tendency for White men to make racially biased assumptions, *“a lot of Asian men ... they’ll say, ‘Oh, you know, I’ve just always been [a bottom] because that’s what’s expected.’ It’s like they’ve given up hope... when you’re placed in roles you just kind of assume them”* [API-2]. This internalized sexual racism which compounds the complications in interracial gay relationships is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

While discussing racial dynamics in interracial relationships, Black gay men interviewed in this study tended to focus on three themes: 1) sexual racism as a barrier to White men developing interest in Black men, 2) avoidance of interracial dating due to inevitable complications, and 3) the importance of racial-awareness and conscientiousness of White partners in longer-term interracial relationships. Black participants reflected on the degree of racial segregation and depicted the gay community as somewhat of an ethnosexual caste system in which different racial castes rarely entered cross-racial relationships. As Black gay men derive market value from their assumed sexual prowess, they are more often pursued for purely sexual purposes and are rarely considered for longer-term relationships. Many Black participants expressed reluctance to entering interracial romantic relationships in order to avoid the additional complications: *“I’ve had sex with White guys before, but as far as necessarily dating one,*

it's hard enough dating a black male anyways. So why would I?" [B-3]. In exploring the complications of these relationships, participants noted obstacles originating both within the partnership (e.g., *"as far as White guys, I just have always had very bad experiences with White gay men ... it's just always been one of objectification"* [B-4]) and outside the relationship. These extrinsic challenges came either from other men of color who label them "white-washed" or "snow queens" for dating White men, or by White gay men who devalued the relationship. Those who reported experience with longer-term interracial relationships reflected on the necessary components to successful relationships including other sources of similarity such as shared values or interests and demonstration of cultural sensitivity manifested in their willingness to discuss racial dynamics in the relationship.

Geographic Location

Participants who lived in or traveled extensively in other parts of the country discussed Seattle as a particular geographic venue for sexual racism. The dominant opinion across participants of all racial backgrounds depicted racial dynamics in Seattle's gay community as distinctly challenging for men of color and cross-racial relationships. Gay men of color reported experiencing more sexual racism in Seattle compared to other racially-stratified regions of the country: *"it became more of an issue for me when I moved here. It happened in [North Carolina, too] but more here"* [B-5]. White participants also observed this tendency as they noted fewer interracial couples in Seattle relative to other cities: *"I'm always struck when I go to another city, whether it's DC or Chicago, and I see so many interracial couples open and out in the community. I don't*

see that here” [W-3]. These dynamics were partly attributed to the degree of segregation in Seattle’s gay and heterosexual communities: *“communities are so segregated geographically and in terms of where people hang out, you know?”* [API-6]. In contrast to the depiction of Seattle as racially-segregated, some gay men of color described the great difficulty they experienced connecting with supportive coethnics; one Asian American participant who had lived in Japan and Hawaii where the A&PI community was easily accessible expressed that while he lived there he, *“felt part of a community and safe in a way. But then when I came here to Seattle, it was a challenge just meeting people”* [API-8]. A number of participants also referred to Seattle’s culture of political-correctness and avoidance of confrontation as a hurdle to responding to racism: *“Seattle has this vibe of being very afraid of confrontation, and that’s problematic in discussing issues like racism ... people can’t ever get to a point of actually being honest with themselves about the way they feel racially”* [W-4]. Despite this overall consensus, there were some dissenting opinions, all of which originated from gay men who had moved to Seattle from more racially homogenous and/or rural areas: *“It’s better here, though. There is more diversity here. I know people say there is hardly any, but where I came from it was only White”* [B-6].

Manifestations

Just as sexual racism was reported occurring in the variety of locations discussed above, it was described manifesting in a variety of forms including ethnosexual

stereotypes, racial fetishism, and race-based sexual rejection. As the dimensions of location and form vary freely, these manifestations can occur within all of the locations described. Each manifestation of sexual racism is described below with reference to participants' own words placed within a larger theoretical framework.

Ethnosexual Stereotypes

Racial stereotyping is ubiquitous within U.S. society where cultural consumers are trained to automatically categorize individuals according to visible distinctions in skin color into groups about which generalized beliefs and ideas exist in the popular consciousness. As a subset of the larger American society, the gay community would be expected to harbor similar tendencies toward stereotyping along racial lines. What White, A&PI, and Black participants reported, however, was a distinct propensity for racial stereotyping involving the sexualization of the target either by emphasizing a racial group's hypersexuality, or highlighting their femininity – quite akin to stripping them of any sexual power. One White participant who frequently dated men of color underscored this distinction in the gay community stating,

When I date interracial...the difference was in the sexualization of it. There's a lot of fetishism that goes with it, with the gay male paradigm specifically for races. Examples would be when I'm dating a Latino, a lot of people assume, 'You've got this Latin lover - must be very spicy and sexual,' if I'm dating an Asian man, 'He must be very submissive, you must be very dominant.' If I'm dating a Caucasian person it's never really talked about. If I'm dating an African American all of a sudden everyone wants to talk to me about, 'Oh, is it really, really difficult, is it hard?' It's like the African American is the pinnacle of the interracial relationship - it always comes down to sex, you know? 'How big is his penis? Is he a power bottom? Is he good in bed?' It's very direct and it's a lot more open in the gay community, but I think there is that unique fetishism that goes into it. [W-8]

This sentiment was a common theme with men of all racial identities confirming the observations voiced by this participant. Not only did gay men of all races point to the higher prevalence of ethnosexual stereotyping within the gay community (e.g., “*Women are always trying to say, ‘Oh well black guys are well endowed.’ But you know, gay men talk more about it then any woman I have ever met*” [B-7]), but they described it as a primary dimension of commodification in the sexual marketplace. Whether enacted by White gay men seeking experiences with the sexual caricatures drawn by these ethnosexual stereotypes, or by gay men of color who, having internalized these stereotypes, tout their racial characteristics as a “sales pitch” to lure the prized White gaze, these stereotypes render the person of color a dehumanized, objectified, fetishized product for consumption.

Upon closer examination of these stereotypes, it is easy to trace their origins, often stemming from those already existing in the heterosexual imagination. Within them are assumptions, expectations, and prohibitions that mirror dominant neo-colonial ideologies and bear the mark of racism stemming from an unresolved 300-year history of slavery. Table 1 presents the most frequently cited ethnosexual stereotypes, each identified and described independently by at least 2 participants.

Table 1

Ethnoseexual Stereotypes and Supporting Quotes

Ethnoseexual Stereotype	Supporting Quotes
The Black "Mandingo" ⁷	<i>That thing about...the big dick Mandingo stud has persisted and it's not just in the straight world, it's in the gay world, too. [B-4]</i>
	<i>...the gay idea that all black men are... hung like horses [W-5]</i>
	<i>I get a lot of that ... with White guys who are like, "Fuck me with your big black cock." ... It's like you're a living porn fantasy. [B-4]</i>
The Savage Black Top	<i>Look at the Tom of Finland books, look at the Hung books - those comics. And I think they're hot, but there is something a little grotesque about them. No man's penis is that long but the Black guys' dicks are super exaggerated, they look like these jungle-bound gorilla dudes. [B-4]</i>
	<i>[White men] are coming up to me and they're like, "oh you must be a gangster. You must be all that. You can fuck the shit out of me!" And yeah, I can, but I'm not a fetish! I'm not your flavor of the week. [B-4]</i>
	<i>"well, obviously they're tops because they've got the big dicks and they're going to fuck my little White ass" [W-5]</i>
The Savage Black Top	<i>Look at the Tom of Finland books, look at the Hung books ... half the time they're raping these White dudes. [B-4]</i>
	<i>... the giant-dick Black guy being the top, basically raping and pillaging his way through whatever. [B-8]</i>
	<i>Blacks always want to dominate the Whites in the relationship. It's the White guy who's looking to be dominated and made a slave. I guess that's not a myth, that's how White men come across. I guess the myth is they feel that every Black wants to role play this. [B-9]</i>

⁷ The "Mandingo" stereotype originated with "Mandingo," a novel (Onstott, 1957) and film (De Laurentiis *et al.*, 1982) of the same name depicting the story of a hyper-masculine / hyper-sexual Black slave with an insatiable appetite for white women who burns down his master's plantation and escapes with his wife.

Table 1 continued

The Asian Bottom	<p><i>A lot of rice queens would come to me just assuming that I'm submissive. The fact that I'm smaller makes them think that 'You better be the bitch' [API-9]</i></p> <p><i>There's the expectation that I should be the one to make sure that they come – I should be the one to make sure that they're having a good time, that they're enjoying the sex. What I want doesn't matter. [API-10]</i></p> <p><i>I think out of all the sort of ethnic subgroups in the gay community, Asians have the biggest stigmas. We're expected to be bottoms, smooth and skinny, maybe a little effeminate, submissive..."[API-10]</i></p> <p><i>I bought into the whole notion of Asians readily being submissive bottoms and I played that role for years [API-6]</i></p>
The "High-Maintenance" Asian	<p><i>I'm gonna get slammed for this because here I am this non-racist, but this might sound very racist: you know, frankly, in Seattle, Asians here are fucking whores, they are either with Daddy or looking for Daddy and the only time I get them is in the bushes or in the bathhouse and you know when they see me on the street, they are with Daddy and they don't even admit they know me...because I don't drive an Audi ... they are gold diggers like you would not believe, [W-6]</i></p> <p><i>I think that there's an expectation that gay Asians are a little more high maintenance. It could just be this stigma that we're the most effeminate. So we're the most female-like so we're the pickiest ones, or the ones who fuss about our hair or designer labels. [API-10]</i></p> <p><i>Asians? We like nice things. We're expensive. And honestly, I mean people want to win you over. They'll take you to Prada and a boutique and buy you everything head to toe. [API-11]</i></p> <p><i>White men think that 'I'm rich, I can take care of you.' [API-9]</i></p>
The Gay Asian Bride	<p><i>...for Asian men in the gay community ... their roles in the relationship tend to be that of a wife [API-2]</i></p> <p><i>I think the lighter skinned Asians seem more effeminate, more of the woman role. [API-10]</i></p> <p><i>You have this image of the Asian, like this housewife, mom, sort of figure. [API-3]</i></p>

Table 1 continued

	<i>One thing I've wondered about is East Indian men and the Kama Sutra. Just wondering if - I've never been with any east Indian men but I was thinking they're beautiful, number one, many of them. And number two: are they trained in the Kama Sutra? You know that's been the history of East India, I just have the sense they have the most erotic time, a lot of them [W-7]</i>
The Exotic, Erotic "Ethnic"	<p><i>Indians for some reason, we are just sort of some different exotic class altogether [API-6]</i></p> <p><i>I will say that I love it when I do have great sex with a brother because sometimes its really tough for me to attract that brother and it's just something that's like-it's so odd for me to say this but- its the exotic. And I really enjoy being in that situation. [B-8]</i></p> <p><i>I feel that for an attraction to people of color specifically... there is a sense sometimes of exoticism, fetishism [W-8]</i></p>
The Ethnic "Curiosity Piece"	<p><i>I've been called a curiosity piece, so I've felt like that, too. Somebody who looked a little different. I sort of see myself as a novelty. I see myself as a curiosity piece. [B-6]</i></p> <p><i>So I'm attracted to different, to exotic--I'm attracted to things that are not normal. And people who are not normal. [W-9]</i></p>

There was virtually universal and instantaneous identification of the broad ethnosexual stereotypes of the well-endowed Black "top" and the feminized Asian "bottom." When asked where they had learned these stereotypes, white men tended to be either unsure, or pointed to the influence of gay media and early socializing experiences in the community including pornography and "gay mentors" who introduced them to ethnosexual roles and expectations. Gay men of color stated that these stereotypes were inescapable in all spaces and products of the community, and noted that they were personally bombarded with these stereotypes through their interactions with White gay men in the sexual marketplace. Interestingly, a small subset of participants of all racial backgrounds also identified an opposing non-restrictive expectation of sexual

“versatility” (i.e., sexual flexibility in being the dominant/insertive partner, passive/receptive partner, or both) in White gay men.

I think there is a way where White queer men can be whatever we wanna be, so there's not a stereotype that White queer men are tops or bottoms or versatile -- if anything there is a stereotype is that they are versatile. But of course it's a stereotype -- little "s" stereotype, versus a capital "S" stereotype [like] Asians being bottoms or Black men all being big dick tops - that kind of thing. So there's this kind of like freedom that you are not cast as anything. [W-10]

Whereas the sexual stereotypes of gay Black and A&PI men confine them to roles oriented towards pleasuring their partners, the only role associated with White gay men – versatility – is oriented towards their own personal choice and self-definition, affording them greater privilege in the gay marketplace of desire.

Racial Fetishism

Shifting from the ethnosexual commodity to its consumer, we encounter the phenomenon of racial fetishism. While racial predilections in sexual object choice are certainly not endemic to the gay community, participants underscored the inflated role of race in defining attractions for some gay men. Perhaps this is most clear in the language surrounding various types of racial fetishes widely recognized in gay communities. Table 2 presents the labels originating from the gay community which are used to describe gay men with racial preferences or exclusionary fetishes.

Table 2

Lexicon of Gay Racial Fetishes

Label	Definitions (<i>in the words of participants</i>)
Rice Queens*	<i>White men who are into Asian men</i>
Dinge Queens	<i>White men who are into Black guys</i>
Mud Sharks	<i>White guys that like Black guys</i>
Bean Queens	<i>White guys who are into Latino men</i>
Burrito Bangers	<i>White men who are into Latino men</i>
Potato Queens*	<i>Asian men who are into White guys</i>
Banana/Coconuts	<i>Asian or brown on the outside and White in the inside</i>
FAW's	<i>Asian men who will 'Fuck Anything White'</i>
Sticky Rice*	<i>Asian men who are into other Asian men</i>
Snow Queens*	<i>Black men who only date White men</i>
Uncle Toms	<i>Black men who only date White men</i>

*Denotes labels that were most frequently used, reported, and understood by all participants

What is perhaps most striking about this lexicon of racial fetishism is its breadth, specificity, and common usage among gay men. When participants used these terms, they were not universally conveyed with a negative valence. On the contrary, many gay men used them quite matter-of-factly and/or with humor to describe their own or others' sexual preferences, some assuming the interviewer's familiarity with these terms endemic to the gay community. When probed specifically about these terms, some participants

reacted with a sense of nascent awareness of the relatively skewed social norms in the gay community which prime them to express and enact these racial fetishes. As one Black participant stated in frustration, *“there are all these terms and names for folks that depend on who they like... and there’s nothing in the gay community that says that it’s not okay”* [B-5].

Gay men of color shared numerous stories about interactions in which they felt fetishized by gay White men. The common thread woven through these narratives was the reported lack of awareness these White gay men exhibited regarding the negative impact of their actions. In most cases, the statements which most clearly revealed their racial fetish were actually intended as sexual solicitations or compliments.

I put a picture up [on Craigslist] and maybe a day later I’ll get 10 replies from older White men telling me ‘Yeah, I love smooth little Asian boys.’ [API-4]

[White] people are focusing on features, like, ‘oh Asian people are so tiny, they are just so much fun to be around’ whether it’s sexually or [otherwise]... They think that’s a compliment, but to me it sounds very racist. [API-3]

The statements made by gay White men cited above were intended to appeal to and entice the listener of color, yet they resulted in offending the recipient by reducing him to his racial features. A number of gay men of color, however, discussed the conflict they experienced when receiving fetishizing solicitations or compliments as they would simultaneously experience gratification from the attention bestowed on them by the “prized” White suitor, and offense resulting from the compliment’s inherent objectification and racism. This dynamic will be further explored as an aspect of internalized sexual racism in Chapter 4.

White participants willingly discussed the specific nature of their fetishes and racial predilections. The sexual experience and its derived pleasure were often viewed by participants through a racial lens:

I've had a friend, South-Asian, I get together with periodically. He's totally passive and yet it's really, really hot because I'm really attracted to him even though he could be dead and I wouldn't know it. [Group laughter] I check afterwards to make sure. [laughter] But, if I had a Caucasian man that I was with who was so listless it would be a one-time thing and that would be that. And yet, with him, I find it hot. Definitely the ethnic dimension affects how I experience the sexuality. [W-3]

What is apparent in this individual's account of sexual encounters with his South-Asian "friend" who "could be dead and I wouldn't know it" is the particular way in which passive receptivity is sexualized and eroticized by the symbolic meaning of his partner's racial identity. Post-colonial theorists have discussed the symbolic meaning of the "oriental body" as a foil for the "White conqueror" against which he can define himself and enact his personal and imperial power (Said, 1978). The oriental body, a "caricature of passivity" adopts a role of servitude and obedience mirroring that of the colonized territories of the idealized Orient (Fung, 1996).

Participants also discussed the important variable of power in the racially charged sexual encounter. Whether that power is brandished over the feminized oriental body, or harnessed and expropriated from the hyper-masculine Black body, racial fetishes operate "on notions of race and power [with] White guys wanting to dominate ... and earn [their] position of power" [API-7]. Numerous examples of enacted power were given by both men of color and White men, such as an experience recounted by a first-generation Filipino gay man who was told, after being mistaken for being Thai by a White gay man,

“I love Thai boys. You know when I went to Thailand they treated me like a king. The boys washed my feet” [API-7]. In this example, the intersection of sex, racism, and imperial power is undisguised: the White Westerner who traveled to Thailand found sexual gratification in exploiting the bodies of servile “boys,” in a physical and psychological enactment of his imperial power.

This sort of “*sexual tourism*” [API-7] was identified as another manifestation of sexual racism whereby the Asian body becomes the symbolic national body and the fetishized sexual pleasure is derived by acquiring “*notches in the bedpost*” [API-7] from around the world. Examples once again abounded, provided by both gay men of color and White gay men. One self-identified “rice queen” explained “*I used to say it was my goal in life to sleep with all cultures as my way of promoting world peace*” [W-6]. The same participant recalled saying during his first sexual encounter with an Indian man, “*‘Where are you from?’ and he was like ‘India’ and I was like, ‘cool,’ [because] I have worked my way through many cultures and I’m glad... because they’re all just a little bit different*” [W-6]. This particular manifestation of sexual racism is sometimes communicated directly to gay men of color intended as a form of sexual bidding:

He was White and he was a rice queen...He was mentioning all the different countries he had visited via having sex with men from those countries. So he had been to, he ‘had done... Vietnam,’ he ‘had done Thailand,’ he ‘had done India’ ... he had not done the Philippines and ... I remember in my head saying ‘well, you’re not gonna visit the Philippines through me’ [API-7].

Taking a closer examination of the White speaker’s words, what surfaces is the interchangeability of person with nation, e.g., he had “*done Thailand*” rather than a fellow human being. His discourse reflects a larger hegemonic struggle in which entire

nations are reconstituted in the form of the objectified Asian body and re-colonized during the sexual act, which is referred to by the word “*done*,” a word synonymous with defeat and conquest.

Race-Based Sexual Rejection

Whereas the sexual attractions of some White gay men appear to be defined by racial fetish or predilection, the opposing pattern of sexual aversion and rejection of the ethnic other was also reflected in the data. Virtually every gay man of color was able to offer examples of sexual rejection based on their race, whether communicated overtly, subtly, or ambiguously. The primary location in which many described experiencing this form of sexual racism was in personals ads in print and on the internet. One White participant shared the words of a Black friend who pointed out to him:

Next time you pick up the person to person ads, look at the number of ones that say “White male seeks same” or “Gay White male seeks same.” ...that’s more subtle than just “No Blacks” or “No Asians” or “No Latinos” ... And another friend of mine who’s Asian mentioned the same thing. He said he’s found a lot of the same things chatting online. [W-11]

Other participants substantiated the prevalence of racially exclusive personals ads by referencing the language established to communicate these preferences. The most commonly cited example was the phrase “*No Fats, Femmes, or GAMs [Gay Asian Males]*” used as the concluding line in some gay personal ads. Statements such as these position gay Asian men alongside those who fail to meet gay standards of beauty and masculinity, on the lowest level of the sexual hierarchy. These occurrences of sexual rejection are seemingly enabled by the anonymity of personals ads which allow individuals to verbalize racial aversions without fear of social rebuke.

Aside from exclusionary statements in personals ads, participants of color attested to the frequency of both explicit and concealed face-to-face race-based sexual rejections in the gay community. One Black participant explained,

A lot of times it comes in the form of guys saying who they won't date: they won't date Asians, they won't date Blacks...That's typical for the internet certainly, but I've seen it in public, I've experienced it in public, I've been told it in public. So people are very comfortable saying those things...there's nothing in the gay community that says that's wrong. There's nobody that'll say that's wrong. [B-5]

This participant's testament points not only to the existence of overt sexual rejection in live interactions, but also to the social acceptability of these communications in a community where no one says "*that's wrong*." Given these circumstances and the concomitant regularity of sexual rejection encountered by gay men of color, it was unsurprising to hear frequent, compelling testaments of the psychological repercussions of this form of sexual racism reported in the data.

I'd find all these hot guys that I wanted to hook-up with. They rejected me. They were saying, 'Oh, I'm not into Asians. You're not my type.' So it kind of led me to believe I was – I was horrible for my self-esteem. So I resorted to hooking-up with these older guys who, according to them I was available to them, I was okay. [API-2]

Encountering repeated rejection online and/or in person was described as psychologically detrimental particularly early on in participants' exposure to the gay community. In coming out, many gay men of color risk repudiation from their ethnic communities, only to be met by rejection in the most intimate contexts, by members of the same community they have risked so much to join.

This description represents one of a plethora of examples provided by participants regarding the psychological impacts of sexual racism. This key body of findings is explored in detail in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS II: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SEXUAL RACISM

Sexual racism has been established as a phenomenon existing since race was constructed as an instrument of hegemony in the early age of imperialism (Nagel, 2003b). It has been uncovered within a variety of populations and has served numerous political, socio-cultural, and personal functions. The present study focused on sexual racism occurring in the gay community of the Seattle metropolitan area. Within this frame, sexual racism was identified within several social locations including the internet, pornographic media, the gay club and bar scene, as well as within casual/anonymous sexual encounters, and romantic relationships. Within these spaces, sexual racism has taken different shapes, manifesting as ethnosexual stereotypes, racial fetishism, and race-based sexual rejection.

Having outlined the central characteristics of sexual racism and confirmed its salience in the gay community of Seattle, this chapter turns to the phenomenon's impact and sequelae. Each of the chief consequences of sexual racism which emerged from the data is discussed below organized within the thematic categories of internalized sexual racism, followed by decreased self-esteem, sexual repercussions, and the development of coping strategies.

Internalized Sexual Racism

Among the psychological impacts of sexual racism are the intra-psychic injuries

incurred cumulatively via interpersonal interactions, media images, language, expectations, and larger cultural institutions. Relentlessly bombarding the individual over time, these messages can become embedded in the mind, resulting in a resistant and self-sustaining oppression. This internalized racism is defined in the literature as “the acceptance, by marginalized racial populations, of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves” (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000, p. 255). Researchers in this area hypothesize that internalized dominant beliefs about the biological or cultural inferiority of minority racial groups can threaten the self-worth and self-efficacy of racially-stigmatized individuals, rendering them vulnerable to more serious psychological problems (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). In a compelling analysis of this “psychological slavery,” Akbar (1984) argues that internalized racism wounds not only on a psychological level, but on a spiritual level as well:

The slavery that captures the mind and incarcerates the motivation, perception, aspiration, and identity in a web of anti-self images, generating a personal and collective self-destruction, is more cruel than the shackles on the wrists and ankles. The slavery that feeds on the psychology, invading the soul of man, destroying his loyalties to himself and establishing allegiance to forces which destroy him, is an even worse form of capture. (p. 2)

Consistent with Akbar’s portrayal of the deleterious effects of internalized racism, the construct has been linked to a number of negative outcomes including poorer academic performance (Steele, 1997), alcohol consumption and psychological distress (Taylor & Jackson, 1990), and even metabolic abnormalities (Tull et al., 2005). Furthermore, a study investigating the impact of internalized racism suggested that higher levels of agreement with stereotypes about one’s ethnicity are predictive of both chronic health problems and psychological distress (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000)

Data collected in the present study suggests that sexual racism is subject to the same process of internalization as any other form of racism, and appears to wield the same psychologically and spiritually destructive power as that described by Akbar. Evidence of internalized sexual racism punctuated the interviews and focus groups, manifesting as sexual rejection of coethnics (i.e., members of an individual's own ethnic group), internalization of the ethnosexual hierarchy, ethnic disidentification, and intra-ethnic hostility. Each is explored below.

