Research Article

Revisiting the Jezebel Stereotype: The Impact of Target Race on Sexual Objectification

Joel R. Anderson[1] , **Elise Holland**[2] , **Courtney Heldreth**[3],
and **Scott P. Johnson**[3]

Abstract

The overt objectification and dehumanization of Black people has a long history throughout the Western world. However, few researchers have explored whether such perceptions still persist implicitly and whether Black women are sexually objectified at an interpersonal level. We sought to address this gap by exploring whether Black women are sexually objectified to a greater extent than White women and whether target sexualization exacerbates this effect. In Study 1, using eye-tracking technology ($N = 38$), we provide evidence that individuals attend more often, and for longer durations, to the sexual body parts of Black women compared to White women, particularly when presented in a sexualized manner. In Studies 2a ($N = 120$) and 2b ($N = 131$), we demonstrated that Black women are implicitly associated with both animals and objects to a greater degree than White women with a Go/No-Go Association Task. We discuss the implications of such dehumanizing treatment of Black people and Black women in U.S. society. We hope that this evidence will increase awareness that objectification can happen outside the realm of conscious thought and that related interventions ought to include an ethnicity-specific component. *Additional online materials for this article, including online slides for instructors who want to use this article for teaching, are available on* PWQ's *website at http://journals.sagepub.com/page/pwq/suppl/index*

Keywords

objectification, dehumanization, sexualization, race, visual attention, implicit cognition

Across the globe, history is replete with examples of Black people being viewed and treated as less than fully human. The dehumanization of Black people within the United States dates back at least to the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution declared that African American slaves counted as three-fifths of a person, indicative of their subhuman status at the time. Such dehumanizing perceptions were not limited to the United States. Around the same time in Europe, Black people were commonly subjected to dehumanizing and objectifying treatment by White people. One example of this is the historical case of Saartjie Baartman, who was a South African slave unwillingly sent to London in the early 1800s to be exhibited as part of a freak show. Displayed in a cage and wearing next to nothing, Saartjie was paraded around circuses, museums, and bars, where onlookers paid to poke, prod, and gawk at her atypical (to most Londoners) large buttocks and features. In the eyes of White Europeans, Saartjie, who came to be known as the Hottentot Venus, was not considered fully human (Butcher, 2002), justifying her subjugation and objectification.

Two centuries later, such blatant and radical instances of the dehumanization and objectification of Black people have undoubtedly attenuated. Recent research suggests that these changes may have occurred at an overt level, however subtle

dehumanizing perceptions, with their damaging consequences, still exist toward Black people. For instance, Black people are still implicitly associated with animalistic concepts (e.g., Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008), and Black women are more commonly presented in visual media as animals and are objectified to a greater extent than White women (e.g., Turner, 2011). However, to our knowledge, no research to date has explored the extent to which Black women are objectified by others at an individual level. The purpose of the present set of studies was to address this gap by examining whether Black women are sexually objectified to a greater degree than White women and how this differs as a function of the sexualized presentation of these women. We sought to explore this across two distinct measures of

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[1] School of Psychology, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, Australia
[2] Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
[3] Psychology Department, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Joel R. Anderson, School of Psychology, Australian Catholic University, Daniel Mannix Building, Victoria 3065, Australia.
Email: joel.anderson@acu.edu.au

objectification: the objectifying gaze and implicit associations with objects and animals.

Dehumanization and Race

Dehumanization is a process in which a group or an individual is perceived and treated as less than fully human. Broadly speaking, it involves the denial of those characteristics or attributes that constitute what it is to be human. According to Haslam (2006), there are two ways in which an individual or a group can be dehumanized. First, they can be denied uniquely human attributes, such as civility and rationality, and thus subtly likened to animals (i.e., animalistic dehumanization). Second, they can be denied human nature attributes, such as warmth, emotionality, and vitality, and thus subtly likened to machines or objects (i.e., mechanistic dehumanization; Haslam, 2006; see Haslam, Loughnan, & Holland, 2013 for a review).

Regardless of what form it takes, the negative ramifications of stripping others of their humanity abound. Dehumanization has been used as a justification for many atrocities throughout human history, including slavery in the United States, the Holocaust during World War II, the Rwandan Genocide of the late 20th century, and the ongoing massacres in Iraq of the Yazidi people (Haslam, 2006; Hazra, 2014; Lott, 1999). Empirically, research has also demonstrated that the tendency to dehumanize outgroups is associated with (among perpetrators) lower prosociality (e.g., Cuddy, Rock, & Norton, 2007), greater social exclusion (Viki, Fullerton, Raggett, Tait, & Wiltshire, 2012), and harsher punishment and more punitive treatment (Bastian, Denson, & Haslam, 2013; see also Haslam & Loughnan, 2014 for a review).

Although applied to many different contexts, including medicine, pornography, and the workplace, among others (Haslam, 2006), people commonly dehumanize others of a different race to theirs, and often strip racial outgroups members of their humanity, thus likening them to non-human entities (Goff et al., 2008; Haslam, 2006; Jahoda, 1999). The dehumanization of Black people in particular has a long history, rooted in centuries of oppression and inequality. As research suggests, and as we will explore in this article, the dehumanization of Black people occurs both through animalistic and mechanistic pathways (i.e., by being likened to animals and objects).

Animalistic Dehumanization

Throughout history, Black people have been likened to animals as a way of legitimizing racial discrimination toward them. In particular, the equating of Black people to apes was a common metaphor employed in the colonial era, reflecting the notion that Black people were primitive beings, and thus not fully evolved. In the 19th and early 20th century, the notion of Black people as apes was expressed in mainstream popular culture, with postcards and cartoons often visually depicting Black people as monkeys or apes, or portraying them in a simian-like manner (e.g., eating with their hands; Stapels, 2009).

In more recent times, such overtly dehumanizing representations have largely fallen out of favor, although some extreme views still hold, as noted by the recent rise of the White supremacy movement (Huber, 2016). Nonetheless, research suggests that these Black-ape associations still persist in the minds of Americans. For example, Goff and colleagues (2008) demonstrated support for an implicit association between Black faces and apes. The researchers found a bidirectional association between these concepts, such that priming participants with Black faces facilitated the identification of ape images, and vice versa. This association was unrelated to participants' attitudes toward Black people and did not vary as a function of whether participants were aware that Black people had a historical association with apes. In addition, the researchers demonstrated that the association carried important real-world implications for the treatment of African Americans. In one of Goff and colleagues' (2008) studies, participants who had been primed with apes were more likely to justify police brutality when they thought the suspect to be Black, as opposed to White.

Goff and colleagues (2008) explored the "Black-ape" association as it applied specifically to Black men and thus to date it is unknown whether such an association holds in relation to Black women. Nonetheless, there is some evidence to suggest that Black women are also dehumanized in an animalistic sense. For instance, content analyses of fashion advertisements have demonstrated that Black women are often portrayed as predatory and animal-like. In their analysis of 1,800 advertisements from women's magazines, Plous and Neptune (1997) found that Black women were shown wearing animal print much more often than White women were—of the ads containing an animal-patterned print, 70% featured a Black woman in the advertisement.

Mechanistic Dehumanization and Objectification

There is also much evidence to suggest that Black people are dehumanized by being likened to objects. One way in which this can occur is through being transformed into a sexual object, whereby the individual is reduced from being a person to the status of a mere instrument, who can then be used and consumed for the pleasure of others (mechanistic dehumanization; Bartky, 1990).

