Race and Sexuality

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz,
Brandon Andrew Robinson
and Cristina Khan

polity

Acknowledgments

Working together in a shared authorship project is always a labor of love. For many, this labor is only sometimes a joy; more often than not, this collaborative labor is a source of irritation or tension. When co-authoring is more a blessing than a curse, whether you are the faculty member, the post-doctoral fellow, or the doctoral candidate, you know you've won the lottery. We are lucky enough to have found each other, trusted each other, and endured the work (and solace, and rejoinder) of this project. In the end, the labor and the responsibility fall on the three of us but, truth be told, there isn't much we would do differently. The many Skype sessions and brainstorming moments made the heart of this project beat, giving life to the words and ideas in this book.

We all wish to thank Jonathan Skerrett for believing in this book project. To the various members of the Polity team who supported this venture – from bringing our ideas to fruition with a wonderful cover to the reviewers of the text who offered their insight and guidance – thank you. Polity was ever-accommodating and supportive throughout this venture; for this we could not be more grateful!

Introduction

The connections between race and sexuality[1] are constant in our lives, yet we do not always have a developed sense of how processes of race (from racial identification to racial hierarchies) are linked to sexuality (such as sexual behavior, desire, identity, or other aspects of sexuality). However, stereotypes assumed to be linked to racial minorities and/or sexual and erotic communities abound in the media and in the news, in everyday interactions, and lurk in our imaginary of individuals, members of minoritized groups of peoples (be it by race and/or sexuality), and even based on nationality or the labeling of a whole ethno-racial group as having particular traits. Recent mainstream media events that demonstrate the power of racial stereotypes include moments such as the 2014 Emmys, where Sofia Vergara was rotated on a pedestal to showcase her curvy body while the chairman of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences proclaimed that their show is "always giving the viewer something compelling to watch" (Vidal-Ortiz 2016). More recently, comedian Steve Harvey stated in January 2017 that the book *How to Date a White Woman: A Practical Guide for Asian Men* by Adam Quan only needed to be a page long because white women would never find Asian men desirable. Just as stereotypes rooted in race and sexuality are plentiful in the media,

those relative to sexuality label gay men and bisexual people as promiscuous, and those relative to race label black people and Latinas/os as hypersexual, working to establish white heterosexuality as the norm.[2] These ideas and images shape the material realities experienced by individuals on all sides of the production and consumption of such stereotypes.

Whether you are reading this book in the United States, in the United Kingdom, or somewhere else, the ways in which we "connect the dots" about people, events, and life experiences really depends on how we think about, and the exposure we have to, processes that connect race and sexuality. Consider your local news and how international, transnational, and global processes are presented: whether reporters are discussing a range of issues faced by countries being invaded through militarization and the subsequent displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, or drawing attention to certain ethno-racial minority groups who quickly get connected to sex work and trafficking, or the political processes of regulating a nation's border against the flow of immigrants, or the fight for democracy in some other country or region that often gets connected to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights (or a fight against the veiled woman) as markers of underdevelopment – all of those illustrations enforce a reading of hierarchies between nations (and their people) that bring up race (and migration) and/or sexuality (and gender oppression) as markers of progress (or backwardness).[3] We are provided – as audiences – with multiple messages that either signify a connection between race and sexuality (as in the case of criminality, or poverty, or hypersexuality, or stereotypes around reproduction) or that attempt to disentangle (or, at least, try to make invisible) their inherent relationship altogether (think about government or parliament as places that are often racially homogeneous and normatively heterosexual).