Sexual Rejection of Coethnics

A commonly cited consequence of internalized sexual racism, particularly among A&PI participants, was intra-ethnic sexual rejection or aversion. Participants referred to the low frequency and, in some cases, the inconceivability of coethnics dating one another, stating “*There's an unspoken truth that Asians should not date other Asians... 'Come on, give me a break! Asians?! No Asians would like other Asians!'* [API-9]. Reports of gay men of color who rejected or were not sexually attracted to coethnics - were ubiquitous in the data.

And I just meet a lot of men- and this is a Northwest phenomenon- some people say all over, but more so in the Northwest - that are Black or Latino or Asian or any other minority, who will not touch their own people with a ten foot pole but will constantly hound these White guys. [B-4]

People that looked like me... would always date White men. We weren't really interested in each other. I didn't really know how to put that into words, but I know now that it's obviously internalized racism.... You don't find a lot of Asian men who are into Asian men. [API-2]

In seeking an explanation for this phenomenon, one participant nominated the internalization of A&PI second-class citizenship:

I find it a lot more difficult to try to locate other Asians here who are also into Asians. Yeah, I feel like we were being categorized as second to White. A lot of Asians here have... internalized this kind of feeling. ' [API-9]

According to this view, as gay men of color internalize the dominant perspective of reality which places them in a one-down position in the ethnosexual hierarchy, they cease to independently determine their own self-worth and the worth of other men of color. Consequently, not only is the self devalued, but one's coethnic – a reflection of ethnic self – becomes quintessentially undesirable. This theme is consistent with Choi et al's (1995) research finding that nearly 70% of a San Francisco-based sample of Asian gay men reported a preference for White men. It also mirrors Phua and Kaufman's (2003) previously referenced research on internet personal ads which found that while only 8% of Asian gay men placed personal ads requesting "Asians only," nearly four times as many specifically requested "Whites only." Furthermore, Phua and Kaufman found the same trend of A&PI gay men evidencing higher rates of sexual rejection of their co-ethnics than Black gay men.

Internalization of the Dominant Ethnosexual Hierarchy

One of the original aims of this study was to explore the ethnosexual hierarchy in the gay sexual marketplace which had been alluded to in a pilot study (Plummer et al., 2005). The degree to which participants across all demographics independently concurred on the arrangement of this hierarchy was striking. Without exception, all participants agreed that on the ethnosexual hierarchy, "*White is king, trumps all*" [API-1] and Blacks are "*...always at the bottom of the totem pole*" [B-10]. In attempting to define a universal rule, one participant summarized the sexual power distribution in the

gay marketplace as “*the lighter your skin the more desirable you are as far as sexual partners*” [API-10].

Below the pinnacle position occupied by White gay men, participants described ethnosexual commodity status in descending order from “*Hispanics, then all the Asian groups, then probably African-Americans*” [API-3] or Black participants were largely in agreement with this estimation, identifying “*...definitely White European Americans first. I would say probably Hispanic or Latin, and maybe next...I would think African American and Asian American are probably the lower* [B-6].” Despite the ease with which participants of all racial backgrounds identified and concurred about this ethnosexual hierarchy, participants reported receiving no explicit communication about it and stated that they had never articulated their awareness of it before. In reflecting on this, one Asian participant lamented, “*...it’s really horrible that we informally know this as a collective people who live these things every single day, but I think that’s actually what happens*” [API-5].

A White aesthetic. Contrary to recent research pointing to a decreasing influence of White aesthetics on heterosexual African Americans’ perceptions of beauty (V. L. Thompson, 2006), a great deal of discussion among gay men of color centered on their own and their communities’ internalization of dominant standards of beauty. Participants voiced that this White aesthetic lay at the foundation of the ethnosexual hierarchy and could determine one’s sexual capital in the gay marketplace. Providing a highly specific example of these standards in operation, one Asian participant identified the characteristically White features which he finds attractive and longs for:

There's a lot of features in Caucasian people that I don't see so much in Asian people. Like their eyes, nose – they're features I really want, but I don't have, like different color eyes, and the nose that just makes me attracted to them more. [API-3]

The inherent contradictions of internalized sexual racism are apparent in this excerpt in which the speaker consciously reveres physical features which are clearly race-based and in opposition to his own phenotypic make-up. Another informant provided an example of the complex internal contradiction stemming from the dual positions of oppressed and oppressor:

I just hung out with my [Asian] roommates and their friends... and they were all bitching about 'oh, no body likes Asians.' But when they see a group of Asian guys they are like 'Ewww! So nasty looking! [API-2]

The standards of beauty dictated by the White aesthetic were collectively portrayed as insidious, powerful, and resistant to change despite intellectual awareness of their origins and harmful psychological effects. One participant reflected explicitly on the contradiction between his awareness of internalized oppression and his ongoing attraction to White men who meet those oppressive standards of beauty.

I remember even thinking at one point, God, you know, that whole body image and look is totally oppressive to me because of the way that I look. 'Cause I don't conform to it, but at the same time I am so turned on by it. ...I was definitely aware of it, and I thought 'oh man that's fucked up. But they [White men] are too hot.' [API-7]

One White informant pontificated upon the origins of gay standards of beauty, linking the “homo-normativity” of these standards to the prevailing forces of capitalism.

...in general I think in the United States [the standard of beauty] is the Abercrombie & Fitch boy. But I think homo-normativity also has everything to do with just this synergy of sexuality and Capitalism, and sexual minority culture in Capitalism... It has everything to do with being invested in individualism, and also a de-investment in political action and social movement, and...just kind of tacitly accepting how an infrastructure has been built for the gay community and just assuming that that again like came from nowhere and also that that doesn't have any sort of political ratifications.[W-1]

According to this analysis the marginalized gay community is exploited within the larger framework of capitalism. The forces of America's profit-driven economy and economy-driven culture colonize even the most personal and intimate spaces of the psyche where sexual attractions originate. By defining the parameters of desirability, the hegemony determines not only what is normative, but what is attractive, and furthermore what can evoke a physiological arousal response within the colonized mind.

Idealization of White Men. Both White men and men of color identified the existence of a subgroup of ethnic minority men who affiliate virtually exclusively with White men for sexual and social relationships. Succinctly expressed in the words of an Asian participant, *"because I had internalized a certain amount of racism... I would go for whatever was the most opposite of what I saw myself as. So that was generally an all-American Blond"* [API-7]. White participants also readily identified a subset of gay men of color who *"...all dream of having a White partner"* [W-12]. Some White participants who commented on this pattern contextualized it in terms of internalized sexual racism. Although the term internalized racism is not used explicitly in the following excerpt, the White speaker alludes to the ways in which gay men of color orient their attractions towards White men.

I have actually been tokenized for my skin and men have picked me out of a club of mostly people of color and they've come up to me and started dancing with me for what I thought and assumed to be my skin color.... I feel like there may be this ideal of... whiteness as being the pinnacle, the ideal. And being able to date that is something of luxury... From what I've seen, if an African American man is dating and he's not dating another African American, in my experience, he's dating a Caucasian. If an Asian man is dating and not someone who's Asian, it's a Caucasian man. [W-8]

This pattern of interracial dating particularly between White men and gay men of color was described repeatedly by members of both populations. Interestingly, there was a diversity of opinions expressed about this pattern, with some gay men of color defending often their own preference for White partners, while others identified and eschewed it as internalized oppression, accusing these individuals of “*trying to rise up the ranks*” [API-10]. White participants divided along the similar lines, with some relishing the racially-driven attention they received and others expressing discomfort at being “*tokenized*.”

A sizeable portion of the participants of color who verbalized their preference for White partners did so at some psychic cost. One Black participant who had underscored the importance of examining and questioning one’s own sexual attractions earlier in the interview, later disclosed:

“I’d say [I’m attracted to] Caucasians for the most part. When I am attracted to African American men they are usually not like the whole gangster rap kind of thing. They are more conservative.... But in terms of having a relationship with a Black man, I have always felt - and this is where I see my own racism - if I am with a Black man, I am lowering my standards. That is a horrible realization - to have that thought.”

[B-5]

Despite his intellectual awareness of internalized racism, he nevertheless experienced a sense of surprise and “horror” upon unearthing and verbalizing his internalized notion that dating a Black man was “*lowering [his] standards*.” This finding corroborates with Watts-Jones’ (2002) notion that internalized racism causes more than direct shame about one’s own race, but shame about experiencing shame. In this case, the participant - an administrator and direct service provider in a grass-roots organization serving people of color - was dismayed and disturbed at discovering the vestiges of racism harbored within his unconscious attractions.

Ethnic Distancing/Disidentification

As a result of countless experiences of race-based rejection and/or fetishization, some gay men of color report feeling that the only way they will find acceptance in the gay community is by distancing themselves from their own ethnicity. In the words of a Filipino key informant describing the early years of his experience identifying as a gay man, *“I was so assimilated into white culture at that point, that I walked around thinking I was this gay White guy. Asian was...just a part of me that I didn’t identify with ...I put it aside”* [API-2].

With regard to the relationship between ethnic disidentification and sexual racism, many gay men of color indicated that at least for some period of time in their identity development, they minimized their race specifically in order to attract sexual partners or avoid sexual rejection. Reflecting on his experiences with online personals ads, the same Filipino informant explained,

When I was trying to hook-up with guys who I thought were hot, who I felt might not be attracted to me, I’d leave out the Asian part, so that was interesting. I’d say, ‘black hair, brown eyes’ but I wouldn’t say Asian... I was horny, I just wanted to hook-up with a guy, I didn’t want him to say ‘no because I’m not into Asians.’ [API-2]

Taking a closer look at this participant’s words, we see evidence of ethnic disidentification as well as the specific function it served. The personal description he utilized in internet transactions was comprised of racially ambiguous information and intentionally avoided anything racially identifying. Notably, he indicated that this personal compromise was justifiable at the time because *“I was horny, I just wanted to*

hook up with a guy.” Furthermore, the amputation of his ethnic identity was warranted by the pain and frustration of racial rejection from which it might protect him.

Ethnic distancing is not only achieved via passive processes of denial and minimization, but through the very active process of assimilation. By displaying what Goffman (1963, p. 44) termed “disidentifiers,” e.g., wearing the clothing, adopting the language, and embracing the attitudes and beliefs of the majority, some gay men of color *“try to assimilate as much as possible, they dye their hair, they dress all Abercrombie...They try to be as White as they can be”* [API-3] in order to escape the stigma and stereotypes associated with their ethnicity. A Black key informant commented on this pattern within the community followed by his appraisal of the associated causes and consequences:

...when I see a young African American guy dressing like that⁸ and hanging out with [White] guys who dress like that...the first thought that pops into my mind is ‘he’s trying to be white.’ ...they see that that’s who’s valued, who’s appreciated, who’s in all the advertisements - so there must be something special about being part of that group or being White, for that matter. ...From my perspective it’s a loss of identity. You have to give up part of who you are to be a part of a particular group...there are some who do make the conscious decision that this is the group that I want to be a part of, so I have to cut off all of these things. I have to dress this way, I have to straighten or color my hair, I have to do all these things to fit in. [B-5]

This excerpt was part of a larger discussion of ethnic disidentification in which the participant explored the need felt by some gay men of color for validation and acceptance from an explicitly White gay audience who are perceived as symbolic gatekeepers to gay

⁸ Here the participant is referring to the clothing associated with the “Abercrombie & Fitch look.” This brand’s image is based on notions of an elite leisure class which is explicitly white. Advertisements for the label typically depict shirtless, tanned, white male bodies in reclining positions, insinuating the promise that those who wear the brand may gain access and entrance into these exclusive places of privilege (McBride, 2005).

identity. It is possible that as men of color pass through phases of immersion during gay identity development (Cross, 1971, 1991), they gravitate towards the quintessential ideal of “gayness” which is universally portrayed as *White* gayness. Ironically, in their efforts to integrate and validate their gay identity, this compromise results in further fragmentation of one’s identities as gay men of color jettison their ethnicity in favor of their sexual orientation. By constructing their identity in opposition to their ethnicity and applicable racial stereotypes, gay men of color end up defining themselves in relation to the same racial schemas they intend to resist or escape.

Intra-ethnic Hostility & Competition

Ethnic disidentification manifests not only within individuals, in the forms of ethnic minimization and assimilation, but between coethnics in the form of intra-ethnic hostility. This phenomenon was referenced frequently by Asian participants as a widespread problem within the Asian gay community, but only once by a Black participant who offered a singular encounter with equivalent intra-ethnic hostility. This discussion, therefore, will focus on the experience of intra-ethnic hostility between Asian gay men.

According to the vast majority of Asian participants, there is a striking amount of dislike, distrust, and even disgust among gay Asian men. One participant summarized and simplified his observations of this hostility by stating that “All the Asian[s]...they all dislike one another” [API-3]. This pattern was often depicted occurring within sexually-

charged social spaces such as gay clubs and bars where Asian gay men described a desire to separate themselves from their coethnics:

...all along the back wall, that's where a lot of the gay Asian men would congregate...So I would walk around there and there'd be the "Ugh!" as you walk past. And quickly I'd circle around to the front of the bar...because I don't want to necessarily be associated with them...I didn't want to feel like I'm very visibly limiting myself and lumping myself in with this group [API-7].

In this quote the participant who had recently moved to Seattle from an area of the country with a very small Asian population, reveals the sense of dread and antagonism ("Ugh!") he experienced while merely in physical proximity to other Asian men in a gay club. This participant avoided associating with other Asian men for fear that he would be "very visibly limiting" his sexual capital, confining it to the ethnosexual stereotypes associated with Asian men.

Another participant disclosed his deliberate rejection of coethnics as friends or associates because of the hostility he had encountered in the past.

I don't know if I should say that I just don't associate with gay Asians anymore but I'm very particular in really seeing the actions and the interactions, interpersonal relationships develop before I will invest time with other gay Asians. It's probably not that healthy an attitude but ...I usually try and see first of all, if they're going to hit on my boyfriend- if they do that then just break off all ties...I also just look to see how they interact with other gay Asians, ...if there's a sense of cattiness involved, I don't want to deal with that...[or] that sense of competition. [API-10]

In this passage the themes of intra-ethnic dislike, distrust, alienation, and competition are laid bare. Furthermore, this participant's reluctance to form relationships with other gay Asian men speaks to the self-perpetuating nature of intra-ethnic hostility, with perceived antagonism in others leading to further perpetration of hostility originating in the self.

Explanations for intra-ethnic hostility made reference to a sense of competition between coethnics over a limited pool of available “Rice Queens” or other White gay men who might be persuaded to partner with an Asian. Characterizing the marketplace as a zero-sum game, Asian participants stated that:

hostility...towards other Asian men...would link up to a lot of the internalized racism that was always there at the core, which is: this is my small little bit of value that I'm claiming for myself - that this system is offering to me...And if it means that I have to fight with you for it, then I will. [API-7]

When sexual resources in the form of prized White men are seen as limited, and one's sexual worth is perceived as dependent upon and determined by their sexual interest, intra-ethnic distrust, competition, and a desire to distinguish oneself from rivals is inevitable. Placing gay Asian men in a larger societal framework, we see that they are devalued within their ethnic community due to their sexual orientation, devalued within the gay community due to their race, and furthermore, marginalized and oppressed in the larger American culture due to both aspects of their identity. This denigration of coethnics has been examined through a post-colonial lens by Osajima who concluded, as did the participant quoted above, it is a direct consequence of internalized racism (1993). The phenomenon has been referred to as “defensive othering,” a process of denigrating and defining oneself in opposition to one's coethnics as another form of ethnic disidentification (Schwalbe, 2000, p. 422).

Some Asian participants – both those who actively harbored dislike of coethnics as well as those who actively combated intra-ethnic hostility – were able to articulate the negative implications of this phenomenon. The most compelling concern was the way in

which intra-ethnic hostility reproduces the power structure, placing the instrument of oppression in the hands of its victims.

If the rice queens ... see us propping up the system like that and fighting one another then ... I would see them being really happy by that because it means that they could have any of us that they wanted, that it's up to them to pick. [API-7]

Rivalry among coethnics, according to this participant, which confirms the notion of the “prized” White partner, exacerbates the already skewed power distribution in the gay marketplace according to the laws of supply and demand. Aside from this concern, participants noted the deleterious effects of hostility within their community:

Where does that animosity come from between different queer people of color, especially gay men of color? ... Why do you hate me? We are supposed to be a group. You know, there's already a division between gay men, lesbians, and transgender individuals, and you know between Caucasian gay men... why do you even want to divide it more? Why? [API-3]

This emotional plea came from a participant who had described the support and psychological healing he experienced when he was finally able to establish a gay Asian social network. After years of feeling isolated and without a sense of community or social support, this participant clearly understood the detrimental impact of within-group hostility, creating further fragmentation within an already fractured LGBT community.

Decreased Personal Self-Esteem

Previous studies utilizing a stress and coping framework have demonstrated that experiences of discrimination lead to internalized racism which is predictive of lower self-esteem and impaired psychological functioning (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Mirroring this link in the literature, participants of color suggested a very similar

pathway between experienced sexual racism which is then internalized, resulting in decreased personal self-esteem. While sharing an account of multiple race-based rejections encountered on internet personals sites, a Filipino participant expressed that,

I just started getting a sense of myself, or - it's weird even articulating it in this way – but, of my value. And measuring that against this ideal that I would see in aggregate that was accumulated based on reading all these [personal] ads. And that ideal was generally everything that I wasn't. And so...my value...was sort of smaller in comparison...Whatever those internalized racist messages were that I'd been imbibing since birth, I guess it was somehow linking up to this, and sort of confirming them in a way that I don't think I was consciously aware of. It's like, I don't know, you're not as good. [API-7]

Compounding the devaluation of self resulting from cumulative exposure to subtle manifestations of sexual racism, overt race-based sexual rejection coupled with racial fetishization can serve to persuade the individual of the legitimacy of their low self-worth:

I just came to believe that again - talking about that sense of value - that I was only valuable to rice queens, that I was only attractive or desirable to a very small subset of gay men and that that's was I needed to put up with.. [API-7]

Here we see the internalized belief that one has limited appeal in the gay marketplace, valued only in the eyes of the White racial fetishizer. This Asian participant also alludes to a subsequent impact of this devaluation of self: the belief that as a gay man of color, he must “*put up with it*,” that is, compromise his own ambitions, attractions, and hopes, in order to be merely tolerated by his only sexual audience of White “*rice queens*.”

The sense of sexual devaluation and worthlessness was sometimes so significant that even in the face of evidence to the contrary, these corollaries of internalized sexual

racism prevailed. One Black⁹ key informant provided a personal example of his self-devaluation, underscoring the resistant nature of internalized sexual racism:

I will go right to the heart of the issue for you because I struggled with being sexual...with men - being comfortable in expressing my sexuality. I felt like I just wasn't good enough. And when I would meet men that were attracted to me I always felt like, 'Okay...there's got to be something wrong with them.' ... and if I did attract somebody who was quality or who was attractive, who was smart and all that, I am like, 'I don't deserve this.' [B-6]

This participant explained that when he is in relationships with White men, he can't “completely trust people. Trust is hard for me, I cannot see myself ever getting into a relationship like: ‘I am 100% yours.’” He went on to attribute his pattern of relationship-sabotaging behaviors which destroyed a series of relationships with White men to his low self-esteem, sense of unworthiness, and concomitant lack of trust.

Etched into the psyche through chronic exposure to sexual rejection and objectification, low personal self-esteem can contribute to the development of severe negative affect and psychological distress. In the most severe example within the data, an Asian participant described his descent into suicidality facilitated by internalized sexual racism and self-loathing. It is useful to contextualize this extreme case by considering that this participant reported having been “*rejected by people for being Asian, for not being smooth and skinny, for not being a total bottom,*” and reported,

...a lot of instances in meeting people where they don't even give you the time of day because they would never consider sleeping with you...it could be they're not into Asians, they don't like rice. I've also had instances where people have had an attitude where I should be happy that they've allowed me to sleep with them, because they wouldn't normally sleep with someone... who had my facial features and my ethnicity. And I

⁹ This participant self-identified as Black during screening but described himself as biracial during the interview.

should just shut up, enjoy that I'm allowed to service them and thank them for the opportunity. [API-10]

According to this participant, experiences such as these, accumulated over time led to

... a crazy time where I was really self-hating. I actually remember one night when I was so depressed after probably my second suicide attempt, where I basically broke down and said 'I wish I was never born Asian.' I hate the challenges, I hate that it took me four times as much effort to meet people as opposed to a Caucasian gay person... And I want more out of a relationship [API-10]

The deeper this individual's internalized sexual racism embedded itself, the more he "domesticated" his own oppression (Freire, 1999). Transcending psychological distress, this participant's desire to actualize his self-hatred in suicide reflects a profound wounding of the spirit.

Sexual Sequelae

Some of the most personal and difficult disclosures made during data collection involved the impact of sexual racism on the actual sexual encounter. Gay men of color volunteered memories of devastating sexually racist comments made during intercourse and ventured beyond these overtly racist experiences to explore the variety of ways in which internalized sexual racism impacts their sexual behavior and ability to experience sexual pleasure.

Participants described the sexual impact of ethnosexual stereotypes whether directly articulated, or tacitly enacted with sexual partners. Extreme examples included one South Asian American's recollections of anonymous White partners repeating phrases such as "'Oh yeah, give it to me Aladdin!'" and "'yeah, love that dark meat'"

noting that “*I start[ed] losing my erection after that*” and “*I was so horrified by it! That doesn’t turn me on*” [API-1]

While these overtly racist incidents are memorable and compelling, the data suggest that the most common sexual impacts of sexual racism occur within the psychology of men of color as they interpret, deconstruct, negotiate, and react to each interracial sexual encounter they enter. Asian gay men described a variety of beliefs and expectations about interracial sex. Those who had “*bought into the whole notion of Asians readily being submissive*” stated that they “*played that role for years*” until some of them “*...woke up and realized that’s just bullshit because I can do both*” [API-6]. This quote introduces the theme of self-imposed sexual restrictions which ran through many participants’ narratives. In the previous quote the participant describes restricting himself from being a top due to internalized ethnosexual stereotypes. In other cases, the self-imposed sexual restriction served as “*an act of resistance*” [API-7].

I automatically assumed that anybody who’s interested in me wanted to fuck me for those reasons [“Asianness as docileness”] and so I deprived myself of the pleasures of bottoming for a really, really...long time, and think it was only literally... last year...that I fully embraced it, which is messed up from a sexual pleasure point of view. [API-7]

This participant highlights the contradiction of restricting his own sexual repertoire in order to avoid validating the stereotype of The Asian Bottom at the expense of his own sexual pleasure. Black gay men viewed the question of bottoming for White men through a historical lens, noting the symbolic implications of sexual positioning.

... it’s a feeling for some of [my friends] and I...if I let a White man penetrate me I’m letting him get away with something that he’s not supposed to be getting away with. Considering the implications of slavery and genocide... and what it means to me. And so that’s just one thing I won’t go for... [B-4]

According to this perspective, when the sexual encounter is seen as a microcosm of sociopolitical and historical realities, real or perceived power differentials during sex can come at significant psychological costs. As this participant expanded on bottoming for White men, he noted *“this unspoken thought that...if we let a White guy fuck us, it’s taking away our manhood. It’s emasculating us in some way... And I’m not saying that’s a healthy way of thinking... but I don’t know if I’ll ever get past that”* [B-4]. In these excerpts, the participant highlights the symbolic sacrifice inherent in bottoming for White men given the legacy of slavery. Interestingly, however, by restricting his sexual repertoire in order to resist White dominance and protect his manhood, he sacrifices his own sexual freedom and endows White men the right to impact his appraisal of his own masculinity.