Current understandings of sexual objectification largely stem from the work of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), who began writing on the topic two decades ago. In their seminal paper "Objectification Theory," Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argued that via interpersonal experiences of being treated as an object (e.g., catcalling) and sexualized media depictions, women learn to internalize an observer's perspective and come to view the self through an objectified lens. This process of self-objectification then facilitates an

abundance of negative mental health outcomes for the self, such as body shame and depression (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Over the past 20 years, a growing body of literature has demonstrated considerable support for objectification theory (see Roberts, Calogero, & Gervais, 2017 for a review), showing that sexual objectification experiences are becoming increasingly common in Western societies (e.g., Holland, Koval, Stratemeyer, Thomson, & Haslam, 2017; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001) and are experienced more frequently by women compared to men (Swim et al., 2001). The literature suggests that objectifying perceptions facilitate a host of damaging outcomes for the targeted individual, contributing to the view that they are less competent (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009), less worthy of moral consideration and treatment (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2016; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013), more responsible for being raped (Bernard, Loughnan, Godart, Marchal, & Klein, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2013), and more deserving of maltreatment (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2016).

However, little research has examined the role of race in objectifying perceptions. There is reason to suggest that a target's racial background may affect people's tendency to objectify them. Recent research suggests that Black women report higher levels of experienced objectification than other ethnic groups (Watson, Marszalek, Dispenza, & Davids, 2015; Watson, Robinson, Dispenza, & Nazari, 2012). Further, the sexualization of Black women may contribute to their objectification by others (Jewell, 1993). A large body of research suggests that being presented in sexualized ways facilitates a target's objectification (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010). One common stereotypical representation of Black women is that of the Jezebel—an alluring and seductive African American woman who is highly sexualized and valued purely for her sexuality (Donovan, 2007; Jewell, 1993). According to Jewell (1993), the Jezebel is a "worldly seductress" who "fulfils the sex objectification requirement of white womanhood" (p. 46). She is reduced to her body and treated as little more than a tool that exists for the pleasure of others. Although hypersexuality and many features of the Jezebel stereotype can also be imposed on White women, the notion of the Jezebel is particularly pronounced for Black women, signifying their inferior status (Jewell, 1993).

The Jezebel stereotype was particularly common during slavery (Donovan, 2007), when African American women's bodies were socially controlled as sexual objects based on racist, classist, and sexist ideologies (hooks, 1981). However, the stereotype still persists today, exemplified in the way Black women are represented in mainstream media. Recent research suggests that Black women are hypersexualized to a greater degree in the media than are White women. For instance, Turner (2011) analyzed the content of 120 music videos, finding that Black women characters (both central and background characters) were significantly more likely to appear in provocative clothing than any other character type, including White women. Other content analyses have revealed that Black women are typically depicted as hypersexual in rap music videos, with an overemphasis on their sexualized physical appearance (e.g., Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Rather than being shown as active agents in the clips, they are presented simply as decorative objects—their sole purpose being to look attractive and desirable to male audiences.

Finally, research also suggests that the consequences of sexualization, including sexual violence, are far greater for Black women than they are for White women. For instance, Black survivors of rape are not only considered more sexually promiscuous than White women (Donovan, 2007), they are also less likely to have the experience defined as rape, are held more responsible, and others are less likely to believe the incident should be reported to authorities, compared to White survivors of rape (Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995). A recent study found that individuals feel less willing and less obliged to intervene in a situation involving a Black woman at risk of sexual assault, compared to a situation in which her race is unspecified (Katz, Merrilees, Hoxmeier, & Motisi, 2017).

Overview of Present Research

Extant research suggests that Black women are depicted in an objectifying manner to a greater extent than White women in Western media. Thus, it should follow that Black women are sexually objectified by others to a greater degree than are White women. However, no research to date has tested this claim. The purpose of the present research was thus to examine objectifying perceptions toward Black women, compared with White women.

In addition to varying the target's race, we sought to manipulate the target's sexualization. Given the prominence of the sexualized Jezebel stereotype, and research suggesting that sexualization leads to objectification (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010), we hypothesized that objectification would be particularly pronounced for Black women under conditions of sexualization (i.e., when the target was displayed in a bikini, compared to regular clothing).

We sought to examine objectification in two different ways. First, we assessed levels of the objectifying gaze toward Black and White women targets (Study 1), and second, we examined implicit associations between Black and White women targets and animal, object, or human attributes (Studies 2a and 2b). Given that the existing literature has predominantly focused on the objectification and dehumanization of Black people by White people (e.g., Donovan, 2007; Goff et al., 2008), we chose to employ only White participants across both studies. Further, given the theoretical argument that a circle of objectification exists among women (e.g., Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005), and research showing that women do indeed objectify other women (Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005), we included men and

women participants in both studies. In sum, our overarching hypothesis was that Black women would be objectified and dehumanized to a greater extent than White women, particularly when dressed in sexualized attire.

Study 1

The purpose of our first study was to examine the possibility that Black women are visually objectified to a greater extent than their White counterparts, particularly when presented in a sexualized manner. The objectifying gaze refers to the visual inspection or "checking out" of the body and is central to feminist and psychological accounts of objectification (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Mulvey, 1989; Nussbaum, 1995). The gaze occurs both at an interpersonal level, with women's bodies being ogled in daily interactions (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007; Swim et al., 2001), and through visual media, whereby the camera lens commonly focuses on women's bodies more so than their faces (Archer, Iritani, Kimes, & Barrios, 1983) and depicts the visual inspection of women's bodies (e.g., Aubrey & Frisby, 2011). In regard to interpersonal objectification, recent research suggests that the gaze is the most common form of objectification that women report, constituting 55% of objectifying experiences (Holland, Koval et al., 2017). Although the gaze was originally referred to as the "male gaze" (Mulvey, 1989), recent work suggests that both men and women engage in the visual inspection of women's bodies (Gervais, Holland, & Dodds, 2013).

A number of studies have explored the consequences of experiencing the objectifying gaze—either enacted or imagined—on women's wellbeing and performance. Research has shown that experiencing the objectifying gaze leads to reduced math performance (Gervais, Vescio, & Allen, 2011), increased body shame and social physique anxiety (Calogero, 2004), and increased self-silencing (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010). To our knowledge, only two studies have actually measured the extent to which we demonstrate the objectifying gaze toward others.

Holland and Haslam (2013) assessed the gaze via a modified dot-probe paradigm. In their study, participants were asked to press the space bar as soon as they saw a red dot appear on the screen. The dot was located either where a target's face had previously been shown or in the location of their body. Faster reaction times to dots appearing in the location of the target's bodies compared to their faces was indicative of a greater objectifying gaze. Although construed as a measure of the objectifying gaze, the modified dot-probe task is not without limitations. In particular, given the nature of the task, the measure was only able to capture where participants initially attended to on the screen. Thus, it only provided information regarding what captured participants' attention first, and not how that attention was sustained or changed over time.

With a different measure of the gaze, Gervais and colleagues (2013) assessed visual attention toward the bodies of targets via the use of eye-tracking technology. This approach provides a much more fine-grained understanding of visual attention, allowing for the tracking of participants' eye movements as they change over time. Gervais and colleagues assessed the objectifying gaze via two measures. First, they assessed how long participants spent fixating on the face as well as on the sexualized regions of the body (i.e., chest, hip/waist); longer times dwelling on sexualized body parts indicated greater objectification. Second, similar to the modified dot-probe task, Gervais and colleagues measured where participants first attended to on the target; faster times to first fixate on the sexualized body parts indicated more objectification. The authors also provided validity information for both measures, with participants demonstrating greater visual objectification when asked to focus on the target's appearance rather than their personality, a commonly employed manipulation of objectification (Heflick & Goldenberg 2009; Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011). Findings from these two studies demonstrate that, at least within Western cultures, the objectifying gaze is more pronounced when the targets are skinny and/or sexualized (Holland & Haslam, 2013), and conform to the ideal body shape (Gervais et al., 2013). However, no research to date has explored how the race of a target affects the extent to which different racial groups are visually objectified by others.