Our focus in *Race and Sexuality* is to bring forth the unique power dynamics embedded in the relationship between systems that are mutually constitutive of each other in social analyses. Our pedagogical goal is to show how

social difference is foundational to social life and how these dimensions – race and sexuality – interface. Figures such as the "welfare queen"[4] (Bensonsmith 2005; see also Cohen 1997; Ferguson 2004), the transgender woman of color (Vidal-Ortiz 2009; see also Spade 2015 [2011]), and men on the "down low" (Robinson and Vidal-Ortiz 2013; Vidal-Ortiz and Robinson 2016) are racialized and sexualized constructs that fuel stereotypes about certain groups of people in ways that do not affect all members of society in the same way. These imaginaries are often utilized to launch neoliberal political agendas that continue class divisions, subsequently affecting individuals in different social locations quite incongruously.[5] While we are all impacted, we are also all implicated in the dynamics of domination and subordination, which are sustained through the ongoing production of race and sexuality biases operating in tandem with (and in and through) each other, and which further individual notions of people's marginalization.

While everyone – *as an individual* – experiences being racialized and sexualized (and thus white, heterosexual people experience this process too), those readings are filled with distinct structural meanings that impact the material and lived experiences of people based on how their social locations and demographics are socially understood. As we discuss in chapter 4, a black (or Latina) woman may be seen as dependent on the state (for food stamps, or for changing their migration status, if undocumented), yet a white woman's raced and sexual representation is often more wide-ranged and, while often based on perceptions of innocence, white women's representations are particularly scripted along a continuum unavailable to other women. The amplitude or reduced number of options in these representations tend to be profitable specifically, but not exclusively, in terms of erotic labor and sexualized imaginaries.

In *Race and Sexuality*, we illustrate and unpack the intricate relationship (seldom explored together) between, on the one hand, race and class readings and, on the other, gender and sexuality. Because we see these overarching elements as

operating in tandem with one another, discursively and in everyday lived experiences, this book proposes a more nuanced way to understand this relationship through analytical discussions, popular culture examples, and summaries of specific case studies that showcase our contribution. We do so to more actively produce an analysis that does not foreground traditional understandings of race as more important than sexuality, or sexuality as a more central analytic category than race – those singular analyses produce, in the end, dull efforts at critical thinking. We pay attention to disciplinary contributions to the study of race and sexuality in the introduction; we save the discussion about topics/areas of study within the disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary ones, for chapter 1.

What follows in this introduction is a section with definitions of terms and concepts central to our book, with the goal of providing a common ground for our readership. This layout is followed by the sociohistorical context through which we situate the book. We close the introduction by centering the disciplines that have grappled with ideas around race and sexuality to elucidate their unevenness and success in tackling these categories' co-constitutive relationship. We end by providing an overview of what is to come in the book, and the political stakes in taking seriously the concept of *racialized sexualities*. Our goal is to leave the reader with a strong sense of how race and sexuality are always mutually constituted (at times visibly connected and at times with one aspect foregrounded and the other implicit), and that to see race and sexuality as discrete analytical categories fails to capture their intertwined and complex relationship.

Central terms and concepts

In this section, we discuss the terms we often use in the book in order to have a shared understanding of the basic tenets of our arguments. Like other social scientists, we understand race as a cultural and social construct, but, in doing so, we do not adhere to the popular notion that one can simply

deconstruct race (because, as students and others often say wrongfully, since something is a social construction, it can be undone). It takes generational efforts and decades to map out a different racial terrain, given the linkages that exist between race, privilege, and access to resources. Thus this undoing of race is not an individually achievable project.

When we speak of race and ethnicity, we subscribe to an understanding that whatever boundaries between the ethnic and the racial are in any given territory (say, the United States), they speak to common groups of people that belong to larger umbrella terms (such as Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Latin American or US Latina/o, which encompass several, sometimes dozens of, different nationally based groups – what is often called pan-ethnic), as well as people grouped along the lines of readings of the body as inherently different groups (such as black or white people) that are read, interpreted, and phenotypically classified as belonging to one category (for example, Asian), and not another (for instance, black). Although mixed-race/multiracial people may be seen as challenging these categories at times (and are sometimes portrayed as a sign of a "post-racial" society), multiracial people often get placed in one of the already established racial categories within (any given) society. For those multiracial people who may have certain types of light-skin privilege or white heritage, they may become "honorary whites," maintaining the hierarchical racial system that subjugates black people and bodies (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Mixed-race/multiracial people appear to occupy a contradictory space, whereby they may both be seen as challenging the racial binary in society and also may be interpreted to uphold the binary and its hierarchies.