The personally and politically complicated nature of interracial sex was described as another negative consequence of sexual racism. Participants lamented the thought processes that preoccupied them during interracial sexual encounters as they interrogated meanings, intentions, and implications. Drawing them out of the moment and into their analytic mind, the high cognitive demand associated with some interracial sexual situations directly interfered with Asian and Black participants’ ability to be emotionally present during sex. As one participant noted, he wonders what ethnosexual fantasies are being played out during sex, and, *“what the other person is thinking.”* He then begins to ask himself,

Do I go on with this, or do I not? And what are the consequences of each? [If I stop] I won’t get off. Damn, I really want to get off. But I don’t want to give him the satisfaction of...the whole notch in the bedpost thing: “Yes, now I’ve been to the Philippines, now I

know that I don't have to go to Thailand to have Asian boys treat me this way because I can find them here." [API-7]

Resolved to never fulfill a White partner's fantasy of The Submissive Subservient Asian and unwilling to allow his body to be used as a conduit for colonialist fantasies of conquering a weaker nation, this participant feels he must hyper-vigilant of the power dynamics in each sexual encounter.

Responses to Sexual Racism: Development of Coping Strategies

Given the compendium of negative consequences resulting from sexual racism, it comes as little surprise that many gay men of color struggle to cope with its often subtle, ambiguous, and internalized manifestations which render it an intangible target. Overall, the data suggested that gay men of color developed more effective coping strategies as they passed through various phases of sexual identity development (Cass, 1979b). This close tie between identity development and positive coping appeared attributable to a number of factors all of which deplete psychological resources needed to effectively cope with sexual racism encountered in the gay community including: 1) the high degree of stress typically experienced early in identity development when coming out, 2) the racial/ethnic isolation that is often experienced as gay men of color enter the gay community, 3) the related lack of social support and access to empathic others who can validate one's experience of sexual racism, and 4) the task of establishing one's gay identity which newly identified gay men of color may believe hinge on sexual acceptance by White gay men.

One participant described the extremely stressful early period in his gay identity development highlighting the destructive coping mechanisms he utilized in attempts to avoid the sense of isolation and objectification he so often felt:

I know that there was a part where I was very destructive to myself. There was this big need to fit in, in any and every situation I could find regardless of what it was. It basically broke me down to the point where I engaged in a lot of dangerous behaviors- unprotected sex, group sex, drugs, alcoholism, things that I would never ever get involved with. But I think...just dealing with all the stress and racial stereotypes broke down my will so much that I didn't really care. And even if I knew what I was doing was not healthy, I saw it was a step to being accepted into the gay community because that's how they acted, so that's how I'll act as well. And I basically did have to reach rock bottom in order for me to bring myself out....Just thinking back about what I did to myself, I'm lucky to be alive." [API-10]

This participant's description of resorting to risky behaviors in order to be accepted into the gay community parallels Wilson and Yoshikawa's (2004) qualitative examination of responses to social discrimination among A&PI gay men. Among their findings, the authors determined that A&PI gay men turned more frequently to "self-attribution" coping mechanisms (e.g., attributing the cause of discrimination to oneself and attempting to alter oneself to reduce the likelihood of further racism by reducing/eliminating indications of difference) in response to stereotypes regarding sexual passivity and submissiveness within the gay community. It also appeared that acts of discrimination occurring in private, without a witness or the availability of "ethnic backup" were more likely to result in self-attribution. Interestingly, when the sample was divided into sexual risk takers vs. no/low risk takers, risk takers overwhelmingly reported self-attributing responses to discrimination. Taken together, A&PI men who internalized the blame for the racism they experienced were willing to place themselves at greater risk in order to attract sexual partners.

Another participant in the current study echoed Wilson & Yoshikawa's findings in his disclosure of the risky, self-destructive coping mechanism he employed in the face of internalized sexual racism:

I just struggled meeting men...I think the nature of the struggle was I felt that I didn't have a lot to contribute, I didn't feel I was desirable, I don't know - I just did not like myself. And I didn't feel comfortable meeting men, I felt uncomfortable going to gay bars and I ended up getting into a whole crazy world of sexual addiction. It was just horrible...[B-6]

This quote reveals the speaker's willingness to risk his physical and emotional health via "sexual addiction" as a function of internalized sexual racism. Feeling undesirable, the participant turns to the sexual attentions of others as a source of self-esteem and worthiness eventually spiraling into a pattern that "*started monopolizing a lot of my time, and that's when I realized, boy, I have major issues here and I started going to meetings and seeing a therapist*" [B-6].

Gay men of color who had more years of experience navigating the gay community and/or had strong social ties with coethnics or other gay men of color were able to recount experiences of sexual racism but responded to them with greater resilience. Being grounded in a social support network that validated both their sexual and ethnic identity, these individuals reported minimal impact, e.g., "*...it kind of gets on my nerves*" [B-4]. One participant offered his own explanation for his resilience in the face of sexual racism:

There are so many persons of color across the board who seek approval from White folks, who don't feel that they have arrived until White people pay attention to them. And, you know, I guess I'm different in that sense 'cause that doesn't matter to me. I don't seek that approval...because I know who I am and I don't need someone else to validate that. But, I know that there are a lot of gay men of color who need that kind of validation - particularly from White men. [B-5]

This participant appears to have developed a grounded sense of his self worth that endures regardless of the approval, attention, and validation of White men. This puts him in a position where his self-esteem, intra-ethnic affiliations, and sexual experience are protected from the sometimes devastating effects of sexual racism. For this participant, the endpoint of this evolution brought him to a place where he is now “*very much less likely to date White men.*” This response of sexual self-segregation to sexual racism was reported by a number of gay black men. The conscious decision to only date men of color, and/or the realization that one is no longer attracted to White men often arrived after repeated negative experiences with White partners. Those who consciously avoided partnering with White men often perceived their choice as an act of resistance representing a reclaiming of sexuality from the White gay authority. Sexual self-segregation also appears to protect against future exposure to sexual racism as it decreases the venues in which gay men of color might encounter sexual racism.

Perhaps the most frequently cited effective coping mechanism described by gay men of color was the establishment of a supportive network of other gay or queer people of color. Unfortunately, this was also depicted to be a very difficult task in the Seattle area. Participants noted the lack of geographic and social cohesion in communities of color, expressing both appreciation and frustration during focus groups as they met other gay coethnics, lamenting, “*Why did I not ever know these guys before coming to this room?*” [API-6]. While the majority of participants of color had formed their own informal social support network of gay men of color, a few had discovered social and political organizations exclusively for queer people of color. These participants

discussed the important role these organizations played as sources of validation and acceptance, enhancing both personal and group self-esteem.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The current study was an exploratory investigation of sexual racism within the gay community in which it has been identified as a unique stressor by gay men of color (Boykin, 1996; McBride, 2005; Plummer et al., 2005). Grounded theory methodology was selected as little empirical research has addressed this phenomenon in the gay community and no research has examined its psychological impact. Data was collected via interviews and focus groups from 46 participants, comprising 15 A&PI, 12 Black, and 19 White self-identified gay men residing in Seattle, Washington.

Participants described sexual racism occurring in virtually all venues of erotic significance including the internet, pornographic media, the gay club and bar scene, casual/anonymous sex, and romantic relationships. It was described as more a more prevalent issue in Seattle compared to other urban areas of the U.S.. The ways in which sexual racism manifested within these locations parceled into three domains: ethnosexual stereotypes and their respective ethnosexual role expectancies and gender performances, racial fetishization, and race-based sexual rejection.

Participants of color identified internalized sexual racism, decreased self-esteem, and psychological distress as the primary psychological consequences of sexual racism. Internalized sexual racism was described as the acceptance/endorsement of ethnosexual stereotypes and hierarchy, adoption of the White gay aesthetic and concomitant idealization of White gay men, as well as acquiescence to racial fetishization. The

behavioral consequences of internalized sexual racism included 1) sexual rejection of coethnics, 2) ethnic disidentification, and 3) intra-ethnic hostility/competition.

Participants also brought to light the detrimental impact of sexual racism on sexual pleasure and flexibility resulting from 1) offensive verbalizations of sexual stereotypes or expectations during sex, 2) unconscious or intentional restriction of sexual repertoire, and 3) disruptive and troubling cognitive and emotional processing experienced in cross-racial sexual situations.

Participants of color described a variety of responses to sexual racism and its consequences. Some men of color turned to self-attributive coping mechanisms (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004), attempting to minimize their ethnic difference to avoid sexual rejection. For some this was accomplished via ethnic disidentification as noted above. Others, however, reported engaging in overtly self-destructive behaviors (e.g., substance use, unsafe sex) in order to gain acceptance from their White gay counterparts. These coping mechanisms were reported more frequently by men who had fewer years of experience negotiating the gay community and who had not yet developed a social network of supportive similar others.

Despite the apparent pervasiveness and significant psychological toll of sexual racism, many participants developed effective coping strategies which mitigated its effects. Effective coping responses included 1) establishment of social ties with other gay men of color who could validate their experience and provide empathic social support, 2) decreased exposure to sexual racism by consciously selecting “safe” locations (e.g., clubs/bars with a larger contingent of color), and 3) partnering with other gay men

of color. These coping strategies identified by gay men of color generally mirror the literature on effective coping mechanisms utilized by members of oppressed groups (Meyer, 2003; Watts-Jones, 2002). This literature identifies personal level coping responses including acceptance of one's identity, development of relationships with supportive significant others¹⁰, creating a "chosen family" of supportive others, and increasing social support. They also point to group-level coping responses such as the establishment of alternative community-level structures and values that enhance the group's status and individual members' self-esteem; and increasing group cohesion such that group members are more likely to seek and find validation and acceptance from supportive others.

Theoretical and Research Implications

These findings have theoretical import in understanding the experience of gay men of color, and outline areas in need of further research. Central themes with theoretical implications are discussed below, along with related implications for research. Finally, a working model is presented incorporating themes identified in the current study with extant theory and research.

Unique racial dynamics in gay communities. The collected narratives point to quantitatively and qualitatively distinct racial pressures operating in the gay community

¹⁰Although research exploring the effectiveness of each personal coping mechanism is lacking, one study has demonstrated a cross-sectional association between relationship status and self-reported stress: being single was positively associated with dysphoria, stress concerning HIV/AIDS, and sexual orientation conflict (Lewis *et al.*, 2001).

in Seattle. Participants estimated that compared to the heterosexual community, their gay community was more racially stratified and exhibited higher rates of sexual racism. They also pointed to the uniquely sexual basis of racial stereotypes in the gay community. Finally, participants revealed a skewed set of social norms operating in the gay community which allow greater expression of sexual racism than in the heterosexual community. These dynamics resulted in some gay men of color feeling their race was a more salient and often limiting aspect of their identity within the gay community than elsewhere. Both men of color and white men acknowledged that while ethnosexual dynamics and sexual racism are present in non-gay communities, they seemed more prevalent in their interactions with the gay community. It is also noteworthy that despite participants' description of racial dynamics in Seattle as distinctly challenging, all agreed that these racial dynamics were not specific to the region: "*It's everywhere I've lived, and I've traveled a great deal for work, and almost every city I've been in, I've seen it. So it's not specific to any particular area, it's all over, it's everywhere [B-5].*" The reported ubiquity of these racial dynamics in gay communities across the United States should be assessed in future research.

Racial differences in the experience and impact of sexual racism. The current study makes a unique theoretical contribution in having collected qualitative data on sexual racism in gay communities from multiple racial and ethnic groups, facilitating identification of cross-racial variations in experience. The data revealed key differences in the psychological impact of sexual racism reported by Asian and Black gay men, such that Asian gay men generally reported a greater impact of sexual racism on self-esteem

and psychological distress than did Black gay men. This difference is likely due to the polar ethnosexual stereotypes associated with each group. Pigeonholed as passive, submissive and feminine, East Asian gay men are stripped of sexual capital and forced to engage in a restrictive feminine gender performance (Han, 2006) within a largely masculine-biased and misogynistic gay marketplace (Edwards, 1994; Taywaditep, 2001). Conversely, ethnosexual stereotypes casting Black gay men as hyper-masculine, hyper-sexual, and endowed with genitalia of “mythic” proportions – inflate Black gay men’s sexual capital while simultaneously reducing them to “walking sex organs” worthy only of short-term, self-gratifying investment by White men (Boykin, 1996, p. 216).

It is important to contextualize these polar stereotypes against the backdrop of dominant racial stereotypes in U.S. society which typically place A&PI individuals above other racial groups. The stark contrast in the valence of A&PI racial stereotypes versus A&PI ethnosexual stereotypes also explains why sexual racism is experienced as particularly stressful form of racial discrimination by A&PI men and less so by Black men who are typically devalued by racial stereotypes. On a theoretical level, these different ethnosexual mythologies in the gay community would be expected to establish quite divergent social environments for A&PI versus Black gay men, which, in turn, influence the likelihood of adverse mental health effects.

Given the important differences identified between sexual racism experienced by A&PI and Black gay men in this study, it is clear that future research on sexual racism must avoid ethnic gloss by examining the phenomenon within specific racial and ethnic contexts. Similarly, findings from the current study should not be blindly generalized to

other racial or ethnic groups who face their own unique forms of sexual racism.

The role of sexual capital in the gay racial hierarchy. Complicating this distribution of sexual capital in the gay marketplace and its reported psychological consequences is participants' consummate consensus that Asian men are above Black men in the racial hierarchy of the gay community. In a community described by its members as highly sex-oriented why are Black gay relegated to the "*bottom of the totem pole*" [B-10] if they hold greater sexual capital? Left unexplained by participants, theoretical clarification may be found within the larger American racial hierarchy in which Asians are afforded "model minority" status, and perceived as holding greater economic and cultural capital. While Asian gay men hold less sexual capital than Black gay men, the value allocated to Black men is generally circumscribed to their sexuality, rendering them appropriate only for brief, casual, and anonymous sex-focused encounters. Asian men, however, who bear greater cultural and economic capital, and present less threat to White gay men's masculinity (Fung, 1996; Han, 2006) may be perceived as more suitable for dating and long-term relationships than their Black counterparts. These hypotheses should be addressed in future research concerning the racial and sexual hierarchies operating within gay communities.

An Emergent Hypothesis

Integrating the data collected in the current study, a working model emerged which incorporates the relationships between many of the themes identified above. Before turning to this model it is essential to reiterate that the purpose of grounded theory is to arrive at hypotheses which can be validated using other methodologies. The

proposed model, therefore, is not intended to reflect what has been demonstrated in the current study, rather, to represent relationships suggested by the data or speculated based on extant theory and research.

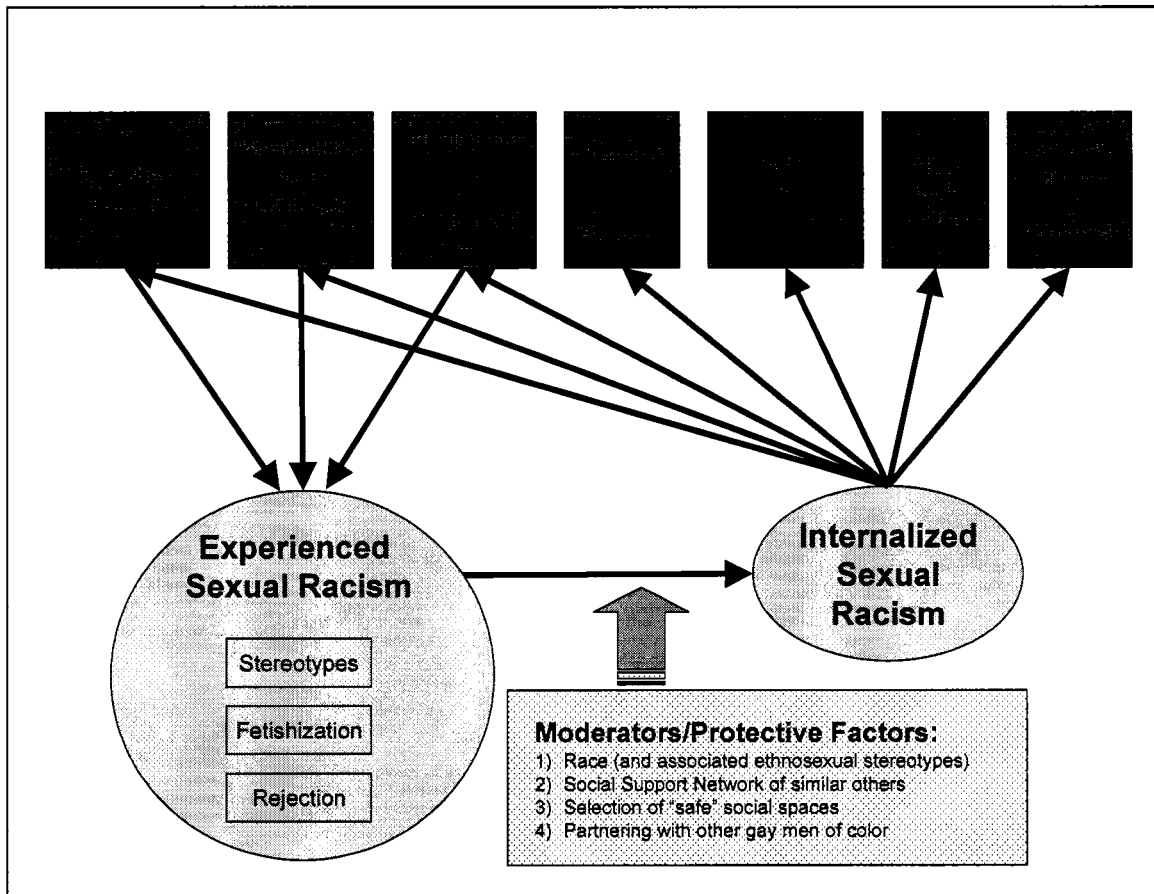


Figure 1. Proposed model of the self-perpetuating process of internalized sexual racism and its sequelae.

This model focuses on the relationship between experienced sexual racism (manifesting as ethnosexual stereotypes, racial fetishization, and racial rejection), internalized sexual racism, and the manifestations/consequences of internalized sexual racism. Based on current findings and Williams and Williams-Morris' (2000) research on the internalization of racism, it is hypothesized that repeated experiences of sexual racism

reinforce associations between gay men of different races and ethnosexually-biased thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. Based on the findings of this study as well as theory on internalized oppression (Lipsky, 1987; Speight, 2007; Walters, 1998), it is hypothesized that this internalized sexual racism then influences an array of internal variables (i.e., self-esteem, idealization of White men and a white male aesthetic, group identity attitudes) and external behaviors (i.e., assimilation into the dominant gay community, sexual rejection of coethnics, intra-ethnic hostility, ethnic disidentification). Some of these sequelae of internalized sexual racism, namely low self-esteem, assimilation into the White gay community, and idealization of White men and the White aesthetic are hypothesized to increase actual exposure to sexual racism by either placing gay men of color in closer proximity to potential White gay perpetrators, or, in the case of low self-esteem, increasing the chances of resigning to sexually racist situations and relationships.

While this hypothetical model points to a self-perpetuating cycle of internalized sexual racism begetting vulnerability factors for further internalized sexual racism, it also suggests the moderating effects of various protective factors and coping mechanisms identified in the present study. Included within this category are a number of coping mechanisms identified by participants as well as in the general literature on coping with oppression, including: 1) race, which was discovered to play a key role in determining the emotional toxicity of experienced sexual racism, 2) development of a social support network of similar others, 3) selection of “safe” social spaces, and 4) partnering with other gay men of color.

This model integrates speculation with knowledge from a variety of sources,

methodologies, and populations and therefore must be tested by quantitative methods. Measures exist for many of the included variables, although it should be noted that these measures have not always been validated within this population. Other variables, including idealization of White men/White male aesthetic and intra-ethnic hostility have not been developed to the researcher's knowledge and would need to be developed in future research.

Clinical Implications

Clinicians and counselors working with clients who inhabit the margins of multiple identities should always be aware of the paramount importance of not only their clients' immediate social environment, but also the larger socio-political environment constantly impacting their lives. The current study underscored how sexual and racial marginalization within the gay community can result in mental health vulnerabilities for gay men of color. The isolation so often experienced by gay men of color can lead to intense motivation for social connection and intimacy in any form available. This unanswered longing leads some to continue exposing themselves to exploitative, oppressive, and emotionally or physically damaging situations in hopes of achieving momentary acceptance and belonging.

In order to mitigate these patterns, clinicians working with gay men of color must continually assess and address their clients' exposure to stressors associated with their marginalized identities. This includes the sexual racism that occurs in the more private contexts of clients' lives and may be more difficult for clients to bring up in therapy.

When sexual racism is raised as a concern by a gay client of color, clinicians are urged to take an idiographic approach remembering that each client's perception and experience of sexual racism is different, as are their psychological resources and responses. When clinicians help their clients explore the meaning their own experiences and determine their own related psychological vulnerabilities and needs, they become a source of empowerment rather than yet another embodiment of hegemony. In the same way, while it appears that social support from gay coethnics may be an important protective factor from the adverse effects of sexual racism, therapists are advised to take a position of helping their gay clients of color to determine for themselves what social connections are or would be supportive versus destructive. Furthermore, by politically contextualizing discriminatory experiences, clinicians can help their clients see sexual rejection and/or fetishization as a result of sociopolitical dynamics. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood that clients will personalize their experiences, internalize the blame, and engage in less-effective self-attributive coping responses.

The current study does present a challenge to former research which has cast incorporation and assimilation into the larger gay community as a significant protective factor for gay men's mental health (Hays, Turner, & Coates, 1992). Glossing over the racial minority identity and experience of men of color in the gay community, this earlier line of research advises clinicians to encourage gay men – regardless of their ethnic background – to integrate into the larger gay community to access social support and group resources. The narratives offered by participants of color in the current study, however, suggest that assimilation into the largely White gay community and the often

associated loss of connection with one's ethnic community may be less useful and perhaps even harmful for gay men of color. It is also important to point out, however, that given gay A&PI participants' reports of intra-ethnic hostility, it is unclear if social connections with gay coethnics would be beneficial at early stages of identity development. It is the opinion of this author that structured social interactions occurring in what Watts-Jones (2002) termed "racial sanctuaries" (e.g., gay A&PI support groups and organizations) would be beneficial in providing opportunities for positive intra-ethnic interactions and mitigating hostility occurring in White-dominated social spaces of the larger gay community.

Strengths and Limitations

A number of key strengths and limitations of this study merit mention.

A narrow sample. Representing both a strength of the study as well as a limitation, the sample was restricted to A&PI and Black gay men living in the Seattle metropolitan area. This delimitation allowed for a more nuanced analysis within these two racial groups and facilitated a deeper contextual analysis of the Seattle gay marketplace. At the same time, these restrictions cost the researcher the ability to examine sexual racism experienced by other racial groups who are typically under-represented in research. Furthermore, given the substantial variations in experience found between the two racial minority groups included in the study, generalizations cannot be made to other racial/ethnic groups. In addition to the narrowness of the racial groups selected for study, it should also be noted that despite theoretical sampling efforts,

the A&PI sample was fairly young in age, the oldest member of which was 47 years old. Future research with under-studied ethnic groups and older cohorts is called for.

Researcher's outsider status. The researcher's identity also presents both strengths and limitations to this research. As a lesbian, the researcher holds personal knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of sexual minority identity and experience. At the same time, the researcher's race and gender present possible hindrances to the research. The power and trust dynamics inherent to cross-racial interactions are likely to have inhibited key informants' openness and comfort in talking with a White researcher about sensitive racial dynamics in dating, relationships, and sexual encounters. Furthermore, the researcher's female gender may have inhibited key informants' willingness to share intimate details of their encounters with sexual racism as doing so would have required them to break social norms about cross-gender communications regarding sex.

Participants' benefit from research design. One related strength of the study is that the researcher followed the suggestion of key informants in withdrawing from her originally planned role as co-facilitator of focus groups. This change allowed focus groups to become safer spaces for participants – “within-group sanctuaries” of maleness and ethnicity (Watts-Jones, 2002). Aside from assuring richer data, the within group sanctuary potentiates participant storytelling, which can serve “a powerful psychic function for minority communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 43).” Because members of marginalized often internalize blame for their experiences, storytelling – particularly in groups – can break the silence, reveal that others have similar experiences,

and reduce participants' sense of alienation (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Through storytelling, hidden forms of discrimination can be named and, once named, can potentially be combated.

Deeper understanding of a under-studied population. As previously discussed, there is a dearth of literature occurring at the crossroads of race and sexuality. The present study presents an important contribution to the literature in this area as it sheds light on a venue of interaction in which racial dynamics are enacted and often magnified.