Following Gervais and colleagues' (2013) approach, in this study, we examined the objectifying gaze with women targets via an eye-tracking device. We predicted that participants would attend more to the bodies of Black women targets compared to White women targets. Further, in line with research by Holland and Haslam (2013), we expected that participants would attend more to the bodies of sexualized targets compared to non-sexualized targets. Finally, in line with the Jezebel stereotype, we anticipated an interaction between the targets' race and their level of sexualization; we predicted the racial effect would be stronger when the targets were presented in a sexualized manner (i.e., in a bikini). In other words, we predicted that targets conforming to the Jezebel stereotype (i.e., Black targets in a bikini) would encounter the greatest visual objectification.

Method

Participants

A power analysis was conducted with G-Power Version 3.1.9.2 to determine the required sample size to detect a medium effect (based on previous work detecting medium sized effects of the objectifying gaze: Gervais et al., 2013; Holland & Haslam, 2013), with 80% power and a 5% significance level. For a within-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) with four measures, a sample of 24 participants was required to achieve sufficient power. The final sample

consisted of 38 White undergraduate students (28 women) from a university in the Southwest of the United States recruited from flyers on campus. Participants were aged between 18 and 23 years (M_{age} = 19.17 years, SD = 1.09). Participants were offered partial course credit in exchange for their participation and were fully informed of the aims of this study and gave their consent for their data to be included in the study before agreeing to participate.

Materials

Images. The final stimuli set consisted of 20 color images of women targets sourced from the websites of online retailers (e.g., ASOS, Shopbop), which we varied based on the target's race (Black vs. White) and their level of sexualized presentation (sexualized vs. non-sexualized; see Figure S1: Online Supplemental Material at http://journals.sagepub .com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684318791543 for sample images). Half of the images presented White women targets (of which, half were shown in a bikini, and half in a casual top and pants), and the other half were of Black women targets (again, half were shown in a bikini, and half in a casual top and pants; images presented in Table S2). To minimize the possibility of visual contrast effects, whereby participants may direct their attention to features of the image that stand out the most, we edited the sexualized images such that the color of the swimwear did not differ substantially from the color of the target's skin. Each target was presented standing in front of a plain white background and looking directly toward the camera. All images were standardized in size (550 × 750 pixels). Stimuli were matched on facial prominence, such that the face-ism index of each image (i.e., the proportion of the image occupied by the face relative to the whole body; Archer et al., 1983) was standardized at a value of 0.23. Thus, the images presented each target from the top of the head to just above the knee.

Images were selected on the basis of a pilot study with a separate sample of 170 participants recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk™ (MTurk; 101 men; M_{age} = 36.22 years, SD = 11.34), conducted prior to the main experiment. Specifically, these participants completed an online task in which they viewed images of a random subset of 20 targets taken from a database of 140 images. For each image, participants indicated their perception of the target's attractiveness (1 = *not at all attractive*, 5 = *very attractive*) and expressiveness (1 = *not at all expressive*, 5 = *very expressive*). They also indicated which race they perceived the target to be, with the possibility of selecting more than one option. Each of the images was rated by between 24 and 44 participants. Given that each participant only rated a subset of images, the data were analyzed at the level of the target. We analyzed the database of 140 images and selected 20 images (five per condition) that were most similar in attractiveness and expressiveness. Our analyses revealed that there were no effects of target sexualization or race on perceptions of

attractiveness and expressiveness, nor any interactions between these factors (all ps > .188). As expected, participants rated the race of the targets accurately. Each Black target was rated as being Black by at least 96% of participants (and rated as White by a maximum of 4% of participants); the White targets were rated as White by 100% of participants (with 0% of participants rating them as Black).

Procedure

Participants were recruited for a study about how we form impressions of women. They were told that they would be viewing pictures of women and rating their impressions of them. They completed the experiment while seated in front of a Tobii T60 XL Eye Tracker, which recorded their gaze behavior. The screen resolution of the monitor was 1,280 × 1,024 pixels, and the eye-tracker had a sampling rate of 60 Hz. Participants sat at a distance of 60 cm from the monitor. All tasks were presented via the software, Tobii Studio Version 3.2.

Participants first completed a 9-point adult calibration procedure, whereby they were instructed to follow a small red dot with their eyes as it moved to nine different locations on the screen. Once calibration was complete, participants then viewed each of the 20 target images. As Tobii Studio does not enable counterbalancing of stimuli, images were presented in a standardized order. However, we initially randomized the order of presentation so that there was no systematic ordering of the four types of images displayed. Each image was superimposed on a plain white background and was displayed on the screen for a duration of 8 seconds. Following the presentation of each image, participants were asked to rate each target on perceptions of warmth and competence. These measures were not of central interest to the current study and were included solely to ensure participants focused on the images during the task. As such, these measures are not analyzed in the current article (refer to Table S1 in the Supplemental Material for further details of the precise items used, in addition to descriptive statistics for each measure, presented in Table S1). After viewing and rating all 20 images, participants provided demographic information, before being fully debriefed. The study procedure lasted approximately 10 minutes, and participants received course credit for their participation.

Data Analysis

Consistent with previous eye-tracking research (e.g., Amir, Zvielli, & Bernstein, 2016; Holland, Wolf, Looser, & Cuddy, 2017), we defined fixations according to the default parameters of Tobii Studio software's velocity threshold identification. This excluded all fixations below 60 ms, as these were deemed too short to provide meaningful data (Olsen, 2012). To examine participants' gaze behavior, we created areas of interest (AOIs) using Tobii Studio. Specifically, we created four separate AOIs for each image. The first three AOIs (encompassing the target's face, chest, and hip/waist
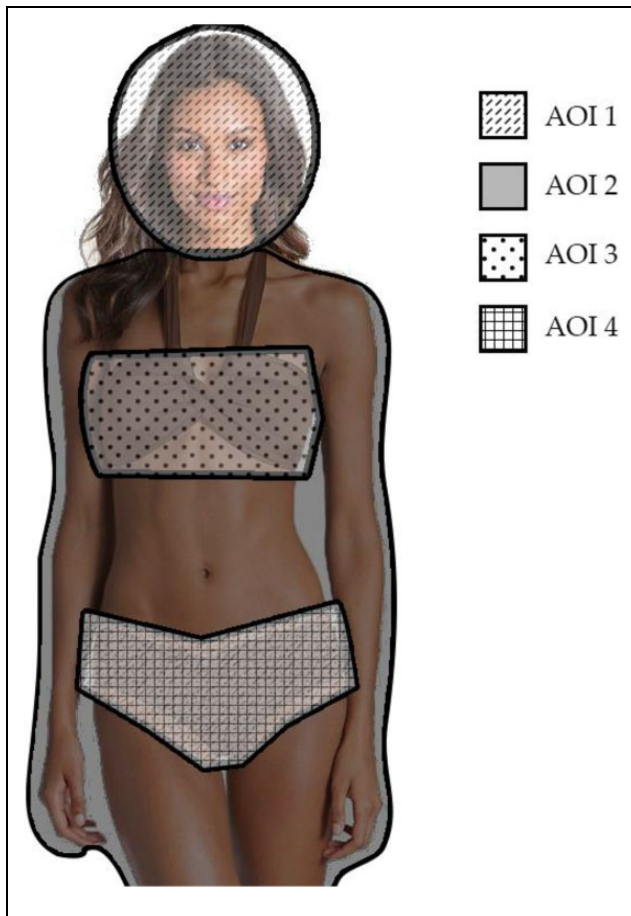
Figure 1. An example stimuli of a sexualized Black woman target highlighting the various areas of interest (AOIs) used in Study 1. Color images are available as Online Supplemental Material at http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684318791543

region, respectively) were selected on the basis of previous research assessing the objectifying gaze (Gervais et al., 2013). In addition, we created a fourth AOI encompassing the full range of the body that was displayed (∼knees to head) minus the face. AOIs are presented in Figure 1. We chose to include this latter AOI, given that the objectifying gaze has been theorized as the visual inspection of the body, generally speaking (e.g., Mulvey, 1989). Further, research manipulating the gaze has not focused exclusively on the sexualized regions, exposing participants to visual inspection below the neck (Saguy et al., 2010), or a generalized up-down glance (Gervais et al., 2011). Thus, in addition to how participants attended to the sexualized body parts of the target, we were interested in visual attention to the body overall.

We were interested in two different eye-tracking metrics: (1) How long participants spent fixating on the AOIs (i.e., fixation duration) and (2) how many times participants fixated on the AOIs (i.e., number of fixations). For each of these metrics, we assessed two different forms of the objectifying gaze—attention to the target's body and attention to the target's sexualized body parts (i.e., chest and hip regions). Below we specify how each of our gaze variables was assessed.

Fixation duration. For our first measure of the objectifying gaze, we assessed it as the average proportion of time spent fixating on the body. To calculate this, we took the average total fixation duration on the body AOI (i.e., AOI 2 in Figure 1) and divided it by the average total fixation duration on the body plus the face AOI for each image (i.e., AOI 1 + AOI 2 in Figure 1). Thus, scores reflected the amount of time participants spent fixating on the target's bodies relative to how much they fixated on the target overall. Second, we assessed the objectifying gaze as the average proportion of time spent fixating just on the target's sexualized body parts. This was measured as the average total fixation duration on the chest AOI plus the hip/waist AOI (i.e., AOI 3 + AOI 4 in Figure 1), divided by the average fixation duration on the whole body plus the face for each image (i.e., AOI 1 + AOI 2 in Figure 1). Fixation duration scores reflected how much time participants spent fixating on the target's sexualized body parts as a function of how much time they fixated on the targets overall. On both measures, scores ranged from 0 to 1, with higher scores reflecting more of the objectifying gaze.

Number of fixations. To calculate the proportion of fixations on the body for each image, we first divided the number of fixations on the body AOI by the number of fixations on the target (i.e., the sum of fixations on body AOI and face AOI). Second, to calculate the proportion of fixations on the target's sexualized body parts, we divided the sum of the number of fixations on the chest and hip/waist AOIs by the number of fixations on the target. Again, scores ranged from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating a higher degree of the objectifying gaze.

All reported analyses are based on a 2 (Target Race [Black, White]) × 2 (Target Sexualization [sexualized, non-sexualized]) within-subjects design. We did not include participant gender as a factor given the small number of men participants in the present study, and on the basis of research suggesting that women also objectify other women (e.g., Gervais et al., 2013; Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). However, including participant gender as an independent variable revealed no effect of gender on the objectifying gaze (all *p*s > .192).

Results

Data Screening and Treatment

The variable assessing the fixation duration on the body for both the White and Black targets were positively skewed, caused by a single case on each variable identified as an outlier (*Z*s = 3.41 and 3.38, respectively). These outliers were treated by replacing their value with the mean + 3*SD* (as recommended by Field & Miles, 2011), which corrected

these issues of non-normality. No other assumptions of the statistical tests used were violated, and there were no missing data points in Study 1.

Fixation Duration

Using the proportion of time fixating on the body as the dependent variable, the results demonstrated a main effect of target sexualization, $F(1, 37) = 64.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .64$, with participants fixating significantly longer on the bodies of sexualized targets ($M = .50$; $SE = .02$) compared to non-sexualized targets ($M = .37$; $SE = .02$). Although there was no main effect of target race, $F(1, 37) = 2.94$, $p = .095$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, as predicted there was a significant interaction between target race and target sexualization, $F(1, 37) = 4.71$, $p = .036$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Specifically, target race had no effect on how long participants spent fixating on the bodies of non-sexualized targets, $t(37) = -0.57$, $p = .788$, 95% CI [−.02, .02], but it affected how long they fixated on the bodies of sexualized targets, $t(37) = 2.43$, $p = .020$, 95% CI [.01, .06], with participants fixating significantly longer on the bodies of Black sexualized targets ($M = .51$; $SE = .02$) compared to White sexualized targets ($M = .48$; $SE = .03$).

As for the proportion of time fixating on the sexualized body parts in particular, again we found a main effect of target sexualization, $F(1, 37) = 123.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .77$, with participants fixating significantly longer on the sexualized body parts of sexualized targets ($M = .30$; $SE = .02$) compared to non-sexualized targets ($M = .17$; $SE = .01$). A main effect of target race also emerged, $F(1, 37) = 10.25$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$, whereby participants spent longer fixating on the sexualized body parts of Black targets ($M = .25$; $SE = .01$) compared to White targets ($M = .22$; $SE = .01$). In contrast to the other measure, there was no significant interaction between race and sexualization, $F(1, 37) = 3.55$, $p = .068$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$.

Number of Fixations

We found a main effect of target sexualization on the proportion of fixations on the body, $F(1, 37) = 95.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .72$, with participants fixating significantly more often on the bodies of sexualized targets ($M = .66$; $SE = .02$) compared to non-sexualized targets ($M = .55$; $SE = .02$). No effect of race emerged, nor any interaction (all $ps > .088$).

In terms of the proportion of fixations on the sexualized body parts, a main effect of target sexualization also emerged, $F(1, 37) = 138.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .79$, with participants fixating significantly longer on the sexualized body parts of sexualized targets ($M = .39$; $SE = .01$) compared to non-sexualized targets ($M = .29$; $SE = .01$). Target race also affected the proportion of fixations on sexualized body parts, $F(1, 37) = 5.70$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, in that participants fixated more often on the sexualized body parts of Black

women ($M = .34$; $SE = .01$) compared to White women ($M = .32$; $SE = .01$).

However, an interaction emerged between these two factors, $F(1, 37) = 10.23$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. Although the effect of race was significant among sexualized targets, $t(32) = 3.82$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.02, .07], with participants fixating more on the sexualized body parts of sexualized Black targets ($M = .41$; $SE = .02$) compared to sexualized White targets ($M = .36$; $SE = .02$), the difference among non-sexualized targets was not significant, $t(37) = -0.43$, $p = .751$, 95% CI [−.03, .02].

Discussion

In sum, our results suggest that White participants visually objectify Black women to a greater degree than White women and that this effect is particularly pronounced under conditions of sexualization. Participants spent significantly longer focusing on the bodies of Black women when sexualized, and in particular fixated more often on the sexualized body regions (e.g., the hips/waist and chest) relative to White sexualized women. This is consistent with the Jezebel stereotype, demonstrating that the portrayal of Black women in sexualized ways contributes to their objectification to a greater degree than White women.