Concluding Thoughts

While the most intimate and pleasurable experiences can occur in sexual contexts, they can also become sites of political significance and struggle, unconsciously co-opted or intentionally exploited as symbolic battlegrounds for racial or imperial dominance. Participants representing different races, ethnicities, ages, phases of identity development, and levels of economic privilege provided compelling descriptions of such sexual racism. A distilled understanding of this phenomenon emerged from their diverse perspectives shedding light on its various locations, manifestations, and impacts. Participants underscored the ubiquity of an entrenched ethnosexual hierarchy operating in the gay marketplace and gave voice to its influence on the determination of sexual capital and the formation of sexual desire, fantasy, and behavior. Despite the destructive potential of sexual racism which is heightened by the emotionally vulnerable milieu in which it manifests, many gay men of color demonstrate remarkable resilience. By establishing a social sanctuary comprised of similar others, and resisting sexual racism's

external and internal manifestations, these individuals have managed to heal and protect their sense of sexual and general self-worth.

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**APPENDIX A:
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR QUOTED PARTICIPANTS**

Participant	Age	Ethnicity (if specified)	Number of Years identified as Gay
API-1	32	South Asian/Indian	20
API-2	27	Filipino	7
API-3	21	Taiwanese	3
API-4	22	Asian American, unspecified	2
API-5	25	Asian and Pacific Islander	7
API-6	44	South Asian/Indian	21
API-7	34	Filipino	16
API-8	28	Asian American, unspecified	20
API-9	29	Asian American, unspecified	6
API-10	29	Asian American, unspecified	10
API-11	47	Asian American, unspecified	25
B-1	21	African American	7
B-2	25	African American	Unspecified
B-3	26	African American	8
B-4	29	African American	11
B-5	35	African American	13
B-6	37	African American and White	34
B-7	42	African American	Unspecified
B-8	54	African American	40
B-9	50	African American	50

Demographic Information for Quoted Participants continued:

B-10	50	African American	30
W-1	30	White, mixed European	10
W-2	29	White	5
W-3	55	White	35
W-4	21	White	21
W-5	33	White	18
W-6	42	White	24
W-7	44	White	17
W-8	21	White	8
W-9	36	White	10
W-10	38	White	14
W-11	44	White	24
W-12	40	White	25

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide – Gay White Men

- 1) **Identity:** How do you see yourself or describe yourself? How central or not central is this (are these) identity(-ies) to your life?
- 2) **Partner preferences:**
 - a. **Self:** What kind of person are you attracted to? Do you have any preferences like body type, age, job, race, etc.? How are your preferences different if you're looking for a hook-up versus a relationship? Are you currently dating/in a relationship/partnered? What sort of relationship do you currently most want: casual dating, committed relationship, open relationship, domestic partnership?
Prompts:
 Ask about any preferences they haven't brought up, e.g., race, body type, age, political philosophies, education, SES, top/bottom/versatile. How are your preferences different when you're looking for dating versus sex?
 - b. **Others:** How about other gay men of color that you know?
- 3) **Finding partners:**
 - a. **Self:** How do you go about finding a partner: e.g., Bars or clubs? Through mutual friends? On the internet? And how do you avoid attracting men who don't fit the preferences you're looking for?
 - b. **Others:** How about other gay men of color that you know?
- 4) **Racial dynamics in the gay community:**
 - a. **Self:** What, if any, racism have you seen operating within the gay community? Have you noticed any differences in general race dynamics in the gay world versus the straight world?
 - b. **Others:** How about gay men of color that you know?
- 5) **Racial dynamics in sexual contexts:**
 - a. **Self:** Some of our participants have talked about how race factors into dating, sex, and finding the right guy. What have you noticed about this? Have you ever dated or had sex with someone outside your race? What was that like? What was the response from the rest of the gay community?

- b. **Others:** Are race dynamics apparent on the internet, e.g., community or dating websites? Have you noticed any sexual stereotypes or myths about different races in the gay community? When attractions are based on racial/ethnic characteristics, are they preferences just like build and hair color, or something more?

6) Sexual racism in the gay community:

- a. How has race been a factor in your dating and relationship experiences?
- b. How does race or racism come up in sexual situations (e.g., clubs, bars, baths, party/sex lines, or sex parties?)
- c. What have you noticed about racial dynamics while cruising on internet websites, clubs, and bars?
- d. What sexual stereotypes have you noticed in the gay community about different races/ethnicities?

Prompts:

- i. expectations about sexual position preference (top/bottom/versatile)
- ii. which ethnic groups are expected to initiate sex?
- iii. Which ethnic groups are more likely to use protection or “be clean”?
- iv. Which ethnic groups hold sexual power, etc?
- e. How and where do you see these stereotypes portrayed – where do they show up? (e.g., media, porn, personal fantasies, sexual interactions, gay travel ads)?
- f. Are and of you or your friends exclusively into hooking up with men of color?
- g. When it comes to attraction, is finding someone attractive because of their race the same thing as finding them attractive because of other characteristics like body type, or are racial preferences a form of racism?

- 7) **Outlook on the future:** Do you see the gay community becoming more or less racially divided? How do you feel about this? Do you have any thoughts about how the situation could be improved or if things are the way they should be?

Interview Guide – Gay Men of Color

1) Identity

- a. How do you see yourself or describe yourself?
- b. How would you prioritize the various aspects of your identity, or, in what order of importance would you place your various identities?
Prompts: sexuality, ethnicity, religion, occupation, etc.

2) Partner preferences:

- a. **Self**: What kind of person are you attracted to? Do you have any preferences like body type, age, job, race, etc.? How are your preferences different if you're looking for a hook-up versus a relationship? Are you currently dating/in a relationship/partnered? What sort of relationship do you currently most want: casual dating, committed relationship, open relationship, domestic partnership?
Prompts:
 Ask about any preferences they haven't brought up, e.g., race, body type, age, political philosophies, education, SES, top/bottom/versatile.
 How are your preferences different when you're looking for dating versus sex?
- b. **Others**: How about other gay men of color that you know?

3) Finding partners

- a. How do you go about finding specifically a sexual partner?
Prompts: Internet, Gym, bars/clubs, through friends?
- b. And how is this different than how you go about finding a longer-term relationship?

4) Racial dynamics in the gay community:

- a. Could you say more about your experiences as (Black, Asian) men in the gay community?
- b. Have you noticed any differences between being (Black, Asian) in the gay world versus straight spaces?
- c. What sort of racism have you encountered within the gay community?
- d. Do you see ways in which your race/ethnicity impacts or relates to your sexuality?

5) Experiences of sexual racism in the gay community:

- a. How has race been a factor in your dating and relationship experiences?
- b. How does race or racism come up in sexual situations (e.g., clubs, bars, baths, party/sex lines, or sex parties?)

- c. What have you noticed about racial dynamics while cruising on internet websites, clubs, and bars?
- d. What sexual stereotypes have you noticed in the gay community about different races/ethnicities?

Prompts:

- i. expectations about sexual position preference (top/bottom/versatile)
 - ii. which ethnic groups are expected to initiate sex?
 - iii. Which ethnic groups are more likely to use protection or “be clean”?
 - iv. Which ethnic groups hold sexual power, etc?
- e. How and where do you see these stereotypes portrayed – where do they show up? (e.g., media, porn, personal fantasies, sexual interactions, gay travel ads)?
- f. What have your dating or sexual encounters with White men been like?
- g. What about experiences with men from other ethnic backgrounds?
- h. What sort of responses have you noticed from your social group when you date men within or outside your own ethnic group?
- i. Are and of you or your friends exclusively into hooking up with men of color?
- j. When it comes to attraction, is finding someone attractive because of their race the same thing as finding them attractive because of other characteristics like body type, or are racial preferences a form of racism?

6) Impacts of sexual racism:

- a. How does racism in the larger gay community impact gay communities of color?

Prompts:

- i. Competition between gay men of color for white men
 - ii. Divisions between gay men of color
 - iii. Internalized racism
- b. How have challenges specific to being a person of color in the gay community affected you in general?
- c. How have these experiences affected you? (behaviors, emotions and how you feel about yourself?)

Prompts:

- i. drug/alcohol use
 - ii. high-risk behaviors, e.g., unprotected sex?
 - iii. depression
 - iv. social anxiety
- d. Do you think your encounters with “sexual racism” have had an impact on how you feel about yourself?

7) Coping/resilience:

- a. How have you personally responded to the issues we've raised today including sexual racism?
- b. What has helped? What hasn't helped?
- c. Do you feel supported by other Asian gay men or gay men of color? Do you feel connected to a community of color and if so, Is there a sense of cohesion in your community?
 - i. If not, why do you think there isn't a sense of community?
 - ii. What do you think needs to happen?
- d. What sort of community-level response would you like to see? Should it come from within the community or from the white gay community?

APPENDIX C: HISTORICAL & THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Race and Racism in the United States

Race relations in the United States have been fraught with injustice, tension, and conflict since the nation's inception. As dynamic aspects of society, conceptualizations of race/ethnicity and manifestations of racism have transformed over the course of the nation's short history, reflecting changing political, social, and economic circumstances. In this section, I briefly review the historical course of racial injustice and the dominant contemporary theories from the social sciences regarding racial construction and modern forms of racism.

Racism Throughout U.S. History

Racism in the Nation's Past

Racism arrived on the shores of this country with the original White European conquerors and colonizers. Native Americans were the first to suffer its detrimental effects in the form of genocide on their own land and were followed by African natives who endured over three-hundred years of legalized slavery. As other ethnic groups immigrated to this country, they faced similar manifestations of racism, both blatant and indirect. While each of these groups will be examined under the historical lens, the current discussion begins with the experience of Black Americans as the color line dividing Blacks and Whites remains the most stable and recognized ethnic boundary in American society.

A cursory look at our nation's history of dominative¹¹ racism including enslavement, exploitation, devaluation, and unequal treatment of Blacks brings many reasons for the Black-White racial binary into sharp focus. From the initial period of European colonization until passage of the thirteenth amendment to the US Constitution in 1865, Africans abducted from their native lands as well as their descendants were legally enslaved. The thirteenth amendment symbolized a change in the particular manifestations of discrimination deemed legal, but did little to expand Blacks' restricted access to social or political power, to establish equal treatment, or to influence the perceived role of Blacks in the U.S. at the time. While developments in sociopolitical spheres during the past four decades have managed to improve some facets of Black experiences and Whites' reported attitudes and beliefs (Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985), Blacks remain the quintessential representation of the ethnic Other within the dominant White psyche.

Lifting the veil of this binary paradigm of race, a multitude of other oppressed ethnicities, colors, and ancestries becomes visible. These peoples have been racialized as American Indians, Latinos/Hispanics, Indians, and Asians¹². Within each of these categories, hundreds of meaningful ethnic and cultural distinctions exist. In this country, however, given the function of differential racialization,¹³ such intra-group distinctions would have complicated the structuring of power in favor of Whites. This meant that

¹¹ Explicit, intentional, and blatant racism that typically takes the form of overt behaviors or verbalizations.

¹² Later discussion will address the inadequacy of these constructed categories

¹³ Differential racialization has been theorized to propagate conceptualizations and stereotypes of different ethnic groups in the service of shifting needs of a society (such as requirements of the labor market or wartime economy)

despite the varied experiences and cultures of émigrés of color prior to arriving in the US, Whites perceived them simply as “colored” or “racial minorities” and treated them accordingly. Some egregious examples of these groups’ consequent second-class citizenship include:

- 1850: Chinese gold miners in California were forced to pay a “Foreign Miner Tax.” Some Chinese miners who objected and refused to pay the tax were physically attacked and murdered. Chinese miners tried to go to court to demand equal treatment but at the time, California’s laws prevented Chinese immigrants from testifying against Whites in court.
- 1887: The Dawes Act, which supposedly protected Indian welfare, was passed. Subsequent misappropriation of the Act by the very government agents sent as its administrators resulted in massive reductions in recognized Indian nation lands.
- 1942: President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, forcing some 120,000 people of Japanese descent living in the US out of their homes and into internment camps. The US justified their action by claiming these individuals posed a threat to national security. Half of those forced into camps were children.
- 1954: A government policy referred to internally as “Operation Wetback” deported 3.7 million Mexicans from the US in violation of their civil rights (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).
- 2001: Congress passes the Patriot Act and implements the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System requiring all nonimmigrant men over the age of 16 who are from a list of 18 Muslim countries, North Korea, and Eritrea to register in person at Immigration and Naturalization Service offices where they are fingerprinted, photographed and assigned a registration number. If those targeted do not report to the INS by the assigned deadline, or if they fail to check in regularly with the government every year thereafter, they risk deportation.

Current Dimensions of Race and Race Relations

Various social psychological studies have demonstrated that over the latter half of the 20th century, and particularly since the civil rights movement, a positive trend has developed regarding the self-reported attitudes and beliefs of White Americans regarding people of color (e.g., McConahay, 1989; Nail, Harton, & Decker, 2003). For example, contemporary national surveys reveal that White Americans overwhelmingly endorse the principles of racial equality and integration (Schuman *et al.*, 1985). These include

increases in support of integration in schools, public transportation, jobs, and housing, as well as support for interracial marriage (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004b).

Despite these notable changes in the nation's social and legal status quo, nearly every social indicator attests to persistent and significant disparities in the quality and quantity of opportunities and obstacles between different racial groups. Researchers have demonstrated that people of color lead shorter lives (Statistics, 2003), receive worse medical care, exemplified in statistics regarding the rising disparity in infant mortality rates among ethnic minorities compared to White Americans (Jenkins, 2001), complete fewer years of education, occupy more menial jobs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and represent a disproportionate percent of the prison population (Harrison & Beck, 2003). Research also demonstrates that the median family income for Blacks is less than two-thirds that of Whites, and this gap has been growing since the 1980's (Blanks, 2001). It therefore comes as little surprise to discover that if indexed as a nation, Blacks in this country would come in twenty-seventh in the world in terms of social well-being, and Latinos would rank thirty-third (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

To explain the apparent inconsistency between self-reported attitudes regarding race and continual racial inequalities, many researchers argue that while self-reported attitudes and beliefs are changing, underlying negative attitudes about racialized minority groups persist. Referred to variously as symbolic, modern, and aversive racism, these subtle and often unintentional biases unfortunately have demonstrated affect on their keepers' behaviors.

Symbolic and modern racism. The theories of symbolic racism (Sears, 1998) and modern racism (McConahay, 1989) both maintain that racism exists widely among Americans due to early socialization experiences. According to these theories, the forms and manifestations of today's racism are more subtle and indirect than those in the past due to changed social norms that proscribe the overt expression of prejudicial or racist attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. Symbolic and modern racists acquire traditional and conservative White American values and beliefs (e.g., individualism, the Protestant work ethic/meritocracy, boot-strapping, and self-reliance), which then contribute to biases against ethnic Others who are perceived as violating these norms. Individuals who exhibit these racial biases would not consider themselves to be racists because they do not consciously hold blatant race-based prejudices or stereotypes. They assume their thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors reflect social facts and real-life observations. Nevertheless, these subtle and insidious forms of racism can be equally – if not more – pernicious than the dominative racism by which they were preceded.

Aversive racism. Similar to symbolic and modern racism, the theory of aversive racism underscores the deeply embedded nature of racism in American culture and posits that it is indelibly written into the socialization experiences of every generation of Americans. Aversive racists typically sympathize with victims of past injustice, align with the principle of racial equality, and believe themselves to be unprejudiced political liberals. At the same time, their early and ongoing socialization experiences leave residual negative feelings and beliefs about ethnic Others which are typically unconscious, or if conscious, stir considerable psychic conflict/cognitive dissonance. This

residue is theorized to cause feelings of discomfort, uneasiness, disgust, and sometimes fear in the presence of an ethnic Other (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004b). These internal correlates of aversive racism link with observable external behaviors including greater physiological arousal to the touch of a Black versus a White person (Nail et al., 2003), and preferential treatment of other Whites when an ambiguous context provides rationalization of such behavior (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996).

Understanding Race: Social Constructionism and Critical Race Theory

Important changes in race relations across time have been paralleled by changes in theory regarding race and racism. Perhaps the greatest paradigm shift in the study of race has resulted from the development of social constructionist theories of race which have proliferated during the last 30 years. More recently, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has begun to impact the ways in which race and racism are studied in academia. Both of these theoretical developments will be briefly examined in this section.

Social Construction of Race

From the social constructivist perspective, an individual's race and ethnicity is completely contextual and dependent upon the positionalities of social Others. Racialization is seen as a dialectical process that emerges from the interaction between individuals and those with whom they interact. Existing racial hierarchies and systems of power influence not only who gets to do the sorting, but which ethnic categories are available in a society to be sorted into (Nagel, 2003a). An individual's ethnicity is therein

a negotiated social construct rather than biological fact. In this sense, one's race and ethnicity is as much the property of others as it is one's own.

The constructionist model argues that biographical and biological characteristics such as skin color, native language or facial characteristics are the visible correlates of race and ethnicity, rather than their essence. An individual's race or ethnicity is not biological in any social sense; it is a socially negotiated, constructed fact (Nagel, 2003a)

Racial and ethnic constructions are inevitably imbued with meanings and stereotypes: Japanese are hard-working while Mexicans are lazy; Germans are rational whereas Jamaicans are emotional; Muslims are prudish and Blacks are promiscuous. All of these meanings and stereotypes are determined by locations, i.e., geography, temporal and political context, and one's own positionality. This positionality reflects one's subjective view of his/her ethnicity and one's perspective given the physical correlates of race/ethnicity. Additionally, positionality is defined in relation to Others, that is, how Others perceive one's ethnicity and interact with its social meanings.

In summary, social constructionist theories of race suggest that the US racial pentagon of Black, brown, yellow, red, and White comprises completely fictive, constructed categories that are deeply imbedded in America's history of racial essentialism used to support hegemonic systems of power. As social construction is a theoretical framework within which the current research effort is based, we must simultaneously acknowledge the arbitrary and artificial nature of racial categories and suspend our disbelief in them in order to consider the experiences of those existing along ethnosexual frontiers.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory sprang out of legal studies in the 1970's and soon entered a wide interdisciplinary field spanning sociology, economics, history, psychology, ethnic studies, Women's studies, Queer studies, and political science, to name a few. While originally applied to the analysis of race and racism in legal processes, today it is used to understand issues as diverse as IQ achievement testing, globalization, and rejection of Affirmative Action programs.

Given its wide application, it is little surprise that CRT is a dynamic movement, constantly being refined and even re-defined by the many academic perspectives working at its forefront. Although this makes CRT difficult to pin down in a single definition, there exist a number of tenets central to the theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001):

- Racism is ordinary, not aberrational
- Racism serves the interests of both White elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically)
- "Races" are the products social construction rather than the result of biology, genetics, or any other objective, inherent characteristics (i.e., social constructionism).
- Dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as major wars and job availability (i.e., differential racialization).
- No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity. Rather, we all exist within the intersections of multiple identities – ethnic, professional, sexual, relational (i.e., intersectionality & anti-essentialism).
- Because of their unique experiences with oppression, people of color have a unique presumed competence to speak about race and racism.
- CRT contains an activist dimension that tries not only to understand but to change our social situation

Aside from these assertions, CR theorists also point out the role of structural determinism in race dynamics as well as racism-related research and theory. Structural determinism refers to the power of modes of thought (e.g., cultural ideologies) or widely shared practices (e.g., language) in determining significant social outcomes, usually

without our conscious knowledge. For example, while there are numerous forms of racism (e.g., intentional, unconscious, institutional), there exists only one term to describe all of these in the common lexicon: racism. According to the theory of structural determinism, the structure of our language – in this case, the distorted and misleading simplicity of this singular term – can actually limit individuals' ability and likelihood to conceive of the complexity and subtleties of racism. This typically results in an overly simplistic conceptualization of racism such as a Klu Klux Klan rally or overt hate-speech. Similarly, the common lexicon can diminish the capacity of recipients of racism to comprehend and communicate about their experiences.

In part due to the limiting structure of our language in describing experiences of oppression, critical race academics often employ the strategy of storytelling, counter-storytelling, and the analysis of narrative to challenge the myths, presuppositions, and unquestioned wisdoms that make up the common culture (Nagel, 2003a). By engaging in these processes, critical race researchers aim to create spaces in which new language can be created and silenced voices can emerge.

Relevant to the current research area, CRT and its academic relatives (e.g., Queer Theory) have also examined psychological/affective dynamics of oppression and privilege as well as the role of sex and sexual orientation in the construction of minority racial status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p. 83). Some of this work will be reviewed in chapter 3.

Sexuality and Sexual Minorities

Similar to race/ ethnicity, sexuality is typically construed as a timeless, “natural,” and objective fact. Yet history and cross-cultural research have demonstrated that categories of sexuality are malleable over time and within individuals. So how can such a complex concept be concentrated into a singular definition? Is sexuality best understood as a behavior, an identity, or a desire? And what constitutes “having” sex, versus “doing” sex, versus “being sexual?” Answers to these questions differ across temporal, cultural, racial, social class, and even academic contexts. A further obstacle to defining sexuality at the outset of a qualitative study is the potential for the researcher’s personal history and related expectations and bias to inadvertently influence the entire research process. Preconceived notions, definitions, and parameters of sexuality are likely to limit the discussion of sexuality with participants and lead to misinterpretation of the data. It is therefore with caution and acknowledgement of my subjectivity that I offer the following working definition with the expectation that it will change and grow over the course of my research: sexuality is understood as erotic desires, practices, and identities as well as any aspects of personal and social life which have erotic significance. Sexual minorities are understood as those individuals whose sexuality places them in a disempowered positions in society. In the current sociopolitical context, sexual minorities would include those who have same-sex attractions and/or engage in same-sex sexual practices.

*Understanding Sexuality: Theoretical Foundations**Social Constructions of Sexuality*

The multitude of variations in our understandings of sexuality all attest to its social construction. Just as race and ethnicity can be understood as boundaries dividing populations into hierarchically organized categories based on characteristics such as skin color, language, geographic location, or religion, sexuality is understood as the product of similar constructions. In the case of sexuality, however, the criteria for categorization can include types of sexual partners (e.g., same and/or other gendered, older or younger); degrees of sexual activity (e.g., celibate, active, promiscuous); sexual practices (e.g., monogamy, fetishism, sado-masochism); and sexual identities (e.g., gay, bisexual, lesbian, straight, transgendered). Furthermore, across almost all studied societies, there have been hegemonic sexualities that delimit socially approved sexualized body types (e.g., by size, musculature, skin color, age), approved kinds of sexual desires for approved numbers and types of sexual partners (e.g., opposite-sex attraction in a monogamous relationship with a same-raced partner), and approved styles of sexual activity at appointed times and places (e.g., post-marital, vaginal-penile intercourse in the home; (Nagel, 2003a). While some of these categories and distinctions are deemed insignificant within a given social context, others are construed as both evocative and meaningful. Almost ubiquitously, the emotionally charged differences in sexuality have given rise to social disapproval, stigma, discrimination, conflict, and violence across many societies.

A History of Sexual Constructions in Western Societies

While same-sex attraction and sexual behavior has been documented within a wide-range of societies and historical periods, the present discussion will begin at the moment when “homosexuality” was first conceived as an identity. Michel Foucault has identified the first written reference to a homosexual identity in an 1870 medical journal in which physician Carl Westphal argued those who experience “contrary sexual sensations” do not simply have different sexual practices but are *essentially* different from other men and women (Foucault, 1978, p. 43). Whereas prior to this time homosexuality was considered only an act or behavior, subsequent to this turning point, individuals who engaged in (or in some cases were merely suspected of engaging in) same-sex sexual behavior were bestowed an identity that was subject to judgment and discriminatory treatment. This characterization is found in subsequent accounts of “the homosexual” in scientific texts of the late 19th and 20th century. Perhaps the most influential of the early texts was Krafft-Ebings’ *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1894) which linked “the homosexual” to mental illness, emotional shallowness, and the inability to maintain relationships.