In addition to providing evidence that Black women are targeted by the objectifying gaze more than White women, our results suggest that sexualization facilitates the objectifying gaze. Our findings thus replicate and extend those of Holland and Haslam (2013), demonstrating that beyond being faster to fixate on the bodies of sexualized targets, participants fixate more often on those regions and for longer durations.

One limitation of Study 1 is the disproportionate number of women participants, relative to men. There were almost 3 times as many women in the sample than men. However, in line with previous research suggesting that men and women do not differ in the extent to which they visually focus on women's bodies (Gervais et al., 2013; Holland & Haslam, 2013), there may be little reason to expect that a more equal composition would have drastically affected the results.

Although the objectifying gaze is an important manifestation of objectification (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gervais et al., 2011), it is not the only one. As philosophers have long argued, objectification also involves stripping an individual of their humanity (e.g., Kant, 1963; Nussbaum, 1995). Thus, the purpose of Study 2 was to explore how a target's race and sexualization leads people to dehumanize them, in particular to associate them with both animals and objects.

Study 2

In Study 2, we examined the influence of race and sexualization on the strength of implicit (i.e., automatic) associations between women targets and attributes related to their

dehumanization. We drew on Haslam's (2006) theorizing of humanness, which posits both animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization. As previously discussed, Black people have been likened to animals throughout history (e.g., Goff et al., 2008; Jahoda, 1999), and the subtle association between Black people and animals persists today (Goff et al., 2008). However, no research to date has explored whether there is an association between Black women and animals, nor how that relation may compare with associations with White women. And, although Black women are commonly depicted in a decorative and object-like manner in mainstream media (e.g., Plous & Neptune, 1997), no work to date has explored the effect of race on implicit object associations.

Study 2 was thus designed to examine the influence of target race (Black & White women) and sexualization on implicit associations with animal and object attributes. Previous researchers measuring implicit objectification processes have used the typical or single-category Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGee, & Schwartz, 1998). However, due to its methodological advantages (Nosek & Banaji, 2001) and the growing range of empirical evidence supporting its reliability and validity (Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2014; Williams & Kaufmann, 2012), we instead employed a Go/No-Go Association Task (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001).

Previous work examining the implicit dehumanization of women has demonstrated that sexualized women are more strongly implicitly associated with animals than non-sexualized women (Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011). Similarly, sexualized women are more strongly implicitly associated with animals than men (both sexualized and non-sexualized; Vaes et al., 2011). However, neither of these studies assessed the extent to which women were implicitly likened to objects—the only study thus far to have explored women's implicit association with objects is that by Rudman and Mescher (2012). The authors found that men with the propensity to implicitly liken women to objects demonstrated greater rape proclivity. Men who scored higher on the implicit animalization of women also demonstrated greater sexual aggression and more negative attitudes toward women rape victims.

The aim of Study 2 was to extend previous work by exploring the effect of both target race and sexualization on the animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization of women. We predicted stronger implicit associations between Black women and animals/objects compared to White women. Further, in line with previous work (e.g., Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes et al., 2011), we expected sexualized targets to be more strongly implicitly associated with animals and objects than their non-sexualized counterparts. Last, we anticipated an interaction between race and sexualization as in Study 1, whereby animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization would be strongest for Black women when they were depicted in a sexualized manner in line with the Jezebel stereotype.

Method

Design

To test the hypotheses of Study 2, we used a 3 (Attribute [Human, Animal, Object]) × 2 (Target Sexualization [Sexualized, Non-Sexualized]) × 2 (Target Ethnicity [Black, White]) mixed-model design. This combination would have resulted in participants responding to 12 experimental GNAT blocks. In order to alleviate effects caused by the excessive amount of time that this would require, we decided to manipulate one of these variables as a between-subjects factor, meaning participants would respond to just six experimental blocks. Whichever way the 12 blocks were allocated, there was a potential for confounds—if we manipulated the targets' sexualization as the between-subject factor, each participant would have a focus on the targets' ethnicity (and would not see the sexualization contrast), and vice versa was true if we manipulated the targets' ethnicity. In order to fully address the hypotheses of the study, we decided that each contrast was important, so we opted to conduct two studies. Thus, in Study 2a, the target sexualization factor was between-subjects and the remaining variables were within-subjects, whereas in Study 2b we manipulated target ethnicity between-subjects (see Table 1).

Participants

A power analysis was conducted with G-Power to determine the required sample size in order to detect a small effect with 80% power and a 5% significance level. For a within-subjects ANOVA with two groups and six measurements, a sample of 111 participants was required to achieve sufficient power. We oversampled, recruiting 300 online participants through Amazon's MTurk[5]—half were allocated to the protocol for Study2a, and the other half to Study 2b. All participants were paid US$1.50 for their time. MTurk is a crowd sourcing platform that has become very frequently used in social psychological research (see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). This platform allows researchers to source appropriate participants to complete online tasks—we restricted our sample to "master workers" (a qualification granted by Amazon to MTurk; MTurk master workers consistently complete their tasks in an acceptable fashion, thus ensuring a level of data quality). In addition, it allows researchers to access a sample this is more representative than typically at their disposal (e.g., student-based samples), which is important for research on socially sensitive topics. Participants accessed the platform from a U.S.-based internet protocol (IP) address.

Study 2a

From the original sample of 150 people, 19 participants were removed based on a performance score on the implicit task that was at or below that expected by chance (i.e., less than 50% response classification accuracy). An additional

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Go/No-Go Association Task Blocks as a Function of Target and Distracter Categories (Studies 2a and 2b).

| | | | | | M (SE) | | | |
| | | | | | Study 2a | | Study 2b | |
Factor Measured	Target Category	Category Distractor	Target Attribute	Attribute Distractor	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Black targets								
Humanness	Black sexualized women	White sexualized women	Human-related attributes	Animal/object-related attributes[a]	—	2.16 (.10)	—	2.10 (.11)
	Black non-sexualized women	White non-sexualized women	Human-related attributes	Animal/object-related attributes[a]	2.18 (.10)	—	—	2.10 (.09)
Mechanistic dehumanization	Black sexualized women	White sexualized women	Object-related attributes	Human-related attributes	—	3.00 (.12)	—	2.78 (.12)
	Black non-sexualized women	White non-sexualized women	Object-related attributes	Human-related attributes	2.98 (.14)	—	—	2.96 (.13)
Animalistic dehumanization	Black sexualized women	White sexualized women	Animal-related attributes	Human-related attributes	—	2.97 (.12)	—	3.41 (.15)
	Black non-sexualized women	White non-sexualized women	Animal-related attributes	Human-related attributes	2.96 (.11)	—	—	3.02 (.14)
White targets								
Humanness	White sexualized women	Black sexualized women	Human-related attributes	Animal/object-related attributes[a]	—	2.24 (.10)	2.10 (.09)	—
	White non-sexualized women	Black non-sexualized women	Human-related attributes	Animal/object-related attributes[a]	2.27 (.09)	—	2.21 (.10)	—
Mechanistic dehumanization	White sexualized women	Black sexualized women	Object-related attributes	Human-related attributes	—	2.81 (.13)	2.73 (.11)	—
	White non-sexualized women	Black non-sexualized women	Object-related attributes	Human-related attributes	2.71 (.12)	—	2.88 (.13)	—
Animalistic dehumanization	White sexualized women	Black sexualized women	Animal-related attributes	Human-related attributes	—	2.55 (.12)	2.72 (.12)	—
	White non-sexualized women	Black non-sexualized women	Animal-related attributes	Human-related attributes	2.67 (.12)	—	2.92 (.16)	—

Note. Participant Group 1 viewed non-sexualized targets (both White and Black; $n = 68$), Group 2 viewed sexualized targets (both White and Black; $n = 52$), Group 3 viewed White targets (both sexualized and non-sexualized; $n = 61$), and Group 4 viewed Black targets (both sexualized and non-sexualized; $n = 64$).
[a]Signifies that the distractors were evenly split between animal attributes and object attributes.

11 non-White participants were excluded, given that the dehumanization and objectification of Black people have historically been enacted by White people. Nonetheless, the inclusion of these non-White participants did not alter the results. The final sample comprised 120 participants (52 women), ranging in age from 19 to 68 ($M_{age} = 36.48$ years, $SD = 11.78$).

Study 2b

From the original sample of 150 people, 11 participants were removed due to below chance performance in the implicit task. As per Study 2a, an additional 8 non-White participants were excluded, thereby allowing for a racially homogenous sample. The final sample comprised 131 participants (57 women), ranging in age from 20 to 73 ($M_{age} = 39.02$ years, $SD = 11.63$).

Materials

Go/No-Go Association Task (GNAT). The GNAT was used to assess participants' implicit objectification (Nosek & Banaji, 2001). The GNAT is a computerized measure of implicit association designed to assess discrepancies between task performance of well-rehearsed (i.e., congruent) and less well-rehearsed (i.e., incongruent) associative pairs. In Studies 2a and 2b, a 12-block GNAT was designed to measure implicit associations between target categories (Black and White; sexualized and non-sexualized) and target attributes (human, object, animal).

In this task, participants are asked to classify rapidly presented stimuli as belonging (or not belonging) to the category or attribute that are the targets for that block. For each block, the target category and attribute are labeled in the top right- and left-hand corner of the screen, respectively. Participants are then instructed that stimuli will be presented rapidly in the

center of the computer screen, and if those stimuli match either label they should press the <SPACE BAR> (i.e., a "go" response), otherwise they should make no response (i.e., a "no-go" response) and wait for next stimuli to appear. Each block comprised 20 practice trials and 80 experimental trials, randomized so that approximately half the trials contained targets and the remainder contained distracters. Each trial had a response deadline of 600 ms, separated by an inter-stimulus interval of 200 ms. Feedback followed every trial with a green "O" following correct responses and a red "X" following incorrect responses. Prior to each block, participants were presented with a complete set of target words to attenuate learning curves, and the blocks were presented in a randomized fashion.

We used the same set of images as per Study 1 (i.e., five sexualized White women, five sexualized Black women, five non-sexualized White women, and five non-sexualized Black women). All images were standardized at 227 × 309 pixels. Three sets of six words were used as attribute stimuli. These words were based on previous research in this domain (Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2011), and were matched for word length, with no differences existing between the average number of characters in each word set, $\chi(2) = .06$, $p = .969$.

The word sets were human-based attributes (e.g., SOCIETY; $M_{\text{length}} = 6.33$ characters, $SD = 1.11$), object-based attributes (e.g., DEVICE; $M_{\text{length}} = 6.50$ characters, $SD = 2.50$), and animal-based attributes (e.g., NATURE; $M_{\text{length}} = 6.33$ characters, $SD = 1.11$). Word stimuli were presented in white 24-point uppercase Arial font. All stimuli were presented against a black background screen. A description of GNAT blocks as a function of target and distractor stimuli with group means and *SD*s are presented in Table 1.

Implicit association scores were calculated using the signal detection theory index of d' (e.g., Green and Swets, 1966), which is based on the ratio of correctly identified targets and incorrectly identified distracters. Higher scores represent stronger implicit associations (i.e., more accurate responses) with that target attribute. The reliability scores were acceptable for all blocks ($M_{\text{RaSSH}} = .73$, $SD_{\text{RaSSH}} = .08$) and were calculated using the method described by Williams and Kaufmann (2012).

Procedure

Participants were recruited through MTurk where they could read a full description of the study (i.e., the aims were not concealed). Those agreeing to participate were redirected to the website hosting the experiment (http://www.millisecond. com/), where they indicated their informed consent before being randomly allocated into one of two conditions. In Study 2a, of the 120 participants in the final sample, a random allocation of participants to these conditions resulted in 68 individuals being randomly allocated to responded to the six blocks in which the non-sexualized stimuli were presented, and another 52 allocated to respond to the six blocks in which

the sexualized stimuli were presented. In Study 2b, of the 131 participants in the final sample, 69 responded to White women targets, and 62 responded to Black women targets. In both studies, these between-subjects conditions were deemed necessary to address potential concerns (i.e., fatigue and boredom effects) that were anticipated should the online sample respond to the full 12 blocks. After being allocated to a condition, participants responded to a series of demographic items and then the implicit measure. The experimental blocks of the implicit measure were counterbalanced in order to limit order effects. Finally, participants were debriefed about the purposes of the experiment.

Data Analysis

To explore the role of race and sexualization in implicit dehumanization, we used a 3 (Attribute [Human, Animal, Object]) × 2 (Target Race [Black, White]) × 2 (Target Sexualization [Sexualized, Non-Sexualized]) mixed-design ANOVA. In Study 2a, the target sexualization factor was between-subjects, and the remaining variables were within-subjects, whereas in Study 2b, we instead manipulated target ethnicity between-subjects (see Table 1). In Study 2, there were no outliers, and the data met all the assumptions necessary for the inferential analyses detailed below.

Results

Study 2a

The mixed-model ANOVA revealed a main effect of attribute, $F(2, 110) = 83.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .60$, and a main effect of target race, $F(1, 110) = 27.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .61$. However, each of these main effects were qualified by their interaction, $F(2, 110) = 7.58$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. The first series of post-hoc tests explored if the strength of implicit associations varied as a function of the target's race. Paired sample *t*-tests revealed the strength of implicit associations with human attributes were the same for Black and White women, $t(115) = 1.31$, $p = .179$, Cohen's $d = 0.16$, but were stronger with Black women than White women for both associations with objects, $t(117) = -4.01$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = -0.74$, and animals, $t(115) = -2.82$, $p = .006$, Cohen's $d = -0.53$. The second series of post-hoc tests explored differences in the strength of implicit associations between attributes for each race. In the case of White women ($\eta_p^2 = .13$), associations with both object ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = .59$) and animal attributes ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = .42$) were stronger than associations with human attributes but did not differ from each other ($p = .426$, Cohen's $d = .13$). In the case of Black women, the same pattern of results was revealed, albeit slightly stronger ($\eta_p^2 = .37$); again, associations with both object ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = .64$) and animal attributes ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = .89$) were stronger than associations with human attributes but did not differ from each other ($p = 1.00$, Cohen's $d = -.06$). The descriptive findings of the
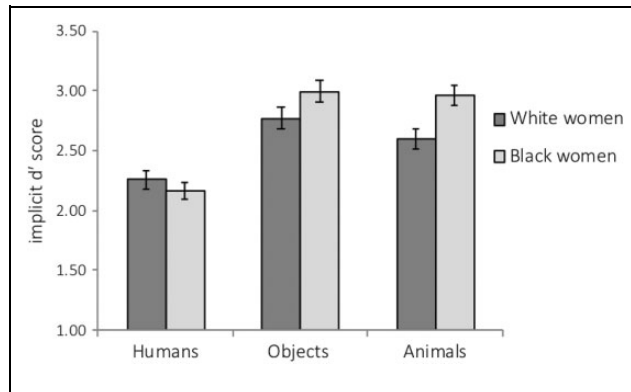
Figure 2. Mean d' scores of associations between Black and White women and human-, object-, or animal-attributes in Study 2a. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE*; data are collapsed across sexualization condition.