Interestingly, Freud’s position on homosexuality differed from those of his contemporaries in Europe and the U.S. Freud’s exploration of possible environmental factors contributing to homosexual orientation (e.g., weak fathering, fear of castration, narcissism, and attachment to the mother) demonstrated his constructivist perspective to sexual orientation. Freud also maintained that homosexuals should not be treated as sick individuals, and pointed out that many of the most admired scholars of his time were

homosexual (Freud, 1962). In a published letter to an American mother asking him to treat her son, Freud stated “homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as illness” (Freud, 1951). After his death, however, his psychoanalytic successors criticized and revised his theory, settling on a pathological model of homosexuality (Isay, 1989).

This pathologizing theory of homosexuality prevailed within the psychoanalytic tradition, and continued to impact the dominant American culture in which same-sex desire and non-heterosexual identity was almost always defined as moral defect, personal struggle, or psychological crisis (Nagel, 2003a). In stark contrast to the sexual hegemony of the times, Kinsey’s research program on the diversity of human sexuality in the 1940s and 50s, suggested a distinction between sexual behavior and identity (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & P, 1953). Kinsey et al. noted that the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual” are “of value only because they describe the source of sexual stimulation, and ... should not be taken as descriptions of the individuals (Kinsey et al., 1953, p 446-447).” Though his research had little initial impact on the essentialized characterization of homosexuals in wider American culture, it did create a doorway through which passed many psychological and sociological examinations of sexuality. These studies documented both “normative” heterosexual behavior and “deviant” sexualities including homosexuality, prostitution, and unconventional sexual practices (Nagel, 49). In the process of exploring sexuality, the majority of studies during this era of research defined the boundaries of normative behavior and ossified rather than

challenged heterosexuality, further marginalizing and pathologizing non-heterosexual behaviors and identities.

It has taken decades of pioneering social-constructivist research and critical academic movements, along with changes in the sociopolitical context ushered in by the civil rights movement to begin shifting the dominant paradigm for understanding sexuality. Only during the past 10-15 years has the constructionist perspective on gay, lesbian, and bisexual identities become a dominant paradigm of study.

Queer Theory

Arising from the social-constructionist texts of Judith Butler in the late 1980s and 90s, queer theory (QT) posits that all identities (not merely gay and lesbian identities) are dynamic and do not determine the entirety of one's Self. QT suggests that analyses of "gay men," "Asian Americans" or any other group are meaningless and reductionistic. Rather, QT advocates for idiographic analyses of the particular amalgamation of identities and elements represented in a single person.

Out of Butler's work come the ideas of performed and performative aspects of sexual expression. To understand this differentiation, consider the myriad ways in which sexuality and race are embodied and enacted. On one hand they can be expressed in the way individuals dress, talk, sit, style their hair, or by the conversations they initiate. These conscious, intended, and explicit aspects of sexual and racial expression constitute performed sexuality and race. Conversely, sexuality and race can also be produced and enacted in subconscious, unintended, and implicit ways, such as in unspoken approval of others' normative performed expressions of race, or via assumptions and expectations of

one's own and others' sexual practices. These performative aspects of sexuality and race are often only noticed when rules, assumptions, or expectations are broken, or when we find ourselves ill-at-ease around non-normative others.

While performed aspects of identity are often much easier to identify and critique, performative aspects can often be the more deep-rooted, stable, and therein, pernicious form of socially-sanctioned sexual and racial expression. To provide a more concrete example of performative aspects of gay Black men, for example, consider how they might differently negotiate their physical proximity to white men on a dance floor (where conversation is not an option) versus at a café (where conversation would be the typical form of social interaction). This one example illustrates how their presentation and performatives of their identity maintain their place and role in the largely White gay community. Queer theorists have coined the phrase “performativity stress” to describe the particular stress put on the individual whose sexual or racial expression is subconsciously, tacitly, and habitually constrained and controlled in this fashion (Nagel, 2003). Social performances directed by performative orders put great strain on an individual – strain that is invisible to others and often inaccessible or unidentifiable to the individual. The research and writing on performativity stress represent just one small area of study in a growing multidisciplinary exploration of the challenges faced by sexual and racial minorities.

Sexual Racism in Ethnosexual Frontiers

There is no more potent force than sexuality to stir the passions and fan the flames of racial tension. (Nagel, 2003a, p. 255)

Ethnicity and sexuality join together to form a barrier to hold some people in and keep others out, to define who is pure and who is impure, to shape our view of ourselves and others, to fashion feelings of sexual desire and notions of sexual desirability, to provide us with seemingly “natural” sexual preferences for some partners and “intuitive” aversions to others, to leave us with a taste for some ethnic sexual encounters and a distaste for others. (Nagel, 2003a, p. 1)

Race, ethnicity and sexuality all occupy powerful and often dangerous territories through which virtually all humans pass. Where these territories metaphorically meet exists what Nagel has termed “ethnosexual frontiers.” Examining these borderlands we can see how race and sexuality intersect and interact, and how they each define and depend upon one another’s meaning and power. We see how race can be embedded within sexuality and sexuality implied within race, e.g., the pattern of sexualized images of different races; myths concerning the sexual prowess, submissiveness, and appetite of various groups; the hypersexualization of Latin and Black individuals contrasted with the hyposexualization of Asian men. We see how ethnosexual spaces (and their inhabitants) can be reviled, eroticized, or exotified. They are socially and, in some cases, legally regulated or restricted, and yet they are constantly penetrated by individuals developing real or fantasized sexual links with ethnic Others.

While the most personal, intimate, and sensual experiences can occur in these locations, they are simultaneously highly politicized sites, fertile for eruptions of physical and psychological violence. Though ethnosexual spaces have the power to overcome and

even heal inter-group and/or historical wounds, they also can be co-opted and exploited as battlegrounds by sexual imperialists. Much of this depends on the type of ethnosexual crossing that occurs: What are the power dynamics? Who instigated the interaction? On whose ethnic “territory” and terms does the sexual interaction take place? Nagel (2003) has described four broad types of ethnosexual travelers whose territorial crossing result in different consequences for those involved and their communities: She defines ethnosexual settlers as those who establish very long-term or permanent relationships across color or ethnic divides, often involving the formation of families, religious conversion, or language change. Closely related are ethnosexual sojourners who enter into brief or longer-term sexual/romantic relationships only to return later to their own home communities. In contrast, ethnosexual adventures tend to jump ethnic boundaries in their sexual engagements for a brief “taste” of the exotic, always returning quickly to their own ethnic territories. Finally, ethnosexual invaders are those who wage sexual warfare via rape, sexual assault, or seduction across color lines.

While some of these traversings are more legitimated (or even encouraged) within certain social contexts, others are either formally or informally forbidden. In all of these cases, however, sexual racism – intended or unintended – can proliferate.

Ethnosexual Frontiers in World History

To understand the ethnosexual locations in which my research will take place, it is paramount to first examine their history. For thousands of years, power struggles between races and ethnicities have been fought in the proverbial bedroom. Throughout documented history we find examples of state-sanctioned ethnosexual invasion in the

forms of rape both within and outside the context of war, sexual enslavement of ethnic Others, and overly-sexualized images of ethnic Others in government propaganda (Nagel, 2003a). During the centuries of European imperialism, entire nations could be eroticized, exoticized, or defiled. European colonizers and tourists filled scientific journals and sensationalist newspapers with tales of men who “sported gigantic penises and women [who] consorted with apes (McClintock, 1995, p. 255).” Foreign lands and ethnic Others became objects “onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears (McClintock, 1995, p. 255).” There exist so many other similar examples and accounts throughout world history that entire volumes have been devoted to them.

Ethnosexuality and Sexual Racism in the American History

A full discussion of ethnosexuality and sexual racism throughout history is outside the scope of this paper. However, to understand the meaning and experience of ethnosexuality and sexual racism in the present American context, it is crucial to consider some of the prevailing ways in which race has been sexualized and sex has been racialized in the nation’s past. This history begins even before the nation’s founding when European colonizers characterized indigenous men and women as sexual savages who engaged in “primitive” and “lurid” sexual acts (Nagel, 2003a). This portrayal served two purposes: it both justified further colonization and genocide of a “morally inferior race”, and created an allure for future, mostly male, European emigrants.

Variations to this characterization exist as well. After the Indian Wars in the eastern states, Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia at the time, proposed that

miscegenation between Whites and Indians be encouraged through the use of marriage tax incentives and cash stipends (Wright, 1994). Thomas Jefferson also followed suit by asking Americans to “let our settlements and [Indians] meet and blend together, to intermix, and become one people (Hodes, 1999, p.11).” Deeper inspection, however, reveals strategic impetus behind these exceptions: by promoting intermarriage, White politicians hoped to prevent further Indian uprisings and violence. While no legislation in favor of miscegenation was passed in either case, interracial coupling was apparent, and by the time of the American Revolution, somewhere between 60,000 and 120,000 people of “mixed” heritage resided in the colonies (Cruz & Berson, 2001).

Although there were similarities in the sexual racism to which Native Americans and Africans/African-Americans were subjected, slavery not only intensified, but significantly altered the meaning and experience of sexual racism. Perhaps the most heinous form of institutionalized racism in the US, slavery implied not only forced physical labor, but forced sexual servitude in many cases. Characterizations of Africans as oversexed, immoral, and uncivilized served the power structure well, given this state of affairs: it was possible at once to defend slavery and camouflage the reality of White sexual domination and mistreatment including virtually institutionalized rape, breeding programs, sexual servitude, and castration (Nagel, 2003). While the European/White imperialist agenda was justified by stereotyping all racial Others as morally inferior, early White slave owners and traders quickly recognized the utility of propagating the specifically sexual variant of these myths. It became quite lucrative for slave traders to market their human capital as “oversexed savages” who would breed easily (producing

more slaves) and enthusiastically offer sexual satisfaction to the White men who bought them (Nagel, 2003).

While this type of sexual racism was overwhelmingly denied, ignored, and suppressed, many thinkers of the time were well aware of its pervasiveness and long-term consequences on the American psyche. Thomas Jefferson, who maintained a sexual relationship with one of his slaves, Sally Hemings, noted in his own journal:

The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unrelenting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it . . . The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved in such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who permitting one half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the amor patriae of the other . . . (Jefferson, p. 162-3)

The inner struggle implied in this passage reflected Jefferson's own personal contradictions and hypocrisy: after he died, Sally Hemings was listed as part of the slave inventory of his estate. His predictions, in this sense, proved true both for himself and for his country. From long before the time of his own presidency, through the emancipation proclamation and 14th amendment, and through the civil rights movements, the political venue of sexual racism has remained open and well utilized for the protection of the hegemony.

Ethnosexuality from the Past to the Present

Throughout our past, color lines have been traversed frequently by ethnosexual invaders and adventurers who have been unlikely to be penalized or stigmatized for

having sex with ethnic Others. These individual social anomalies persist unimpeded because ethnosexual adventurers and invaders are in some cases unofficially approved of, or in other cases, can keep their border crossings a secret or deny their liaisons (Nagel, 2003a). US laws and society have historically attempted to prevent ethnosexual sojourners and settlers from establishing officially recognized relationships. For example, laws prohibiting miscegenation¹⁴ date back to 1661, and were common in many states until 1967 when the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*, that Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional. With this ruling fell the remaining anti-miscegenation laws in 15 other states, as well¹⁵. While these formalized barriers to interethnic marriage prevented institutionalized recognition of long-term relationships, informalized regulation of ethnosexuality (e.g., lynching, castration, out casting, and stigmatization) may have more powerfully threatened and prohibited their formation and continuation (Cruz & Berson, 2001). All of these barriers, along with the witnessed exploitation of in-group members at the hands of out-group ethnosexual travelers, and Whites' un/conscious motivation to uphold the hegemony maintaining their dominance, have resulted in the "stick to your own kind" ideology rooted so deeply in the American psyche.

¹⁴ The original legal statutes specifically prevented Black-White unions but subsequent legislation extended to unions between Whites and Mongolians, Malayans, Mulattos, and Native Americans" (Cruz & Berson, 2001)

¹⁵ In 1967 anti-miscegenation laws were recognized in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

It is surprising in some ways, then, to discover the number of inter-ethnic marriages and mixed-racial children in the US today. While less than forty years ago it was illegal to marry outside one's race in sixteen states, today more than 1 in 20 children born is bi- or multiracial (Cruz & Berson, 2001). While it would be informative to examine trends in census data on multiracial children and families over time, the 2000 census was the first to recognize and collect data on multiracial individuals as such. Census Bureau research does show, however, that the number of children living in mixed-race families has been increasing over the past two decades. While in 1970 the number of children living in mixed-race families totaled 460,000, by 1980 this number had increased to 996,070. By 1990 children in mixed-race households reached almost 2 million accounting for 4 percent of all children (US Census Bureau, 2001).

The growing number of mixed race relationships, marriages, and children might be interpreted as an indication of decreased racial tensions in the US, but ironically, sexuality across color lines – particularly in the context of ethnosexual sojourning, adventuring or invading – can do more to maintain ethnic/racial boundaries than weaken them (Nagel, 2003a). Brief sexual or romantic inter-ethnic encounters, which are often catalyzed by stereotypes, sexual myths, and fantasies, often reinforce associations between ethnic Others and the erotic and exotic. Such interludes, whether real or existent only in fantasy, often relegate ethnic Others into increasingly smaller pigeon-holes, e.g., “the submissive Asian,” “the sex-ravaged Black man,” or the “pure White woman.” A cursory appraisal of the pornography industry does much to reveal the widespread availability of these stereotyped ethnosexual images, and demonstrates how easily they

are fetishized (McBride, 2005). In these cases, invitations to cross boundaries are quickly and easily commodified and marketed to consumers (Nagel, 2003a, p. 22).

What about longer-term relationships of ethnosexual sojourners or settlers? Do these relationships maintain, deconstruct or transcend ethnic boundaries? The answers to these questions are entirely idiographic to the individuals involved, the cultural context, and the particular moment of analysis. Overall, however, it seems more likely that individuals in longer-lasting relationships encounter the realities behind stereotypes of their partner, though this is not always the case. It is important to acknowledge that contacting realities and dissolving myths could do much to break down inter-ethnic barriers, but relationships do not always survive when ethnosexual expectations go unmet. This fate, too, often contributes to the “stick to your own kind” American axiom, reinforcing racial barriers and sexual segregation.

If partners in inter-ethnic relationships can weather these challenges, what others might they confront? Most obviously, they face the hardships associated with performed aspects social construction – that is, the intended, clear messages proscribing inter-ethnic crossings. Beyond this first layer, they must also bear the “performativity stress” associated with their relationships; that is, the particular stress put on individuals whose sexual expression is subconsciously, tacitly, and implicitly constrained and controlled through subtle disapproval, exclusion, or silence (Nagel, 2003a). While many relationships manage to endure despite these stressors, others collapse under their weight. Upon the psychological, social, and historical battlefield of racism and homophobia, reparative sanctuary such as that provided within functional relationships is invaluable

and imperative. The psychological support that could be garnered from romantic relationships is frequently surrendered to these forces.

Ethnicity can be one, if not in some cases *the*, major force behind sexual attraction and repulsion. It has the capacity to reflect and enact superiority and inferiority, and in so doing, actually participate in the construction of race and ethnicity. As an element of social construction, it can be a means of domination or resistance, conformity or radicalism, and within different individuals can elicit honor, shame, fear, or pride. Sexual involvement with an ethnic Other could reflect genuine human desire, lust prompted by stereotyped sexual myths, or in some cases, both. Even when they seem purely the former, no individual is so sequestered from the American social environment that his/her feelings, actions, and decisions are uninfluenced by Ethnosexual ideologies incorporated so fundamentally in our nation's and world's history, in our political and economic systems, and even in more mundane day-to-day cultural transactions.

APPENDIX D: PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Race, sexuality, discrimination, oppression, and their interactions have not gone unnoticed in the psychological literature. To varying extents, social, health, and clinical psychologists have explored the psychological underpinnings and outcomes of these variables with individuals and groups. Having already addressed the theoretical literature in previous sections, I will devote the following chapter to reviewing the empirical research on racial and sexual minorities. A number of important themes recur through the empirical literature including stress and coping, physical and mental health correlates, and identity development. I have therefore organized the following sections along these lines although much of the research transcends these separate categories.

Psychological Research on Ethnic Minorities and Racism

The origins of psychological research regarding ethnic and racial minorities derived from mainly White researchers' interest in defining group differences and understanding the sources of social disadvantage affecting ethnic minority individuals and groups. Prior to the sociopolitical movements of the 1960's, the theoretical tenor of research reflected the assumption that disadvantaged groups were responsible for their own plight and the belief that minority psychology was a study of negative or deficient psychological functioning (Jenkins, 1995). Since this time, the focus began shifting towards understanding the various experiences of ethnic/racial individuals in a context of social oppression from the perspective of coping and resilience.

Stress and Coping among Racial Minorities

Though evidence of such a philosophical framework existed between the 1960's and 1980's, the advent of stress and coping theory created a new theoretical foundation for research into race and racism (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory casts stress as the product of situational and personal characteristics which transact, leading a person to perceive an event as stressful (e.g. noxious or threatening). Stressors can take a variety of forms from catastrophes (e.g., natural disasters) and significant life events (e.g., unemployment, death of a loved one) to smaller daily hassles (e.g., long commutes in heavy traffic, worrying about owing money). They can also be distal (e.g., institutional racism) as well as proximal (Pearlin, 1982). The stress and coping model also highlights the role of cognitive appraisal in determining if an event is experienced as stressful or benign while also emphasizing the importance of an individual's coping skills in determining the outcomes of stress. In this framework, coping is defined as the process by which an individual uses cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage external and internal demands that are assessed as exceeding one's resources (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000).

The general stress and coping literature has linked perceived stress to a number of concerning outcomes including depression, healing processes, heart disease, blood pressure, pulmonary disease, and upper respiratory infections among others (for a review, see (Pearlin, 1982). These findings prompted interest in the epidemiology of diseases correlated with stress. During the initial period of study, researchers confirmed that hypertension, cardiovascular problems, depression, and anxiety (among many others)

varied with demographic factors such as race, gender, and income (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This discovery of socioeconomic patterns in physical and mental health suggested that some of the stressors leading to health problems were rooted in the experiences and conditions confronted by those who occupy disempowered positions in society.

Not only did stress and coping researchers discover that stressors varied with demographics, but individuals' coping repertoires appeared to be partially socially determined as well. That is, coping skills, including the way one avoids or remedies painful experiences, the cognitive behaviors used to reduce threat, and the behaviors used to manage tension, are modeled within and learned from one's social milieu (Pearlin, 1982). Stress and coping had, at this turn, moved from a theory explaining individual differences to a theory that could also address group experiences and patterns.

It was not long until the stress and coping paradigm was adapted to the exploration of ethnic minority psychology. Researchers undertook the work of identifying societal stressors and coping responses particular to these individuals, and the outcomes produced by their transaction. The overarching goals of this research aimed to explain inter-group health disparities, explore how exposure and response to racism could account for intra-group differences, and identify potential interventions and prevention strategies to reduce racism's negative impact.

Before reviewing this literature, it is important to note that the majority of published research examining ethnic discrimination has been based on African Americans, and, as a result, the effects of racism as a stressor among members of other ethnic groups remain largely unknown. The few studies focusing on ethnic minorities

other than African Americans would actually suggest that the findings in African American samples cannot always be generalized to other populations. For example, Crocker and Quinn (1998) collected data from Asian and African Americans suggesting a negative association between perceived discrimination and self-esteem in Asian-Americans, but a positive association with the same variables in African-Americans. Because these relations are complex and dependent upon a variety of contextual factors, generalizations should be made with the greatest of caution.

In the stress and coping literature, racism has been defined as a stressor not based on its objective or topographic features, nor the intention of the source, but rather on the recipient's subjective perception and evaluation of the stimulus as racist. These characteristics of the recipient are seen as the key determinants of ensuing physiological and psychological stress responses including changes in cardiovascular, immunological, and cortisol functioning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Tull *et al.*, 2005) as well as psychological distress (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004; Serido *et al.*, 2004), and emotional responses including anger, paranoia, anxiety, helplessness-hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and fear (Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Jackson *et al.*, 1996; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Other studies have investigated the sequelae of perceived racial discrimination within a stress and coping framework and have found that men of color who report higher levels of perceived discrimination had lower personal and ethnic self-esteem, which in turn predicted higher depression and anxiety (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004).

Researchers have also explored the utility of both general coping mechanisms as well as racism-specific coping strategies. General coping responses, which are used to

deal with stressful stimuli regardless of their nature, include social support, problem-solving, religious participation, and avoidance. Racism-specific coping responses include strategies such as racial armoring (Bell & Nkomo, 1998) or developing stronger ethnic group identity or group consciousness (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999).

Research on the frequency with which different coping strategies are utilized has produced inconsistent findings. While some studies have found that avoidance strategies are the dominant response to perceived racism in African Americans (Utsey et al., 2000), others have suggested that more active responses such as verbal counterattacks (Feagin, 1991) or social support seeking (Lalonde, Majumder, & Parris, 1995) are dominant. One obvious source of the empirical disagreement in this area derives from the diverging operationalizations of perceived racism and diverse samples used.

Research on the utility of varying coping responses has also produced somewhat ambiguous findings due to the variety of ways in which researchers have conceptualized and categorized coping strategies. For example, some have published findings on the psychological outcomes associated with active versus passive coping (Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997), while others have examined outcomes associated with general versus racism-specific coping (Armstead, Lawler, Gorden, Cross, & Gibbons, 1989). Additionally, the chronicity and severity of operationalizations of perceived racism has varied across studies muddling overarching conclusions. This area still requires extensive investigation to clarify the specific coping strategies which are functional in particular contexts and for particular racial/ethnic groups.

Racial Minorities and Physical Health

It has been long established that relative to Whites, Black Americans have poorer physical health (Hummer, 1996; Krieger, 2003; Krieger, Rowley, Herman, Avery, & Phillips, 1993). Theories accounting for this have generally implicated institutional racism as the source of health outcomes. According to this line of thought, economic disparities resulting from institutional racism give rise to differential access to healthcare and health education which are known to relate to physical health outcomes. Only more recently have researchers explored how personal experiences of race-based discrimination may also contribute to racial health disparities.

A large number of laboratory studies have explored physiological responses to interpersonal racism. The results have been mixed and indicate a complicated relationship between discrimination and physiological markers of health including systolic and diastolic blood pressure, cardiovascular reactivity, mean arterial pressure, and electromyographic response (electrical activity in muscles). The majority of studies have demonstrated that racist material, images, and laboratory simulations generally elicit physiological arousal, but have not converged on the role of mediating and moderating variables including cognitive coping styles and personality characteristics (Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro, 2003).

Survey research has also explored the relationship between reported perceived racism outside of the laboratory and subsequent physiological arousal. This line of research has also suffered from contradictory findings including positive associations between self-reported encounters with racism and physical health status (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002), no association (Broman, 1996), and even a negative association (Jackson

et al., 1996). It appears that coping styles and other factors mediate these relationships, and when left unassessed, muddle our understanding of the impact of perceived discrimination on physical health.

Several survey studies which have assessed for mediators in the relationship between racism and physical health deserve mention. Using the National Survey of Black Workers database, Martin, Tuch and Roman (2003) demonstrated that personal reports of discriminatory experiences had an influence on problem drinking which was mediated by endorsement of escapist drinking. In the same vein, a study of smoking habits in African American girls demonstrated that perceived experiences of racial discrimination was highly correlated with smoking and that the relationship was mediated by stress (Guthrie, Young, Williams, Boyd, & Kintner, 2002).

While much of this research has been conducted with African American/Black samples, some researchers have demonstrated relationships between perceived discrimination and physical health in other ethnic groups. Using the cross-sectional Chinese American Psychiatric Epidemiologic Study data, (Gee, 2002) found that both individual and institutional measures (e.g., housing segregation) of racism were associated with health status after control for acculturation, sex, age, social support, income, health insurance, employment status, education, neighborhood poverty, and housing value. Diaz, Ayala, and Bein (2004) provide another example of this research in their study of sexual risk as an outcome of social oppression in Latino gay men. Diaz and his colleagues found that the relation between oppression (including racism) and sexual risk-taking was mediated by participation in difficult sexual situations (e.g., those in

which there is a perceived power-differential or sexual activity is used to alleviate feelings of isolation).

Racial Minorities and Mental Health

Countless researchers have collected data on racial/ethnic disparities in mental health. Taken together, this body of research is marred by a plethora of apparent contradictions regarding the relationship between race, racism, and mental health. The use of differing samples, measures, operational definitions, and methods have resulted in findings that sometimes point to intuitive relationships between discrimination and psychological distress, and at other times uphold the null hypothesis. My review will begin with those studies that maintain a relation - either direct or mediated - between racism and mental health, and will end with a discussion of contrary findings that highlight the limits of our knowledge.

A growing body of research has pointed to pervasive, deleterious effects of perceived racism on mental health in people of color in the US (e.g., Broman, 1997; Jackson et al., 1996; Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996). Various pathways linking perceived racism to negative psychological health outcomes have been examined including the experience of racism as a stressor and the internalization of stigma (internalized racism) resulting in lower self-esteem and impaired psychological functioning (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

Many researchers have documented higher levels of general distress among the psychological sequelae of racism as a stressor (e.g., Cassidy et al., 2004; Serido et al., 2004), as well as increased incidence of mood, anxiety (e.g., Kessler et al., 1999;

Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000), and substance-related disorders (e.g., Guthrie et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2003). In their initial study employing the Schedule of Racist Events, Landrine and Klonoff (1996) found that both lifetime and one-year prevalence rates of perceived racism were related to psychiatric symptoms and disorders including anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and somatization disorders. Additionally, they discovered that higher stress in response to experiences of racism was linked to poorer mental health outcomes. Investigations into the route by which racism influences depression have suggested that racism decreases self-esteem and contributes to a sense of helplessness-hopelessness, both of which, in turn, increase the likelihood of depression (McNeilly *et al.*, 1995)

Other studies have looked at the specific influence of internalized racism on psychological health. Internalized racism refers to the acceptance, by marginalized racial groups, of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Researchers in this area hypothesize that beliefs about the biological or cultural inferiority of minority racial groups can threaten the self-worth and self-efficacy of at least some members of stigmatized racial groups, leaving open the door to more serious psychological problems (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000)

Internalized racism has already been linked to a number of negative outcomes including poorer academic performance (Steele, 1997), alcohol consumption and psychological distress in Black women (Taylor & Jackson, 1990). Furthermore, a study in which Black participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with various negative and positive stereotypes of Blacks, endorsement of negative

stereotypes was predictive of both chronic health problems and psychological distress (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000)

While these studies have revealed links between perceived discrimination and psychological distress, other studies complicate the picture by presenting counterintuitive findings. Given the association between perceived discrimination and mental health, one might predict higher overall rates of psychopathology in ethnic minority groups who are presumably exposed to racism on a regular basis. Evidence from community samples, however, suggests that over the past 20 years, Blacks have exhibited lower than expected rates of psychiatric disease relative to Whites (Brown, 2003). Similarly, a major co-morbidity study in the US found no racial group differences in life-time or past-year affective disorders, substance use disorders, or anti-social personality in adults between the ages of 15-54 after controlling for income and education (Kessler *et al.*, 1994). Yet other studies suggest that Blacks fare at least as well as Whites on measures of mental health including self esteem and psychological distress (for a review see Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

There are a few different ways to synthesize these contradictory findings. First, most of the studies mentioned earlier which suggested an association between racism and mental health were specifically defining racism strictly as perceived racism; that is, race-based stimuli that were evaluated as noxious or threatening. Studies that pointed to lower than expected rates of psychopathology in ethnic minorities did not look specifically at the relation between perceived racism and the incidence of mental disorders. It is possible that this important distinction is to blame for the disconnect.

Another perspective on this conundrum comes from pioneers in the sociology of mental health who have begun applying critical race theory to their discipline. In a recent paper, Brown argued that the nosology represented in the DSM-IV casts mental disorders as products of internal, individual-level factors and does not attend to mental health problems resulting from structurally-embedded systems such as racial stratification. He posits that a taxonomy of mental health problems informed by critical race theory would 1) highlight the social conditions associated with racial stratification that might be linked to mental health, 2) expand the current understanding of indicators of mental health status to recognize the effects of societal/structural factors, and 3) include the unique mental health problems resulting from racism (Brown, 2003). He puts forward a number of potential candidates for these mental health problems, including nihilistic tendencies (i.e., strong tendencies to hurt or destroy oneself due to the futility associated with the permanence of racial stratification), suppressed anger expression (e.g., “boiling on the inside while smiling on the outside”), and delusional denial tendencies (e.g., in Whites this might take the form of pretending that race doesn’t matter). Returning to our original conundrum, Brown would likely argue that research refuting the link between racial oppression and mental health is flawed by its focus on DSM-categorized mental disorders which do not include the unique disorders resulting from racial-stratification.

At this point the jury is still out with regards to the nuances of the relationship between race, (perceived) racism, and mental health. While experts in the field tend to assert the existence of this relationship, they admit confusion in light of research findings to the contrary. Perhaps the only conclusion that can be stated with certainty is that

individual differences are likely mediators in these relationships and that clarity will remain out of reach until researchers find agreement on operational definitions, methods, and appropriate limits of generalization beyond the sampled population.

Ethnic/Racial Identity Development

Racial identity has existed within the psychological literature for over 60 years and has become a hotbed of research since Cross proposed his original nigrescence model (1971). While this line of research has typically run parallel to the psychological health & well being research outlined above, at times the two have been entirely conflated such that racial identity development was considered a proxy for, if not the essence of, psychological health in people of color (for a review, see Cross, 1991). While a thorough review of racial identity development models would be ideal, space will limit the current discussion to an overview of the dominant models of identity development and trends in research.

From stage models to phase models. The early identity development models were stage models in which growth was conceptualized in a linear, step-wise fashion. Cross, the first to create and test such a model proposed five stages of development including pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment stages. Other researchers subsequently revised his model with new terminology and definitions, such as Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998) who proposed the five stages of conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and synergistic articulation and awareness. Phinney (1990) went on to condense the model into only four “phases,” namely diffuse (ethnic identity is not yet explored), foreclosure

(ethnic identity and commitment is based on parents or dominant cultural context), moratorium (exploring identity without committing to one), and achieved (explored identity and is firmly committed). Although individual theorists utilized different terminology to describe the developmental course, general commonalities are identifiable. Individuals are understood to 1) lack awareness of or deny their oppressed identity; 2) begin questioning their identity, typically after an experience highlighting racial or ethnic difference; 3) delve into their newly discovered identity(-ies); and 4) integrate their oppressed self into a larger whole identity.

Until recently, stage theorists assumed linear movement through these stages, implying that ethnic identity development is pre-determined, unidirectional, and nomothetic. Criticisms from and new models by constructivist thinkers prompted a change of course in the field. The “stages” proposed in Cross’ and others’ models were redefined as “phases” through which individuals can move bi-directionally and repeatedly. Research and theory during the last decade has fueled further movement in the constructivist direction, with the newest revised models sharing a more dynamic, contextualistic, multi-faceted, and non-linear approach to understanding identity throughout the lifespan.

Identity development and mental health. Similar to the research on mental health correlates and consequences of minority status and racism, the findings on psychological sequelae of identity development have been mixed. This has lead researchers to look more closely at variables that are likely to mediate and moderate these relations. Among those mediating/moderating variables demonstrated in the literature are salience of

identity, centrality of identity, ideology associated with the identity, and self-esteem (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003).

Psychological Research on Gay Men and Homophobia

Psychological research regarding sexual minorities, and in particular, gay men, has followed a trajectory somewhat similar to racial minorities. It has emphasized the stressors and coping mechanisms particular to the population, relevant physical and mental health correlates of sexual minority identity and/or behavior, as well as sexual identity development. This section will review the prevailing perspectives on and applications of these domains in the literature.

Stress and Coping: Minority and Gay Stress

While early psychological considerations of “homosexuality” cast gays and lesbians as psychologically troubled and gender-confused sexual deviants, the gay liberation movement in the American political theater as well as within the discipline catalyzed a perspective shift. Gay men and lesbians became of interest to psychologists as socially oppressed individuals rather than specimens for abnormal research. Not long after this revolution, the then budding stress and coping paradigm was applied to understanding that population’s inferior mental health outcomes. To describe the experiences of lesbian women, Brooks (1981) coined the term minority stress to refer to “. . . culturally sanctioned, categorically ascribed inferior status, social prejudice and discrimination, the impact of these environmental forces on psychosocial well-being, and consequent readjustment or adaptation” (Brooks, 1981, p. 107). Brooks and her

successors have gathered preliminary evidence supporting the idea that minority status is a major stressor not only for lesbian women, but for gay men and other oppressed groups as well.

Some research has demonstrated that gay men, lesbians, and bisexual individuals experience more lifetime and day-to-day stressors in the form of experiences with discrimination than their heterosexual counterparts (Mays & Cochran, 2001). This is little surprise given the aversive and dominative forms homophobia so visible in American culture, politics, and law. A recent review by Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, & Rose (2001) of gay-related stressors identified in the literature highlighted the wide spectrum of stressors affecting gay men including visibility issues (e.g., degrees of outness, being out in different contexts); family conflict/rejection regarding sexual orientation; discrimination at work (both encountered and feared); discrimination in housing and social services; homophobic violence and harassment; HIV/AIDS; sexual orientation conflict (e.g., shame, guilt, and problems accepting a stigmatized sexual orientation); misunderstanding and ignorance about being gay; internalized homophobia (Williamson, 2000); stigma consciousness (Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, Morris, & Rose, 2001); and exposure to anti-gay politics and electoral decisions (Russell & Richards, 2003). Studies examining the situations in which these stressors are likely to arise have pointed to a similarly wide array including victimization in community settings, emotional suppression in family contexts, discrimination in job searches, and even prejudice encountered while making hotel reservations (for a review, see Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 2003).

The examples just cited all relate to negative experiences, but Meyer posits that minority stress derives not only from these instances, but “from the totality of the minority person’s experience in dominant society. At the center of this experience is the incongruence between the minority person’s culture, needs, and experience, and societal structures” (1995, p 39). This gestalt perspective reminds us that even if all minority stressors could be named and measured, they still would not fully represent the experience of members of oppressed groups.

It is important to note in this discussion that, like racial minorities, gay men must deal with stressors other than those related to actual discrimination experiences. The prevalence of homophobia and heterosexism in this society contributes to three additional stress processes: internalized homophobia, perceived stigma/vigilance, and concealment of sexual orientation. Other terms have been used to describe these in racial minority research, but the processes are hypothesized to function in a similar manner.

Internalized Homophobia. From very early ages, gay men are exposed to anti-homosexual messages long before they become aware of their own sexuality. These attitudes are internalized and are often the first obstacle encountered as identity development progresses. When these individuals first self-label, the negative attitudes and beliefs about being gay are then transferred to themselves, damaging self-esteem and depending on the circumstances, potentially their overall psychological well-being.

Perceived Stigma. Also termed stigma consciousness, perceived stigma reflects the stress experienced by gay men (and members of all oppressed groups) relating to the fear or belief that others do not accept them or “will not meet them on equal grounds” (E.

Goffman, 1963, p. 13). Arguably a reasonable precipitate of existing homophobia, this stressor is particularly pernicious because it causes constant vigilance on the part of the stigmatized individual for another's internal reaction that often cannot be directly observed or disproved. In addition, a high degree of stigma consciousness is likely to perpetuate itself as expectations of rejection, discrimination, and prejudice easily become self-fulfilling prophecies: the more one scans the environment for it, the more one is likely to witness.

Concealment of sexual orientation. Unlike most racial minorities, gay men often face an additional stressor in the form of concealment. Whether spurred on by real or perceived negative ramifications of coming out, many gay men bear the psychological burden of inhibiting their emotions, suppressing sexual expression, and modifying their self-presentation on a daily basis. Previous research has established a number of channels through which this stressor effects humans including psychological and neuroimmunological processes (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, & Visscher, 1996; Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher, & Fahey, 1996).

Interestingly, no published articles that focused specifically on stressors faced by gay men included stressors internal to the gay community. That is, every gay stressor hypothesized, discussed, tested, and measured in this literature was situated in the interaction between gay men and the larger heterosexual community. This being the case, I was unable to find any empirical consideration of sexual racism as a stressor in the gay population.

A number of studies have also examined the coping mechanisms utilized in this population, exploring both prevalence and effectiveness. Researchers in this area have examined both personal and group-level coping resources. Personal level resources include accepting one's own gay identity, developing relationships with supportive significant others¹⁶, creating a "chosen family" of supportive others, and increasing social support. Group-level resources include establishing alternative community-level structures and values that enhance the group's status and individual members' self-esteem; and increasing group cohesion such that group members are more likely to seek and find validation and acceptance from supportive others (Meyer, 2003). In the same paper, Meyers proposed that these group level resources are crucial for individuals coping with stigmatized identities and went on to forward the notion of minority coping, a "group level resource, related to the group's ability to mount self-enhancing structures to counteract stigma" (p. 677). Minority coping, he theorized, may actually define the boundaries of individual coping efforts because when group-level resources are inaccessible or lacking, even the most resourceful individuals may be short of the tools necessary to deal with social stressors of stigmatized status.

Physical Health Issues in Gay Men

The overwhelming majority of physical health research in the gay population has revolved around HIV/AIDS. Within this area, the impact of stigmatized identity and its

¹⁶ Although research exploring the effectiveness of each personal coping mechanism is lacking, one study has demonstrated a cross-sectional association between relationship status and self-reported stress: being single was positively associated with dysphoria, stress concerning HIV/AIDS, and sexual orientation conflict (Lewis *et al.*, 2001).

concomitant external and internal stressors have been explored in relation to sexual risk, health behaviors, and progression of the disease once it has been acquired. An exemplar study by Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher, and Fahey examined the relationship between HIV-positive gay men who conceal their sexual orientation and advancement of HIV infection. They found that infection advanced more rapidly in a dose-response relationship to the degree participants were closeted when controlling for demographic characteristics, health practices, sexual behavior, and antiretroviral therapy. These observed effects were not attributable to differences in depression, anxiety, social support, or repressive coping style (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher et al., 1996).

Evidence that links gay identity to negative health outcomes in HIV-negative men exists in the literature as well. For example, Cole and his colleagues discovered that participants high in concealment-stress (operationalized in an item asking how closeted they are compared to other gay men) were more than 3 times as likely to develop cancer, and slightly under 3 times as likely to develop several other infectious diseases including pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis, and tuberculosis over the 5-year follow-up period. These findings persisted even when controlling for age, ethnicity, occupational and educational status, health practices, depression, anxiety, negative affectivity, repressive coping style, and social desirability (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, & Visscher, 1996).

Mental Health Issues in Gay Men

After more than three decades of research dedicated to clarifying the mental health implications of gay (and lesbian) identity, the field remains fraught with ongoing debate and conflicting results. Difficulties in recruitment, sampling, measurement, and

methodology have contributed to the ambiguity. Furthermore, rapidly changing social norms and attitudes obfuscate comparison of findings across time. In an effort to provide some clarity and distinction, I will separate my discussion into two sections covering between-group and within-group research – a distinction that is somewhat useful in making sense out of contradictory findings.

Between-group research. A large number of general population between-group studies have revealed a higher prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in those engaging in same-sex sexual behavior compared to respondents with only opposite-sex sexual behavior (for a review, see Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 2003). These studies have demonstrated a higher likelihood for suicide attempts among adolescents and young adults reporting same-sex sexual partners (Cochran & Mays, 2000a), and higher prevalence of certain psychiatric disorders including major depression and panic attacks (Cochran & Mays, 2000b). Gay respondents in one national sample were significantly more likely than heterosexuals to meet criteria for at least 1 of the 5 disorders assessed including major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, as well as alcohol and drug dependence after controlling for potential demographic confounders (Mays & Cochran, 2001). Interestingly, this study showed that the relation between sexual orientation and mental health was moderated by lifetime and day-to-day events of discrimination.

On the other hand, a second group of studies generally using identity as a marker, and using non-representative sampling has suggested equal prevalence of psychiatric symptoms and psychological distress in LGB and heterosexual samples (for a

comprehensive review, see Meyer, 2003). Studies highlighting this finding first appeared in the literature in the early 1970's when gay-affirmative psychologists were eager to demonstrate that homosexuality did not constitute a mental disorder. These studies found either no significant differences in the prevalence of criteria-defined mental disorders between gays/lesbians versus heterosexuals, or very slight elevations but argued that the levels found were still within a normal range (Meyer, 2003).

In an effort to bring resolution to this debate, Meyer conducted a meta-analysis of between-group studies examining the prevalence of mental disorders in LGBs. His analysis revealed that overall, gay men and lesbians were about 2.5 times more likely to have had a mental disorder during their lifetime. Meyer also discovered that the odds ratio for mood disorders in gay men was 2.07; for anxiety disorders, 2.43; and for substance use disorders, 1.45 (Meyer, 2003). Overall this line of research suggests that being a sexual minority and/or engaging in same-sex sexual activity is a risk factor in the development of psychological distress and mental disorders.

Within-group studies. More so than between-group studies, within-group studies can illuminate the particular variables that impact mental health in gay men. For example, studies in this category have examined which gay stressors are predictive of psychological distress, depression, and suicidality (Meyer, 2003). These studies are therefore more useful in understanding the experiences of gay men, identifying and targeting those most at-risk, and devising treatment and prevention programs.

Within-group studies of minority stress processes in sexual minorities have demonstrated initial support of the basic hypothesis that greater levels of stress predict

more severe mental health problems. For example, gay men who reported feeling more stigmatized (i.e. increased stigma consciousness) experienced a greater sense of alienation and exhibited less self-acceptance (e.g., Frable *et al.*, 1997; Grossman & Kerner, 1998). Likewise, higher levels of internalized homophobia, expectation of rejection or discrimination, and actual discrimination experiences predicted psychological distress in a study of gay men in New York City (Meyer, 1995). Other studies have revealed a link between minority/gay stress and sexual problems (Meyer, 1995), substance use (Cochran *et al.*, 2000), suicide ideation (Cochran & Mays, 2000a), conduct problems, and sexual risk behaviors (Rosario *et al.*, 1996).

Identity Development in Gay Men

Many theorists have developed models of identity formation pertaining to gay men (Cass, 1979a, 1984; Coleman, 1982; Cox & Gallois, 1996; D'Augelli, 1994; Demonteflores & Schultz, 1978; R. E. Fassinger & B. A. Miller, 1996; Isay, 1986; Minton & McDonald, 1983; Troiden, 1979, 1989). Similar to the early racial and ethnic identity formation models, most of these theories utilize stage-based models of “homosexual” or gay identity development. Though minor variations in content exist, these models suggest that the process begins with the individual’s recognition of homoerotic behaviors (i.e., feelings, thoughts, or overt behaviors). Following this recognition, individuals move through a stage of testing their sexual identity by contacting the gay community and/or experimenting in same-sex encounters. As individuals progress through this stage, a tentative commitment to gay identity develops and crystallizes over time. Initially this commitment may be troublesome to the

individual, but it is tolerated: while the identity is acknowledged, it is often simultaneously devalued. Reinforcing contact with similar others, the gay community, or its exports are eventually preferred and the individual begins to take pride in their gay identity. Around this stage gay individuals begin to disclose their identity to others. Those who move beyond this stage of pride in their gay identity and immersion in the gay world progress to a stage of identity synthesis in which gay identity becomes integrated into their greater self-concept and ceases to be their central, defining feature.

Cass' six stage model of homosexual identity formation (HIF; 1979) has become the dominant model in the psychological literature, receiving both theoretical consideration and empirical validation. According to Cass, the process begins with identity confusion during which an individual becomes aware that homosexuality is relevant to them. The internal conflict often resulting at this stage continues through identity comparison as individuals compare themselves and their behavior to others. During this stage individuals are hypothesized to experience heightened levels of alienation and isolation as they recognize the growing divide between their own and others' experiences. Contact with other gay men and growing commitment to one's own sexual identity signifies movement into the next developmental stage of identity tolerance. Identity acceptance is entered into when an individual forms more substantial connections within the gay community and begins to reveal their gay identity to select others. This connection with the community continues and eventually culminates in the achievement of identity pride, the stage during which the gay community is starkly preferred to the heterosexual community and heterosexuals may be devalued. Finally,

Cass suggests that identity development culminates in identity synthesis at which point the individual sees their gay identity as just one aspect of themselves, and feels more comfortable disclosing their sexual identity in most contexts. Importantly, Cass notes that the identity development process can be halted at any stage, resulting in identity foreclosure.

Empirical research (Cass, 1984) has provided initial validation for Cass' model although some research has suggested the existence of two rather than six distinct stages of identity development (Brady & Busse, 1994; Johns & Probst, 2004). Other researchers have challenged the entire notion of stage-based identity development, arguing that development over the lifespan is neither unidirectional, nor invariable (D'Augelli, 1994). Most current theorists and researchers have been influenced by such constructivist criticisms and would agree that stages are better understood as phases through which individuals can pass, return to, or skip over entirely. Similarly, Cass and others have clarified that stages should not be reified as the developmental process is idiographic and determined by variables including the social context, an individual's age, and so forth. Despite these recent criticisms to Cass' HIF theory, it has remained the most prominent model of sexual identity formation in the literature.

Identity Development and Mental Health. Several studies have used measures of HIF to examine the impact of identity development on mental health. Most recently, Halpin and Allen (2004) found that in a large sample of men reporting attraction to other men, Cass' six stages of identity formation were associated with a U-shaped function for psychological indicators of well-being. That is, well-being was high during the initial

confusion and comparison stages and later during the pride and synthesis stages, but significantly lower in-between during identity tolerance and acceptance. This finding contradicted earlier hypotheses suggesting a linear relationship between identity development and psychological adjustment. It still suggests, however, that once an individual has become aware of same-sex attractions, psychological well-being is somewhat dependent upon successful progress through the later stages of identity development.

Psychological Research on Gay Men of Color

In virtually all American social spaces, individuals are stratified along a multitude of social dimensions including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual preference, and age. This applies no less to the gay community. Ethnically-based discrimination and devaluation in this community has been described many times in the non-empirical literature (Chuang, 1999; Duruz, 1999; McBride, 2005; Scott, 1994) and has more recently emerged within the empirical literature (Bing, 2004; R M Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, & Marin, 2001; Greene, 1994; Loiacano, 1989). In this section, I will review the empirical research regarding experiences of gay men of color, including the limited explications of sexual racism.

The overwhelming majority of empirical research on sexual minorities has been conducted with White, middle-class, well educated participants (Greene, 1994). At the same time, research examining the experience of people of color has rarely explored distinctions between heterosexuals and sexual minorities within their samples. This

situation has resulted in a general dearth of empirical literature occurring at the crossroads of race and sexuality. The work that has been published has been largely theoretical in nature. An analysis of the empirical literature concerning sexual minorities of color from 1992 to 2002 revealed that only 124 (less than 1%) of the 14,482 empirical articles published in APA journals included LGB samples (Jernewall & Zea, as cited in Harper *et al.*, 2004). Of those 124 articles, only 6 (.04%) focused on people of color. Even when combined with APA-division journals and non-APA journals, the number remains strikingly small considering the accumulated theory and evidence highlighting the psychological struggles linked to multiple-minority status. Before perusing this literature, a brief discussion of the unique experiences impacting gay men of color is warranted.

Homophobia in Communities of Color

Long-before realizing their own sexual identity, ethnic minority gay men often learn and internalize negative stereotypes about gays and “the gay lifestyle” within their ethnic community, thus complicating the process of sexual identity development (Greene, 1994). As they become more aware of their sexual orientation, they may feel forced to choose between denying their own sexual identity, remaining closeted, or cutting ties with their homophobic ethnic networks. This situation presents hardships as their ethnic community offers much-needed validation, sanctuary and support within the dominant racist society. Those who transcend this choice and move toward identity integration must struggle to jettison their own internalizations of homophobic messages from their ethnic communities while maintaining connections within those same ethnic

communities. As difficult as this process proves, integration of oppressed racial and sexual identities has been linked with higher well-being in a number of studies (Crawford *et al.*, 2002). This finding makes sense considering the emotional and social support needed to navigate the rejection and devaluation experienced by so many people of color when entering the gay community.

Having faced rejection and racism within the larger American context, gay men of color may bring already established coping mechanisms to this task. These strategies developed to deal with racism and discrimination could be adapted when confronting not only racism in the gay community, but homophobia within their ethnic community as well. This transference of strategies would be helpful when one's coping mechanisms alleviate stressors while maintaining or improving well-being (e.g., cognitive coping skills such as reframing), but could also be detrimental when they temporarily alleviate stress while threatening well-being in the long-term (e.g., substance use or distraction through sexual risk taking; (Greene, 1994).