Figure 3. Mean d' scores of associations between Black and White women and human-, object-, or animal-attributes in Study 2b. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE*; data are collapsed across sexualization condition.

significant interaction are presented in Figure 2. Contrary to predictions, there was no main effect of target sexualization, $F(1, 111) = 0.74$, $p = .786$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$, nor did this variable interact with the other variables at the second, $F(1, 111) = 0.27$, $p = .604$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$; $F(2, 111) = 0.71$, $p = .927$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$ (target race and attribute, respectively); or third order, $F(2, 110) = 1.01$, $p = .379$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$.

Study 2b

The mixed-model ANOVA revealed a main effect of attribute, $F(2, 102) = 109.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .68$, and a main effect of target race, $F(1, 105) = 122.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .70$. As with Study 1, there was an attribute by target race interaction, $F(2, 104) = 5.16$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. The first series of post-hoc tests explored if the strength of implicit associations varied as a function of the target's race. Independent sample *t*-tests revealed the strength of implicit associations with human attributes ($p = .635$, Cohen's $d = -0.01$) and object attributes ($p = .540$, Cohen's $d = 0.01$) were the same for Black and White women but were stronger with Black women than White women for associations with animals, $t(126) = -1.98$, $p = .049$, Cohen's $d = -0.35$. The second series of post-hoc tests explored differences in the strength of implicit associations between attributes for each race. In the case of White women ($\eta_p^2 = .562$), associations with both object ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.69$) and animal attributes ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.71$) were stronger than associations with human attributes but did not differ from each other ($p = 1$, Cohen's $d = 0.00$). In the case of Black women, the same pattern of results was revealed, albeit slightly stronger ($\eta_p^2 = .697$); again, associations with both object ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.78$) and animal attributes ($p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.51$) were stronger than associations with human attributes but did not differ from each other ($p = .61$). The descriptive findings of the significant interaction are presented in Figure 3. Contrary to predictions, there was no main effect of target
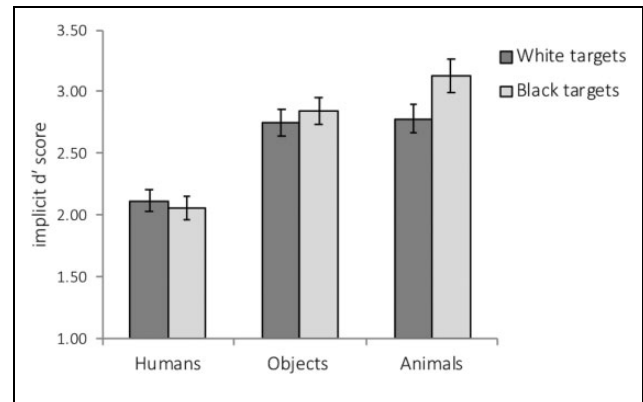
sexualization, $F(1,104) = 1.98$ $p = .163$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$, nor did this variable interact with the other variables at the second, $F(1, 104) = 2.61$ $p = .109$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$; $F(2, 103) = 0.78$ $p = .460$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$ (target race and attribute, respectively); or third order, $F(2, 104) = 0.66$ $p = .517$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.013$.

Discussion

Our results add evidence about how Black women are objectified. Although implicit associations with human attributes did not significantly differ as a function of target race, we found that Black women were animalistically and mechanistically dehumanized compared to their White peers. Stated simply, Black women were more strongly implicitly associated with animal and object concepts, which indicates their greater dehumanization compared to White women. Our results thus extend those of Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, and Jackson (2008), suggesting that not only do such implicit associations hold for Black women in addition to men, they apply in a mechanistic sense—with Black women likened to objects, as well as animals. We also present some evidence that the animalistic dehumanization effect is stronger for Black women than White women.

Unexpectedly, and in contrast to previous research (e.g., Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes et al., 2011), we did not find any effect of target sexualization on implicit associations with humans, animals, or objects. Thus, our findings were not consistent with the Jezebel stereotype—regardless of sexualization, Black women were dehumanized. This finding may be a result of methodological differences between the studies—whereas both Vaes, Paladino, and Puvia (2011) and Puvia and Vaes (2013) employed a single category IAT, in the present study we employed the GNAT. The temptation is to assume that all these implicit measures are tapping the same constructs; however, we cannot provide evidence of this so instead we must acknowledge that this could explain the differences between our findings and those reported

previously in the literature. There is also the possibility that implicit objectification (at least as elicited by associating target stimuli with animal- and object-based attributes) is a conceptually different version of the construct than objectification measured in other ways. Further research continuing to explore the construct validity of implicit (associative) objectification is warranted.

An alternative explanation for these differences might be that there are multiple conceptualizations of objectification—some that are of more sexual objectification and reflect the placement of value on others as merely an object of pleasure for consumption by others, and some that are less sexualized in nature and instead reflect the denial of others their full humanness. Thus, a plausible explanation is that the eye-tracking findings from Study 1 reflect more sexual conceptualizations of objectification (aligning with Bartky, 1990; Nussbaum, 1995), while the associative findings from Study 2 might reflect more dehumanization-based conceptualizations (aligning with Haslam, 2006). It is also worth highlighting that these differences between studies might be driven by differences in the composition of our samples and the samples in these previous studies (e.g., gender composition, age ranges, online vs. offline administration), as well as some procedural differences (different stimuli, participant exposure to the stimuli [i.e., learning curve effects]) which might also contribute to the differences between our findings and the existing literature.

General Discussion

Over the last two centuries, the blatant objectification and dehumanization of Black people has substantially diminished. Overt dehumanizing attitudes and behaviors have somewhat fallen out of favor, superseded by a broader culture of inclusivity. However, although the law no longer judges the worth of an individual on the basis of their race, the dehumanization and objectification of Black women still persists today, albeit more subtly. Across two studies, we provide some preliminary evidence for this claim. In Study 1, we found that Black women were targeted in the form of the objectifying gaze more often than their White counterparts. Consistent with the Jezebel stereotype, this effect was heightened under conditions of sexualization, with participants fixating more often on the sexualized body parts of Black women. In Studies 2a and 2b, we found that Black women were implicitly dehumanized to a greater extent than White women, subtly likened to both animals and objects.

Our findings challenge the notion that we only objectify those who conform to Western beauty ideals, at least ideals centered on Whiteness. As objectification theory suggests (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), women who adhere to Western society's expectations of beauty (i.e., those who are White, young, and slim) are the most likely targets of objectification. In contrast, those who depart from this ideal are less susceptible to objectifying perceptions. Although previous empirical

work has demonstrated some support for this idea (i.e., that women who conform to the ideal body shape [Gervais et al., 2013] and size [Holland & Haslam, 2013] are relatively more likely to attract the objectifying gaze), our findings demonstrate that this may not necessarily apply to ideals regarding race. We found Black women were more susceptible than traditionally idealized White women to objectifying perceptions. It appears likely that although adherence to the White, Western ideal may facilitate objectification, other factors such as a history of sexualization and subjugation also play a role in determining a social group's susceptibility to objectification. It would be worthwhile for researchers to explore how objectification operates in other non-White cultures with a history of sexualization (e.g., among Latina women; Beltran, 2002; Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004). Further, researchers should seek to explore how the objectification of Black women differs depending on their adherence to the White ideal. The Western media often portray Black women with physical characteristics that conform more to European, rather than African, standards of beauty (Jewell, 1993).