Racism in Gay Communities

Many gay men of color report racial discrimination within gay clubs, bars, organizations, and social gatherings representative of the greater gay community (Chan, 1992; Gutierrez & Dworkin, 1992; Morales, 1992). One innovative study also examined racial discrimination faced by gay men of color on internet dating websites¹⁷ (Phua & Kaufman, 2003). Analysis of 2,400 internet personals ads placed by men-seeking-men

¹⁷ The internet is quickly turning into a cornerstone of the gay community, particularly in urbanized areas where internet access is becoming more ubiquitous. It provides both a safe and anonymous forum for MSMs to network and find sex partners.

and men-seeking-women revealed that gay men were more than twice as likely as heterosexual men to mention race in their ads. Furthermore, regardless of the ad-placers' race, gay men were significantly more likely to specify their desired partner's race. White gay men, in particular, were three times more likely to request a specific race than their heterosexual White counterparts. This study also found, not surprisingly, that Blacks were the least preferred racial partner in ads placed by gay and heterosexual men of all other racial/ethnic groups. Among gay ads, Whites clearly occupied the highest rung of the racial ladder: thirty-one percent of Asian gay men and thirteen percent of Black men specifically requested White respondents in contrast to heterosexual Asian and Black men who requested White respondents only 3 and 5 percent of the time, respectively. These findings suggest there are substantially different racial pressures and hierarchies within the gay community.

This mirrors the rejection they experience within their own ethnic communities as gay men. Together, this contributes to a general sense of alienation which may leave gay men of color at greater risk of isolation and associated psychological vulnerability (Greene, 1994).

When these two sides of experience are joined together, we see that ethnic minorities often experience rejection from their ethnic network of family and friends, and social exclusion from the gay community. Simultaneous rejection and devaluation of two important aspects of identity blends to create a toxic formula of social isolation and alienation that would challenge even the most resourceful and well-adjusted individual.

Stress and Coping: Multiple Minority Stress

In her explication of minority stress, Brooks (1981) argued that sexual minorities experience proportionally more negative life events as a result of living in a sexist, racist, and heterosexist society. While Brooks' original studies on minority stress focused on lesbian women, researchers examining the experiences of gay men and other sexual and racial/ethnic minorities have utilized the construct/model to understand similar experiences in a variety of minority populations (Meyer, 1995, 2003). When applied to those who are both ethnic *and* sexual minorities, the model implies even greater risk for experiencing negative life events and chronic daily hassles leading to increased overall life stress. These negative life events include external events such as loss of employment and verbal assault as well as internal experiences, such as constant vigilance, emotional inhibition and self-concealment. While these stressors can affect sexual minorities of all ethnicities, they are particularly salient to people of color whose ethnic communities are often more homophobic and who, at the same time, may depend on support from their ethnic communities to defend against racial stressors (DiPlacido, 1998). These factors often create circumstances in which gay men of color are constantly managing if not completely concealing aspects of their various identities depending on their current context: either minimizing their ethnic identity within the predominantly White gay community, or concealing their sexuality within largely homophobic ethnic networks.

Some of these hypotheses have received initial empirical validation in a study comparing the experience of "gay-hassles" in Black, Puerto Rican, and White gay HIV-positive men (Siegel & Epstein, 1996). Men of color in this sample reported greater

frequency and cumulated severity of hassles related to openness/outness about their sexual identity than White men. Similarly, African American men reported higher frequency of homophobia-related discrimination than White men, while Puerto Rican men reported greater severity of this discrimination. The data also suggested that the same situations were rated as more stressful by gay men of color than White men, suggesting that the appraisal process may contribute to the differences in frequency and severity of gay hassles observed.

Given the increased perception and experience of gay- and race-related stress in gay men of color, the question of coping strategies becomes all the more important. Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) contributed the first and only research effort to examine coping mechanisms used in response to social discrimination among gay men of color in general and Asian and Pacific Islander (A&PI) men specifically. Qualitative data collected from 23 A&PI men was coded and resulted in identification of 5 categories of coping responses to experiences of discrimination. These included: 1) confront responses involve taking some sort of action toward the source of the discrimination (e.g., confronting the source, putting down/insulting, educating); 2) self-attribution responses involve attributing the cause of discrimination to oneself and/or attempting to alter oneself to reduce the likelihood of further racism (e.g., becoming more muscular, dressing differently; speaking differently); 3) external attribution responses were those that blamed some aspect of the situation for the discrimination experience, (e.g., "it occurred because I'm in the wrong neighborhood," or "they don't know any better"); 4) social network responses included talking about a discrimination experience to friends or

family; 5) avoidance responses involved active distancing from the discrimination experience by physically, emotionally avoiding, or distracting from the experience.

Next, Wilson and Yoshikawa combed the data for patterns in coping responses to different types of discrimination. This analysis revealed that men in the sample were much more likely to cope with homophobia and anti-immigrant discrimination using social-network responses, whereas they turned more frequently to self-attribution coping mechanisms in response to stereotypes regarding sexual passivity and submissiveness from the gay community. It also appeared that acts of discrimination that took place in public spaces were more likely to elicit confront responses, whereas those occurring in private, without a witness or the availability of “ethnic backup” were more likely to result in self-attribution.

Importantly, when the sample was divided into sexual risk takers vs no/low risk takers, it was the risk takers who overwhelmingly reported using a self-attributed response to experiences of discrimination. In other words, these men essentially blamed themselves for their experiences of discrimination. The interview data linked these two notions together such that men who blamed themselves for discrimination were willing to place themselves at greater risk in order to be more attractive to sexual partners. In the authors’ words, “the notion of not using condoms . . . in an effort to please (more than often) non-Asian sexual partners was frequently brought up among our respondents (p. 77).” They go on to conclude that confrontational and social-network based responses to discrimination are more adaptive and that these coping mechanisms are associated with decreased sexual risk.

Physical Health: A Focus on Sexual Risk and HIV/AIDS in Gay Men of Color

The majority of studies looking at physical health impacts of racial minority status within the gay community have focused on sexual risk behaviors and HIV/AIDS. Even so, of the five major HIV/AIDS journals which focus on behavioral and psychological factors only 18% of the articles between 1992 and 2002 contained specifically gay or bisexual male samples, and of those, only 3% specifically sampled gay and bisexual men of color (Jernewall & Zea, as cited in Harper et al., 2004). Considering the disproportionate number of HIV/AIDS cases in racial/ethnic minority populations, these numbers are conspicuously low. More detailed work in this area is necessary. In the meantime, some preliminary cross-sectional data has been collected examining the links between multiple minority status, sexual risk, and HIV/AIDS. These are outlined below.

Race and sexual risk. Findings regarding the relationship between race and sexual risk behavior suggest that both heterosexual and LGB racial minorities are more likely than their White counterparts to engage in unprotected sex and other sexual risk behaviors. For example, Peterson and colleagues found that A&PI, Hispanic, and multiracial gay youth engaged in higher rates of unprotected anal intercourse than gay youth from other ethnic backgrounds (Peterson, Bakeman, Stokes, & The Community Intervention Trial for Youth Study Team, 2001). Numerous studies have also demonstrated that low socioeconomic status (SES) was among the best predictors of sexual risk – a demographic closely tied to race (Myers, Javanbakht, Martinez, & Obediah, 2003).

Race and HIV infection. While Black and Latino men and women constitute only 25% of the US population, the CDC has documented that approximately 70% of new HIV infections occur among these two ethnic groups (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000). Rates of HIV infection in A&PI have remained lower than levels in other communities of color; however, the trajectory of infection in this group is following that of the epidemics early years in the rest of US population and may continue to follow this trend. Furthermore, some recent studies have found higher rates of HIV infection in Asian gay men compared to White gay men (Valleroy *et al.*, 2000).

Race and HIV disease progression. Not only are gay men of color at greater risk of acquiring HIV, but HIV disease progression in some ethnic groups appears to be hastened as well. For example, among those who have already acquired the virus, Latinos are 4 times more likely, and Blacks 11 times more likely than Whites to be diagnosed with AIDS (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002).

Discrimination/oppression and sexual risk. Studies from a number of labs suggests that more frequent encounters with discrimination as well as higher levels of perceived oppression lead to more sexual risk taking. Within a gay and bisexual Latino sample, for example, experiences of racism, homophobia, and anti-immigrant expressions were associated with higher risk sex behaviors (R M Diaz *et al.*, 2001). In a later study utilizing the same data set, Diaz and his colleagues investigated the effects of social oppression on sexual risk taking. Their analyses revealed that men who reported higher levels of social discrimination (e.g., homophobia, racism, and poverty) were more psychologically distressed and more likely to engage in sexual interactions involving

unequal power, drug or alcohol use, or sex for the purpose of alleviating isolation or depression. Participation in these “difficult” sexual situations mediated the relationship between social oppression, psychological distress and sexual risk behavior (Rafael M. Diaz et al., 2004). These quantitative findings were in agreement with results from qualitative investigations of reasons for sexual risk-taking in Latino gay men. In these studies sexual risk behaviors were more likely to occur in situations of unequal power or at times when sexual engagement is used to alleviate feelings of isolation and depression (R. M. Diaz & Ayala, 1999, 2001). Both of these sexual contexts may be more typical for gay and bisexual men of color who are disempowered and alienated within gay and heterosexual spaces.

Gay Men of Color & Mental Health

Gay men of color – even those who share the same ethnic and sexual identity – are not a homogenous group. Because of this, it is unlikely that mental health outcomes will pan out similarly across all ethnic minority groups. Consolacion, Russell, and Sue’s longitudinal study addressing the relationship between multiple minority status and psychological health in adolescents demonstrates this well (2004). Relations between sexual attractions and mental health outcomes were inconsistent across racial/ethnic groups. While African American and White youths reported more suicidal thoughts, Hispanic, Latino, and A&PIs did not. Furthermore, only African Americans reported higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem, while other ethnic groups seemed protected from these outcomes.

Unlike Consolacion et al.'s study, the majority of research regarding mental health in gay men of color has come in the form of within-group studies that focused on psychological outcomes within one racial/ethnic group. These provide us with important information about the added burden of sexual-minority status within ethnic minority communities. Richardson and his colleagues demonstrated higher rates of heavy substance use (i.e., alcohol and cocaine) among African American gay and bisexual men (AAGBM) in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts (1997). The authors also found elevated levels of depressive mood and anxiety disorders among AAGBM in comparison to heterosexual African American men (Richardson et al., 1997)

Relations between experiences of discrimination and psychological distress have been examined within a sample of self-identified Latino gay and bisexual men from Miami, Los Angeles, and New York city (R M Diaz et al., 2001). In this study, 26% of participants reported feeling uncomfortable in White gay spaces while 62% reported being sexually objectified, and 20% rejected, because of their race. A significant relationship was discovered between these forms of social discrimination and suicidal ideation/psychological distress within the 6 months preceding the questionnaire. The same study also demonstrated that rates of psychological distress are significantly higher in Latino gay men, with 80% of their sample reporting depressed mood, 44% reporting anxiety or panic, and 11% reporting at least one occurrence of suicidal ideation within the past 6 months. In their analysis, social discrimination influenced mental health through its effects on both social isolation and self-esteem (R M Diaz et al., 2001).

Identity Development Issues in Gay Men of Color

While research on separate racial and sexual identity models has grown, few have investigated the unique internal processes of those with multiple oppressed identities, such as gay men of color. Are extant models of singular identity development really applicable to the development of multiple oppressed identities? If so, would they chart a course of development in which multiple identities are developed simultaneously, or in succession? And how would the development of one identity bear on the experience of another identity? For example, would the lack of ethnic/cultural resources, social support, and role models in the largely White gay community complicate the process of identity development for gay men of color? Limited attention has been given to the interactions of race and ethnicity in this developmental process (Cox & Gallois, 1996; R. Fassinger & B. Miller, 1996). These questions, therefore, remain largely unanswered and ripe for exploration.

Some researchers have applied the existing models of identity development in the study of gay men of color and have found that those who possessed more integrated identification on scales of racial and sexual identity development reported higher levels of self-esteem and HIV prevention self-efficacy, along with lower levels of psychological distress (Crawford *et al.*, 2002). Interestingly, in this study, life satisfaction was significantly related to racial identity, but not sexual identity development. This study also revealed that higher levels of life satisfaction had an inverse relationship with sexual risk-taking.

Some authors have suggested that because gay men of color have rarely been included in research on gay identity development, there may be a need to abandon them

altogether. They argue that current models are based on the assumption that “coming out” and being involved in the (White) gay community will produce positive effects, which may not generalize to the experience of gay men of color. Icard (1986), a proponent of this view, stated that, “. . . interpersonal relationships that gays experience are critical to the development of a positive sexual identity particularly during what has been described as the coming-out period . . . For many Black gays, however, gay interpersonal relationships do not provide the kinds of positive consequences that have been defined as so important to the closure of the individuals sexual identity” (Icard, 1986, p. 84).

APPENDIX E: DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Sexual racism is situated at the crossroads of many issues of contemporary concern including race and racial constructions; dominative, aversive, and modern forms of racism; constructions of sexuality; sexual minorities; homophobia and heterosexuality; multiple minority stress; and mental health outcomes. Despite its relevance, sexual racism in the gay community has been largely absent from academic study. Both the self-reported significance of this intimate form of racism in part of my own larger sexual minority community, and its absence from the literature of the field potentially able to offer assistance, support, and perhaps even community-level interventions, have culminated in the current dissertation proposal. It is my aim to explore sexual racism within the gay male community by:

- Defining the concept of sexual racism as it manifests in the gay community
- Describing experiences and psychological consequences of sexual racism relying on the situated knowledge of gay men of color
- Investigating how White gay men understand, rationalize, and negotiate the role of race in their interpersonal attractions and relationships.

In order to explore these issues I propose using a qualitative design which involves “analyzing and interpreting texts and/or interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003, p. 3).”

Drawbacks of Quantitative Design

Before describing why qualitative design is well suited to the present study, it is useful to consider why the traditional quantitative approach is less so. To begin,

quantitative methodology is designed for hypothesis-testing research. That is, it investigates a phenomenon in terms of the relationships between numerically measured independent and dependent variables. The purpose of such research is to test whether the hypothesized relationship is “true” using statistical methods (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003). In pursuit of this purpose, traditional design incorporates the following elements:

1. Selecting a research topic from a review of the literature
2. Developing hypotheses about the phenomenon of interest based upon the literature review
3. Determining and operationalizing the independent and dependent variables so that relationships can be tested statistically
4. Developing a random sampling technique so that results can be generalized
5. Determining the sample size necessary to produce statistically significant results

Neither the stated purpose nor elements of quantitative design apply well to the study of sexual racism in the gay community. To begin with, my research topic came from individuals encountering sexual racism in their own communities, rather than from issues noted in the literature. Furthermore, as it is virtually non-existent in the literature, my proposed research involves hypothesis-generation rather than hypothesis-testing. It would be presumptuous, without needed guidance from the literature, to devise hypotheses about relations between sexual racism and other variables. Even if such hypotheses could be derived, it would be ill-advised to attempt operationalization of sexual racism without deeper understanding of the phenomenon in the gay community. Finally, due to the inappropriateness of inventing hypotheses regarding sexual racism, the

question of statistical power and sample size necessary to achieve statistical significance becomes irrelevant.

Grounded Theory Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology not only resolves these difficulties of quantitative design, but offers additional benefits making it the clear methodology of choice in exploring sexual racism in the gay community. Because it can take so many forms and does not rely upon the same terminology used in quantitative science, qualitative methodology is difficult to define. Generally, qualitative methods examine phenomena in depth and detail without predetermined categories or hypotheses. The emphasis is on understanding the phenomena as it exists in the real world rather than in a laboratory. Another way to define it is that it involves a subjective methodology utilizing the researcher's self as the research instrument (Adler & Adler, 1987). While a plethora of qualitative methods exist (e.g., ethnography, ethnomethodology, participant observation, sociometry, content analysis, historiography) the most frequently used is grounded theory.

Prior to discussing the advantages of grounded theory, I will begin with a cursory description of this specific qualitative method. Grounded theory [GT] was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s as a means to develop theory "grounded" in observation about phenomena of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). GT is an iterative process that begins with the conception of dynamic research questions or issues which

guide the research but are not intended to be limiting or static. As soon as the researcher has begun to gather data (e.g., interviews, focus groups, written text or narrative), data analysis begins, in which core patterns and theoretical concepts are identified. Tentative links are established between theoretical concepts and the data. As data collection comes to a close the researcher becomes more engaged in verification and summary of resulting theory.

Grounded Theory Solutions to Quantitative Problems

In contrast to quantitative design which stipulates that research problems must come from the literature, the grounded theory qualitative methodology instructs researchers to identify research issues that remain unclear or unaddressed in the literature yet are relevant to a given population. In qualitative design, the initial research issues are broad and become progressively more focused as concepts and their relationships surface during data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As there has been virtually no research or theoretical development in the psychological literature regarding sexual racism in the gay community, and given that gay men of color in previous Rainbow Project focus groups and interviews identified it as an issue of importance, this phenomenon appears better-suited for qualitative research.

Secondly, whereas traditional quantitative design requires the development of hypotheses derived from the literature, grounded-theory directs researchers to clarify research concerns which are defined as the specific queries to be addressed by the research. Initially, the research concerns (also called the research questions) are stated in

a broad general format and become more specific through the course of the research. The assumption going into the research is that the variables pertinent to the topic are as of yet unknown, therefore the only stated focus is on learning more about the lived experience of research participants chosen because of their engagement with the given phenomenon. In the present case, rather than concocting hypotheses about sexual racism and its psychological correlates, grounded theory focuses my research concerns on learning more about the experience of gay men of color encountering racism in sexual contexts as well as the experience and perceptions of White gay men in ethnosexual domains.

While the next step in quantitative work is to select and operationalize variables, there are no variables to select or operationalize in qualitative design. Instead, the third step in grounded theory is to prepare for narrative interviewing – that is, selecting questions and constructing interviews that allow participants to talk about their lives and experiences. Whereas variable selection and operationalization is aided by the literature review in quantitative design, the literature review in grounded theory is used to suggest important topics on which interview questions might focus. Grounded theory assumes that the literature will not provide a complete set of questions or foci for the interviews. This is why grounded theory researchers must be open to discussing unanticipated topics with participants and remain flexible about the interview questions. In my proposed research, interviews will be guided by a loose set of questions that walk research participants through their history with the phenomenon of sexual racism.

The quantitative assumption that random sampling ensures generalizability of results is questioned in qualitative research design. While the quantitative assumption

might be true in theory, grounded theory researchers posit that random sampling is realistically impossible, particularly within marginal and/or oppressed communities in which qualitative design is often used. Additionally, because the goal of grounded theory design is theory development rather than hypothesis testing, being able to generalize results by random sampling is less relevant than developing a comprehensive theory via purposeful and theoretical sampling. Purposeful sampling involves selecting and interviewing 3-5 participants representing a broad experience with the phenomenon of interest. These interviews are analyzed as soon as they are completed to establish initial codes and to identify experiences of others in the population that should be sought out in future interviews. Theoretical sampling is achieved by then selecting participants who potentially have new information about the research concern. In this sense, the theory, rather than the requirement of randomness, determines the sampling procedure (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Lastly, because qualitative research is designed for hypothesis generation rather than hypothesis testing, the issue of statistical testing and significance is replaced with the concept of theoretical saturation. This concept refers to the continual process of interviewing participants until new participants no longer contribute new ideas about or perspectives on the developing theory. While some grounded theory researchers suggest that theoretical saturation is typically reached between 15-30 individual interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), all agree that final sample size cannot be determined in advance.

In summary, the elements of quantitative design which seem inappropriate for the current study are matched by much better-suited elements of grounded theory. This is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of elements in quantitative and qualitative design

Steps in Research Design	Quantitative	Grounded Theory / Qualitative
Step 1	Conduct literature review to identify a research problem	Select research issues that are unclear or unaddressed in the literature
Step 2	Develop hypotheses	Define research concerns regarding subjective experiences
Step 3	Operationalize the variables	Create a rough narrative interview
Step 4	Random sampling	Purposeful and Theoretical Sampling
Step 5	Determine sample size necessary to demonstrate statistical significance of results	Continue interviewing until theoretical saturation is reached

Additional Advantages of Grounded Theory Methodology

Having established the appropriateness of grounded theory qualitative design for the current study from the researcher's perspective, it is also important to note the benefits of this design for the participants and the population of gay men of color.

Grounded theory method involves participant storytelling, which researchers agree can serve “a powerful psychic function for minority communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 43).” Because many victims of oppression suffer in silence, or internalize blame for their experiences, storytelling – particularly in groups – can break the silence, reveal that others have similar experiences, and reduce participants’ sense of alienation (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Through storytelling, hidden forms of discrimination can be named and, once named, can potentially be combated. Additionally, group-based storytelling provides opportunities for community members to create a language that bridges the gaps in imagination and conception between minority and majority groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The grounded theory method is community-based. That is, community members are considered co-researchers and participate in the identification of research issues, development of the narrative interview questions and coding system, and review of coding results (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, unlike other research designs, dissemination of the findings to the community of focus is paramount in grounded theory design. These many forms of collaboration with the community increase confirmability and trustworthiness, and even more importantly, empower community members in the research process.

Role and Perspective of the Researcher in Grounded Theory

In qualitative methodology, the researcher is ideally an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences the subject of study. In GT qualitative research,

however, the researcher is recognized as a subjective participant in the research who enters the work with a unique history, biases, beliefs, expectations, and relevant experiences with the phenomenon and/or population of interest. GT posits that because researchers inevitably work from their own standpoint they are obligated to identify and describe relevant aspects of their background that will influence their relationship with the data. This process of examining how one's own subjectivity influences the research is called reflexivity, and is an integral part of qualitative work.

I have brought a very clear value base to this research proposal that is rooted in acknowledgement of ethnic and sexual minorities' oppressive life experiences, a commitment to socio-political evolution toward social justice and equality, in addition to my own White, upper-class, well-educated, lesbian identity. This value base has directly encouraged my involvement with the Rainbow Project, and subsequently, the choice of sexual racism as my central research issue. It also played a hand in my selection of GT qualitative methodology. But other factors have shaped these choices as well. First and foremost, after years of occupying a standpoint within the privileged American majority, my experience as a lesbian woman has illuminated the far-reaching consequences of stigmatized identity. While I have been fortunate enough to avoid many forms of dominative homophobia (e.g., physical assault, imprisonment), I cope daily with others including anti-discrimination clauses for employment and housing that do not include sexual orientation, and marriage laws that do not recognize same-sex couples. These experiences, in addition to my daily encounters with aversive homophobia and heterosexism, have sensitized me to the burden of disempowered minority existence.

Also of importance are my deep friendships with people of color and gay men who have greatly shifted my positionality with respect to race/racism and the gay community. It was, in fact, within my friendship with Lance, a Black gay man, that I first heard the term “sexual racism” and absorbed personal accounts of its manifestations and psychological effects.

While some aspects of my identity will be an asset in this project, others may present obstacles: first and foremost, my race, and secondly, my gender. Though I will be placing myself in a position of service to the communities of gay men of color, I will also be gaining personal benefit from the work, and this will undoubtedly be clear to my participants. This reality, coupled with the power and trust dynamics present in all interracial interactions between strangers, will undoubtedly impact my data collection, research, and analysis processes. My gender also dictates the beliefs and values I hold about dating, relationships, and sex which are quite different from those held by my participants. This aspect of my identity is likely to inhibit my participants’ openness and comfort in talking about dating, relationships, and sex in the gay male world. It may also be more of a challenge for me to approach the data non-judgmentally and make less-biased interpretations than it would for a gay man.

My expectations, biases, and hopes as a researcher have been informed by my identities, personal experiences with oppression, and friendships. Navigating my biases will mean first acknowledging and being able to recognize them, and second, maintaining an openness and willingness to listen and give voice to participants regardless of their alignment with my own biases (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It also means being flexible and

open to helpful criticism from other coders, consultants, and reviewers from the community. In fact, all of these characteristics have been identified as crucial for researchers engaging in GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Design Specifics

Population Specification

As the overarching subject of this study is sexual racism, my initial (and broadest) potential population included all who cross or exist within the intersections of race and sexuality, i.e., both heterosexual and LGBT members of all ethnic groups. Given the practical concern of my geographic location, I decided to narrow my population to sexual minorities in the greater Seattle metropolitan area. Sexual racism is certainly an issue within all sexual minority (and, for that matter, majority) groups. However, the salience and emotional significance attributed to sexual racism by gay men of color in the Rainbow Project prompted my decision to narrow the research population further to include only gay men – both racial minorities and majorities – living the greater Seattle area. My decision to interview gay men from all ethnic and racial backgrounds was rooted in the importance of triangulation of data – that is, utilizing multiple sources of data regarding the phenomenon of study. In this case, I concluded that significant information about sexual racism could be brought forth from both its victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, I believe the likely differences in standpoints relative to sexual

racism will help to explain and understand the experiences of all those who visit or sojourn in ethnosexual frontiers in the gay community.

Sampling Rationale

Grounded theory employs purposeful and theoretical sampling techniques to ensure initial collection of diverse experiences and perspectives on sexual racism. The purposeful sampling procedure for gay men of color and White gay men will utilize nomination and snowball strategies and may include working collaboratively with community organizations. For research involving hidden populations, these sampling techniques have found much support in the literature (Clements-Nolle & Bachrach, 2003; Kalton & Anderson, 1989; S. K. Thompson & Collins, 2002). I anticipate that the initial purposeful sample will comprise 3-5 interviews with men of color, and 3-5 interviews with White men. In an effort to establish initial codes from a broad base of experiences with sexual racism, I aim to interview men representing a range of demographic characteristics including ethnic/racial identity, age, and socio-economic status. Following initial interviews, theoretical sampling will employ similar recruitment strategies and, if necessary, may also rely on advertisements in community newspapers, gathering places (e.g., cafes, bookstores, organizations), and internet websites and communities. During this period in the research process, I will continue collecting data until theoretical saturation is reached¹⁸.

¹⁸ A number of methodological texts have suggested that this typically occurs after 15-30 interviews.

Data Collection Methods

While data collection with the initial purposeful sample will take the form of individual interviews, focus groups will be conducted during the theoretical sampling phase. My reasons for this are twofold: first, there are numerous benefits to storytelling and group discussion for the participants as previously reviewed; secondly, focus groups will allow me to observe if and how painful experiences with sexual racism are held and processed in social (albeit artificially created) groups. Focus groups will last 2 hours and will comprise 5-8 participants.

Interviews and focus groups with men of color will be led by myself and one gay man of color, whereas I will conduct interviews and focus groups with White men with a White gay co-leader. These sessions will be digitally audio-taped to reduce participant distraction and anxiety often resulting from video-taping. Transcribed audio recordings and significant behavioral observations made by the interviewers will be the only sources of data.

Interviews and focus groups will be loosely guided by a set of questions or probes that will continually change as the study progresses. Table 2 and 3 present the topics around which the interview will center, and sample questions/probes that will be used for gay men of color and White gay men, respectively.

Table 2

Probes for interviews with gay men of color

Topic	Sample Questions and Probes
Identity	Let's start with how you see your identity: how do you see yourself or describe yourself? Are some parts of your identity more important than others?
Race/racism in the gay community	Could you say more about your experiences as a (Black, Asian) man in the gay community? Does your ethnicity/race have an affect on your sexuality? Have you noticed any differences between being (Black, Asian) in the gay world versus in the straight world?
Dating, sex, & relationships	Are you currently in a relationship? Dating? Hooking up? What kind of person are you attracted to? How do you go about finding them: bars? Friends-of-friends? the internet?
Sexual racism	What about being (Black, Asian) when it comes to dating/relationships/hooking up? And how about being (Black, Asian) when it comes to sex and being in sexual spaces or situations like clubs, bars, baths, party/sex lines, or sex parties? Do you ever use the internet for finding a dating or sex partner? What have you noticed about race dynamics on the internet? Have you noticed any sexual stereotypes or myths about different races in the gay community? What have your experiences been like dating/having sex with White men? What about men from other ethnic backgrounds?
Psychological effects of sexual racism	What is it like dealing with racism in the gay community? How did that experience you told me about make you feel? How do you feel about it now? What do you think the emotional consequences are for these experiences you've described? Are they long or short term? How do they compare with other major stressors about being a gay man of color?

Table 2 continued

Coping & Resilience	How do you cope with all these things we've been talking about today? What about when it comes to the racism you experience in dating/sexual situations in particular? How do you deal with it in the moment it happens versus in the long term? Have you ever noticed that you're more likely to feel badly about yourself, try to suppress your feelings, or do drugs/drink in response to certain types of racism? What has been the most helpful thing to you in coping with this sort of racism?
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Table 3

Probes for interviews with White gay men

Topic	Sample Questions and Probes
Identity	Let's start with how you see your identity: how do you see yourself or describe yourself? Are some parts of your identity more important than others?
Partner preferences	Are you currently in a relationship? Dating? Hooking up? What kind of person are you attracted to? Do you have any preferences like body type, age, job, race, etc.? How is it different if you're looking for a hook-up versus a relationship?
Finding partners	How do you go about finding the right guy and the right situation? Bars, clubs, internet? And how do you avoid attracting men who don't fit what you're looking for? How is it different if you're looking for a hook-up versus a relationship?
Race in the gay community	A lot of our participants have talked about how race factors into dating, hooking up, and finding the right guy. Have you noticed anything about this? Is it the same in the straight world? In your experience and in your group of friends, what do you think about these race dynamics? Are they just preferences or something more?
Experiences with race and sexuality	Have you ever hooked up with or dated someone outside your race? What was that like? What was the response from the rest of the gay community?
Outlook on the future	Do you think things are getting more or less racially divided in the gay community? How do you feel about this? Do you have any thoughts about how the situation could be improved or if things are the way they should be?

Before interviews begin, these questions will be reviewed and revised by those on my Rainbow Project research team as well as consultants who are members of my study population though not participants in the research.

Post-Interview/Focus Group Data Management

Following each interview and focus group, the digital recording will be saved (and password protected) onto my personal computer and backed-up on recordable compact disks to be stored in a locked file cabinet at the University of Washington. These interviews will be fully transcribed by me and/or undergraduate research assistants within a month following collection. Transcription files will also be saved and password protected on my personal computer, and backed-up onto compact disks.

Data Analysis: Coding

As previously stated, data collection and analysis will proceed simultaneously. This ensures that new and important concepts and codes can inform the direction of subsequent data collection (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the grounded theory method, data analysis proceeds in a generally hierarchical (though not necessarily linear) fashion, beginning at the level of the raw data and then proceeding through selection of relevant text, identification of repeating ideas, distilling of themes, development of theoretical constructs, and finally, construction of theoretical narrative. Each is described and applied to my research below.

- 1) *From raw data to relevant text.* This step involves cutting down the text from interviews and focus groups into manageable portions selected for their relevance to my research concern of sexual racism.

- 2) *Identification of Repeated ideas*. Working from the selected relevant texts from within and across interviews/focus groups, similar experiences, patterns, words, and phrases are identified.
- 3) *Distillation of Themes*. Repeated ideas are then grouped by commonalities and the implied organizing topic, or theme, is derived.
- 4) *Development of Theoretical Constructs*. In the same way that repeating ideas are organized into themes, themes are then grouped into theoretical constructs which are larger, more abstract ideas.
- 5) *Construction of the Theoretical Narrative*. Finally, a theoretical narrative is written which summarizes what was learned about my original research concerns regarding experiences of sexual racism from the perspective of both gay men of color and gay White men. (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

While early coding typically develops linearly, later in the coding process the procedure can jump between levels as the categories themselves are continually revised to match the researcher's evolving interpretation of the text.

Steps 1-3 will be completed by me and one additional coder from the Rainbow Project to safeguard against missing important data or being influenced blindly by my own biases (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I will undertake the fourth and fifth levels of coding and review my decision processes and conclusions with team members from the Rainbow Project, as well as outside consultants and participants from the study who have agreed to contribute to this part of the research.

In terms of the mechanics of coding, I plan to use ATLAS/ti, a qualitative analysis software package that aids in text management and theory building via the extraction of conceptual knowledge from documents. Reasons for selecting this software package include 1) its strengths over its main competitor (i.e., NVivo software) in terms of

software development, greater inter-connectedness of coding elements, use of hypertext structure, and user-friendliness (Barry, 1998; Weitzman & Miles, 1995), and 2) the practical consideration of the availability of ATLAS/ti through the Rainbow Project.

Reliability and Validity of Interpretations

Grounded theorists agree that the ultimate value of the research process rests upon the researcher's ability to keep the raw data, selected text, codes, interpretations, and resulting conclusions grounded as deeply as possible within the reality from which they came. These objectives constitute the qualitative equivalent to reliability and validity in quantitative design (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In grounded theory, reliability and validity can be evaluated along a number of different dimensions including transparency (can other investigators know and check what was done?), communicability (do the codes and categories make sense to participants and other investigators?), and coherence (are the codes and categories internally consistent and do they accurately reflect both the trends and inconsistencies within the population?; (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Toward these ends, I am mandated to effectively monitor my own work and verify my analyses with others both within my academic community and within my study population. By frequently meeting with my research team and consultants (who have experience with sexual racism in the gay community but are not participants), I will be able to check the progress of my work on an interview-by-interview basis. I also plan to conduct "member checks" with members of my study populations – both gay men of color and White gay men – a number of times during my coding process, and additionally after I have assembled a

more complete theoretical narrative. Finally, I will subject my conclusions to analysis in the light of relevant research, looking for consistencies and inconsistencies that may offer verification or contextualization. Using the literature I will also look for silences within my theoretical narrative and other levels of coding analysis.

CURRICULUM VITAE

MARY DIANNE PLUMMER

EDUCATION :

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| <p>VA Puget Sound, Seattle, WA
 <i>Program:</i> APA accredited psychology internship
 <i>Training Director:</i> Stephen McCutcheon, Ph.D.
 <i>Rotations:</i> Chronic Pain Clinic, Outpatient Family Therapy,
 Addictions Treatment Center of Excellence</p> | 2005-2006 |
| <p>University of Washington, Seattle, WA
 <i>Program:</i> APA accredited clinical psychology program
 <i>Advisor:</i> Jane Simoni, Ph.D.
 <i>Degrees Obtained:</i> Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy
 <i>Dissertation:</i> "Sexual Racism in Gay Communities: Negotiating the
 Ethnosexual Marketplace"
 <i>Masters Thesis:</i> "Effects of a Social Support Intervention on Antiretroviral
 Adherence in a Multi-Ethnic Urban Population"</p> | 2001-2007 |
| <p>Bryn Mawr College
 <i>Degree Obtained:</i> B.A. in Psychology and Sociology, Magna Cum Laude
 <i>Senior Honor Thesis in Psychology:</i> "An Examination of Intergroup
 Relations: Race, gender, and class
 interactions in two college settings"
 <i>Senior Thesis in Sociology:</i> "The Potential for Empowerment in Women's
 Friendships"</p> | 1996-1999 |

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE :

Multicultural Research

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| <p>Co-Investigator, The Rainbow Project
 <i>University of Washington, Seattle, WA</i>
 Collaborated on a qualitative research project addressing the relationships
 between minority stress, coping, and mental health and substance abuse
 outcomes among sexual minorities in Washington state. Developed
 interview guides, co-facilitated focus groups, and conducted content analysis
 of interview transcripts using grounded theory methodology.</p> | 2004-2005 |
|--|-----------|

Research Specialist, Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict 2000-2001
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Conducted research on the role of maladaptive core beliefs in the development and resolution of ethno-political conflict. Collaborated on an inventory assessing core beliefs on the individual, group, and meta-group levels. Co-authored one manuscript and assisted in grant preparation.

Undergraduate Research Fellow, Hughes Fellowship in Psychology Research 1998
Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

Conducted literature reviews on behavioral and attitudinal measures of inter-group interaction. Developed two new behavioral indices of inter-group contact and completed two preliminary studies of inter-ethnic/gender contact with the measures. Co-authored two manuscripts.

Health Psychology Research

Graduate Research Assistant, Project PAL 2002-2005
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Aided in the development and implementation of an NIMH-funded study examining the effects of peer support on medication adherence among HIV-positive outpatients. Analyzed data from previous pilot study and co-authored related manuscripts. Recruited participants and collected data in a hospital setting. Co-led skills-training groups for HIV-positive peer counselors, and supervised their on-going peer-support interactions. Facilitated bi-monthly support group with patient participants and their peer supporters. Prepared annual IRB & NIMH reviews.

Research Assistant, Behavioral Medicine Division 1999-2000
Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia, PA

Conducted research on spousal support, coping, and mood among individuals with breast cancer, as well as preventative health behaviors of colorectal cancer patients' siblings. Screened, recruited, and monitored subjects from area hospitals. Researched medical histories of study subjects. Collected, entered, and analyzed data. Prepared annual IRB & NIMH reviews.

C L I N I C A L E X P E R I E N C E :

Clinical Supervisor 2006-Present
Psychological Services and Training Center
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Supervisors: Mavis Tsai and Corey Fagan, Ph.D. (Clinic Director)
 Provided clinical supervision in Functional Analytic Psychotherapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for a beginning therapist in the Adult Clinical Doctoral Program.

Intake Worker & Clinic Teaching Assistant

2005-2007

*Psychological Services and Training Center**University of Washington, Seattle, WA**Supervisor: Corey Fagan, Ph.D. (Clinic Director)*

Conducted intake at graduate student clinic. Provided clinical guidance to graduate trainees.

Student Therapist on Dialectical Behavior Therapy Treatment Development Team

2004-2005

*Practicum at the Behavioral Research and Therapy Clinics,**University of Washington**Supervisors: Marsha Linehan, Ph.D., ABPP, Professor and Director & Beatriz Aramburu, Ph.D.*

Provided DBT for individuals meeting criteria for borderline personality disorder (BPD). Received extensive training on DBT, BPD, suicidality, and crisis intervention procedures. Participated in Dr. Linehan's weekly training and consultation team. Received hour-for-hour DBT supervision.

Student Therapist on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy [ACT] Team

2004-2005

*Practicum at the University of Washington**Supervisor: Madelon Bolling, Ph.D.*

Gained experience with ACT in individual and group settings. Employed ACT for Substance Abuse protocol in individual therapy. Received hour-for-hour ACT supervision.

CBT and MI Research Therapist

2004-2005

*Practicum at the University of Washington Department of Psychiatry**Supervisor: Mary Larimer, Ph.D.*

Facilitated psycho-educational CBT groups and provided individual MI interventions for college students at-risk of developing gambling and alcohol addictions. Received training and supervision in CBT and MI.

Student Therapist on Functional Analytic Psychotherapy [FAP] Team

2003

*Practicum at the University of Washington FAP Clinic**Supervisors: Robert Kohlenberg, Ph.D & Madelon Bolling, Ph.D.*

Gained experience with FAP in individual and group settings. Received hour-for-hour FAP supervision.

Staff Therapist, Psychological Services and Training Clinic

2003-2005

*University of Washington**Clinic Director: Corey Fagan, Ph.D.*

Conducted individual and group therapy as well as evaluations/assessments under the supervision of various community supervisors.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE :

Teaching Assistant & Peer Supervisor: FAP Consultation Team 2005-Present

Supervisor: Mavis Tsai, Ph.D., University of Washington

Duties: Co-facilitating small group consultations. Observing and providing feedback on graduate students' therapy sessions.

Teaching Assistant: Psychology of Gender Fall 2001 & 2002

Supervisor: Nancy Kenney, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Washington

Duties: Lectured on the intersections of gender and sexuality. Assisted in syllabus development and exam construction. Planned and led for four weekly discussion sections. Graded essays, exams, and oral presentations.

Teaching Assistant: Psychobiology of Women Winter 2002

Supervisor: Nancy Kenney, Ph.D., University of Washington

Duties: Prepared comprehensive review materials and exercises. Assisted in syllabus development and exam construction. Led and created content for four weekly discussion sections. Graded essays, exams, and oral presentations.

Teaching Assistant: Introduction to Psychology Spring 2002

Supervisor: Michael Passer, Ph.D., University of Washington

Duties: Planned and lead review sessions. Assisted with exam construction and bookkeeping.

Teaching Assistant: Sociology of Crime Spring 1999

Supervisor: William Hohenstein, Ph.D., Haverford College

Duties: Assisted in designing curriculum based on experiential/hands-on learning modality. Facilitated class discussions. Evaluated student coursework.

PUBLICATIONS :

Simoni, J.M., Pantalone, D.W., **Plummer, M.D.**, Huang, B. (2007). A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Peer Support Intervention Targeting Antiretroviral Adherence and Depressive Symptomatology among HIV-Positive Men and Women. *Health Psychology*, 26(4), 488–495

Pantalone, D. W., **Plummer, M. D.**, & Simoni, J. M. (2005). HIV disclosure and risk reduction research: Practical implications. *FOCUS: A Guide to AIDS Research and Counseling*, 20(5), 1-4.

Eidelson, R.J., & **Plummer, M.D.** (2005). Self and nation: A comparison of Americans' beliefs before and after 9/11. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 11(2), .

McCauley, C., **Plummer, M.D.**, Moskalkenko, S., & Mordkoff, J.T. (2002). The Exposure Index: a measure of intergroup contact. *Peace and Conflict: The Journal of Peace Psychology*, 7(4).

P R E S E N T A T I O N S :

Plummer, M.D. (2006, May). Critical Psychology: Building careers in the service of social justice. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Atlanta, GA.

Plummer, M.D., Balsam, K.F., Yoshimoto, D., & Fieland, K. (2005, November). Experiences of sexual racism among gay men of color. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Washington, DC.

Pantalone, D. W., Simoni, J. M., **Plummer, M.D.**, Pearson, C. R., & Huang, B. (2005, November). RCT of peer support versus a text pager reminder to enhance antiretroviral adherence among people living with HIV/AIDS: Baseline characteristics and the role of social support. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Washington, DC.

Plummer, M.D. (2005, August). Clinical Case Presentation: Layering the lenses of FAP and ACT. Case presented at the first annual Functional Analytic Psychotherapy Conference, Seattle, WA.

Plummer, M.D. (2005, May). Clinical Case Presentation: Layering the lenses of multiple behaviorally-based therapies. Case presented at the Association of Behavior Analysis, Chicago, IL.

Manne, S., **Plummer, M.D.**, Hosterman, J., Ray, J., & Stevens, J. (2001, March). Longitudinal association between demand/withdraw communication and cancer patient and spouse psychological distress. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine.

McCauley, C., **Plummer, M.D.**, Moskalkenko, S., & Mordkoff, J.T. (1998, August). The exposure index: A measure of intergroup contact. Paper presented at the Hughes Fellowship Summer Research Symposium. Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.

McCauley, C., Moskalkenko, S., & **Plummer, M.D.** (1998, August). A developmental application of the indices of group exposure and isolation. Paper presented at the Hughes Fellowship Summer Research Symposium. Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.

WORKSHOPS :

Tsai, M., **Plummer, M.D.**, Terry, C.M., Newring, R.W., Holman, G.I., & Kohlenberg, R.J. (2007, May). Functional Analytic Psychotherapy: Creating and harnessing powerful therapeutic relationships. Half-day workshop presented at the annual conference of the Association for Behavior Analysis, San Diego, CA.

Tsai, M., Kohlenberg, R.J., Newring, R.W., Terry, C.M., **Plummer, M.P.**, Whiteside, U., Secrist, C., & Bowen, S.W. (2006, November). Psychotherapy Supervision: An experiential model based on Functional Analytic Psychotherapy for enhancing the CBT supervisory process. Half-day workshop presented at the annual conference for the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Chicago, IL.

Newring, R.W., Terry, C.M., **Plummer, M.D.**, & Holman, G. (2006, May). FAP: Surfing the third wave. Full-day workshop presented at the annual conference of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Atlanta, GA.

Kohlenberg, R.J., Newring, R.W., Terry, C.M., **Plummer, M.D.**, & Holman, G.I. (2006, May). FAP: Surfing the third wave. Full-day workshop presented at the annual conference of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Atlanta, GA.

Tsai, M., Kohlenberg, R. J., Newring, R. W., Terry, C. M., and **Plummer, M. D.** (2005, November). Psychotherapy Supervision: An Experiential Model for Enhancing the Supervisory Process. Half-day workshop presented at the annual conference of the Association for the Advancement of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapy, Washington, D.C.

Kohlenberg, R.J., Tsai, M., Newring, R.W., Terry, C.M., **Plummer, M.D.**, Bolling, M.Y., and Parker, C. (2005, August). Functional Analytic Psychotherapy: the basics. Workshop presented at the first annual Functional Analytic Psychotherapy Conference, Seattle, WA.

Kohlenberg, R.J., Newring, R.W., Terry, C.M., **Plummer, M.D.**, & Bolling, M.Y. (2005, May). Functional Analytic Psychotherapy: Super-Charging the Therapeutic Relationship. Full-day workshop presented at the annual conference of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Chicago, IL.

Kohlenberg, R. J., Kanter, J. W., Parker, C. R., Newring, R. W., Terry, C. M., & **Plummer, M. D.** (2004, November). The Pot of Gold at the End of a Functional Analysis: How and When to Use the Client-Therapist Relationship to Improve Outcomes of Cognitive Behavior Therapy. Workshop presented at the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Newring, R. W., Terry, C. M., **Plummer, M. D.**, & Kohlenberg, R. J. (2004, September). Functional Analytic Psychotherapy: Summer Workshop. Workshop for graduate students conducted at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

POSTERS PRESENTED :

Simoni, J.M., Pantalone, D.W., **Plummer, M.D.**, & Huang, B. (2005, May). "Does a peer support intervention enhance antiretroviral adherence? Longitudinal findings on Project HAART." Poster presented at the annual conference of the Society of Behavioral Medicine.

Plummer, M.D., Montoya, H., & Simoni, J.M. (2005, January). "Answering the Call: Facilitating multicultural courses in clinical psychology programs." Poster presented at the annual Multicultural Summit of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA.

Pantalone, D.W., **Plummer, M. D.**, Willoughby, B. L. B., & Snyder, D. J. (2004, August). "Sexual minority issues in psychology graduate education: Disclosure and community." Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.

Plummer, M.D., & Simoni, J. (2003, November). "The Effects of Social Support on an HIV-Positive Population." Poster presented at the annual Elements of Success Convention, Dallas, TX.

Plummer, M.D. (2002, August). "Who is *really* sitting together in the cafeteria?" Poster presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, Il..

Sherman, M., Mack-Allen, J., Selikoff, S., DeVellis, D., **Plummer, M.D.**, Ostroff, J., & Manne, S. (2000, April). "Cancer related communication and psychological adjustment: a cognitive processing model." Poster presented at the annual conference of the Society of Behavioral Medicine.

AWARDS & HONORS :

Nominated for Excellence in Teaching Award, University of Washington	2003
Graduated Magna Cum Laude, Bryn Mawr College	1999
Departmental Honors in Psychology, Bryn Mawr College	1999
Hughes Fellowship in Psychology Research, Bryn Mawr College	1998

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE :

Conference Organizer, FAP Summer Workshop & Summit <i>University of Washington</i>	2005 & 2006
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Member, Multi-Ethnic & Cultural Association

2001-2004

University of Washington

Member of graduate student group which provides a supportive network for ethnic minority students and their allies in the profession. The group promotes awareness and scientific understanding of culture and ethnicity in psychology, and advocates for cultural diversity in the training and teaching of psychology.

C O M M U N I T Y I N V O L V E M E N T :**Co-Founder, Deconstructing Privilege**

2003-2005

Organized monthly meetings for a group of graduate students and Seattle community members dedicated to discussing issues of privilege and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, class, and other systemic oppression.

Director, Rainbow Alliance

1997-1999

Bryn Mawr College

Directed activities of the political organization and support group for LGBT students. Counseled students with concerns about sexual orientation as well as discrimination and harassment. Established liaisons with members of the faculty, administration, and board of trustees in order to increase the group's visibility as well as garner financial support for the group's endeavors. Coordinated numerous cultural, political, and social events relating to issues of sexual orientation and cultural diversity. Expanded the library of the LGBT Resource Center. Organized and facilitated weekly meetings.