In the present research, we also selected idealized images of both races, largely due to their greater accessibility, and the need to standardize images across conditions. However, it would be useful to explore whether Black women who depart from this ideal (e.g., overweight, very dark skinned) are less (or more) prone to objectifying or dehumanizing perceptions than Black women who more closely resemble the ideal (e.g., thin, lighter-skinned). Conversely, and in accordance with the treatment of Saartjie Baartman (see Holmes, 2007), it could be that the more removed from the ideal, the greater the objectification (or dehumanization) of Black women.

Strengths and Limitations

To our knowledge, our study is the first to explore the effect of race on objectifying perceptions. Although a number of studies have explored the tendency of Black women to self-objectify (e.g., Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003), and experience objectification by others (e.g., Watson et al., 2012), no other research has examined how a target's race may influence their susceptibility to be objectified. Further, our research builds on existing work by using two novel measures of objectification—the objectifying gaze, and associations with animals and objects—both of which assess objectification at a more subtle and implicit level. Given that the tendency to view social categories as non-human is ingrained and unlikely to occur at a conscious level (e.g., Loughnan & Haslam, 2007), the use of more automatic and implicit measures is crucial in this line of research.

Nonetheless, there are some limitations of our work. For example, we found that across Studies 2a and 2b, women were more closely associated with words connected to animals (e.g., hibernate) and objects (e.g., instrument) than they were with words connected to being human (e.g., society). This may be partly due to the choice of human words used in the study (e.g.,

rational, logic), which align more closely with stereotypes of men than women (e.g., Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Using human words that are more women-oriented (e.g., secondary emotions) may well have produced less of a discrepancy between associations with human and non-human words. Similarly, it is likely that the word stimuli representing object- and animal-traits are inherently less positive than those representing animal traits. As such, our associative findings (Study 2) might be partially reflecting simple out-group derogation. These stimuli-based concerns warrant empirical investigation. Similarly, the target category stimuli (Black vs. White women; sexualized vs. non-sexualized) were commercially sourced and thus might not be particularly representative of these target categories under investigation. For example, all of the images that we used conform to the thin ideal (perhaps in excess), are wearing make-up, and are relatively light skinned. As we have argued, Black women who depart from Western beauty ideals (or at least those focused on Whiteness) might be more susceptible to objectification. Again, these stimuli effects should be tested empirically.

Another notable limitation is that our findings pertain to White participants only. Thus, we cannot shed light on whether Black participants also dehumanize and visually objectify Black women. We purposely chose to employ a White sample on the basis of the historical dehumanization and objectification of Black people by Whites (e.g., Jahoda, 1999), and consistent with previous empirical work (e.g., Goff et al., 2008) which has predominantly relied on White samples. That being said, it is possible that by only sampling Whites, our effects may have been driven by other processes, such as ingroup favoritism. In Study 1, for instance, our finding that White participants spent less time fixating on the bodies of White compared with Black targets, and more time fixating on the face, accords with previous research on the own-race visual preference (Anzures, Quinn, Pascalis, Slater, & Lee, 2013). However, if this were the case, we would expect it to hold across both sexualized and non-sexualized targets, which it did not. Among non-sexualized targets, White participants attended similarly to White and Black women, suggesting that it is more than simple in-group favoritism driving the effect. Nonetheless, although it seems as though there is more than ingroup versus outgroup processes accounting for our findings, future research should consider sampling Black participants to gain a fuller picture of the effect of race on objectification. For example, future research should consider exploring how the internalization of racism and sexism affect how Black women self-objectify, given that they are living in the context of racist and sexist messages and evaluative practices.

Practice Implications

Our findings pose a number of important real-world implications for the treatment of Black women. For example, in order for societal conditions for minority members (and Black women in particular) in America to ameliorate, certain amounts of change need to be introduced in a top-down fashion (i.e., policies to reduce race- and gender-based discrepancies and improve related conditions across a range of contexts [e.g., employment, education, and legal system]). Thus, it would make sense that these minority members be represented in places where they might make an impact on the introduction of such policies, including by members of these groups. However, research has demonstrated that objectified women are less likely to be voted for (e.g., Helflick & Goldenberg, 2009), and a recent addition to the literature demonstrates that sexualized women candidates are perceived as less competent, trustworthy, and electable (Smith et al., 2018). Moreover, these researchers used eye-tracking technology to demonstrate that the mechanism behind the negative perceptions was the objectifying gaze—the tendency to look at sexualized female body parts (i.e., hemlines, breasts) was related to negative evaluations of the candidate's personal attributes. This is problematic for women if they endeavor to instigate change through workplace and leadership contexts. Although it is yet to be tested whether these effects are more pronounced for Black women, based on the ethnicity-exacerbation effect that we have presented in this article, it is likely to be especially problematic for Black women, and it might influence how they chose to visually present themselves in these contexts.

There are other, more severe implications of our findings, relating to Black women's safety. Goff and colleagues (2008) found that simply priming people with the Black-ape metaphor led them to condone violence toward Black men. The current research suggests that it is likely that people's tendency to objectify and dehumanize Black women may also result in a greater tolerance of violence and harm toward them. Given the established link between objectification and attribution of victim responsibility in instances of rape (e.g., Bernard et al., 2015), as well the tendency for Black women to be rated as more blameworthy for rape than White women (Foley et al., 1995), it is likely that Black women are particularly subject to damaging perceptions and maltreatment. Furthermore, the tendency to objectify and dehumanize Black women may have important implications for the criminal justice system. One recent example of this is the case of Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old Black woman, who was found dead in her jail cell 3 days after being arrested over a traffic stop (Rogers, 2015). Following her death, and to call attention to violence against Black women in the United States, the Internet was flooded with the "#SayHerName" campaign, which brought attention to forms of police brutality often experienced disproportionately by women of color. By humanizing women of color, Sandra Bland's case and the "#SayHerName" campaign served to broaden dominant notions of police brutality against Black women and to call attention to the ways in which Black women can be perceived as not fully human. Given the prevalence of mistreatment directed toward Black women, researchers should seek to

explore these potential downstream consequences of objectifying Black women.

Our findings further suggest that the media plays an important role in fueling the objectification and dehumanization of Black women through their continuing depiction of the Jezebel stereotype (Baker, 2005). Thus, not only are Black women commonly presented in an objectified way in the media (Plous & Neptune, 1997), they are also frequently sexualized. For instance, a recent content analysis revealed that over one-third of Black women featured in music videos are portrayed in a sexualized manner, compared to less than a quarter of White women (Turner, 2011). As our results demonstrate, this can fuel their objectification, at least in its visual manifestation. Thus, efforts to reduce the sexualization of Black women in the media may be effective in mitigating their objectification.

Conclusions

The current set of studies provides support for the subtle objectification and dehumanization of Black women by White men and women. Not only are Black women objectified more than their White counterparts, especially when sexualized, they are also implicitly associated with both animals and objects to a greater extent. Our studies demonstrate the applicability of objectification theory to those beyond the White ideal and have important ramifications for the perception and treatment of Black women throughout society. We hope that these findings will resonate with academics and clinicians to act as a catalyst for further research into this area and that they can assist policy makers in addressing social inequalities that might be driven by processes outside the realm of conscious cognitions.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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ORCID iD

Joel R. Anderson [ID] http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3649-2003
Elise Holland [ID] http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6550-3811

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