We often refer to or use a shorter term that we prefer, "ethno-racial," to convey the relationship between race and ethnicity throughout the book. Ethno-racial alludes to a previously significant construct – that of ethnic identity and ethnic communities – from earlier multicultural or pluralist analyses (e.g., "the melting pot"), yet conjures more recent

analyses of "ethnic" that defy that previous lens and that do not subscribe to previously dominant paradigms often linked to immigration (e.g., assimilationist approaches). Thus this "ethnic" is combined with a racial construct to converge government-defined institutional categories like the US Census with popular notions of the ethnic and the racial as cohabiting. We do this convergence of ethnic and racial because, while distinctions have been made between one's being ethnicized versus being racialized (Urciuoli 1996; see our discussion in chapter 2), both of these processes capture inherent racial readings (albeit with various cultural and social readings of "difference" or "danger"). A word of caution: we do not use "ethnic" in the more traditional European use of heritage; as well, we stay away from the common US usage that presumes ethnic as cultural elements that code national heritage attributes (as in Italian, Italian-American, little Italy, and/or foods and customs assumed to be representative of such nationality-based heritage groups). We also do not refer to ethnic to assume innate characteristics of racial or pan-ethnic groups (such as "all Latinas are voluptuous or hypersexual," or "white men can't dance").

Race, and being raced, is established in clear demarcations of understandings of difference in and through a hierarchical reading of groups supposedly agreed upon (explicitly or, more to the current times, implicitly) as superior or inferior. Race and racial readings vary according to the racial formation processes in any given geopolitical context – the term "racial formation" references the sociohistorical formations of solidifying race and racial groups into distinctive, oppositional categories (Omi and Winant 1986). (As processes, they take multiple decades to enact, if not longer – these are not moments, or temporalities, in racial systems, but shifts that become rooted through both structural arrangements and the participation of people in any given territory.) Racial readings act as commonly shared understandings – not only of the value of a given racial group but of the permeability or movement into and outside that construct. To put it

another way, in certain spaces it seems desirable to become white, with group boundaries threatened by sought-after changes in skin tone (for instance, with the cosmetic advances to "lighten" one's skin) and, in others, whiteness is actually measured in relation to economic resources, often making symbolic racial mobility possible (Bonilla-Silva 2013). However, all members of a given geopolitical territory must be in some kind of agreement, otherwise the racial movement (or passing through certain categories) cannot be accomplished.

"Racialization" refers to the markings of people previously unmarked (Omi and Winant 1986). Omi and Winant later defined racialization as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (2015: 13), wherein racialization becomes the *anchor for the discussion of racial readings and understandings of race.* Racialization is a sociohistorical concept developed to better explain US racial formation, which was based on the colonization and exploitation of the land, human power, and distribution of the goods based on such exploitation. Social relations, cemented on the creation of terms such as white and black, structured the nation-state through slavery and then through the Civil War (roughly the late part of the seventeenth century and into the nineteenth century). Individuals who came from various countries or regions that we have come to identify as black or white were consolidated into such groups through a very specific political, economic, and social process of a raced and classed order. This racialization sustained such a powerful binary of whiteness and blackness (while eclipsing the existence of Native Americans) that it still serves as our social, cultural, and racial compass today, further proving the power of that racial formation system. But the racial formation so central to the USAmerican[6] psyche, structured on racial binaries, was also structuring other elements such as gender, sexuality, and class (Holland 2012; see also Ferguson 2004), making it more complex then and today (see Martinez HoSang, LaBennett, and Pulido 2012).

Similarly, to speak of sexuality is to invoke a set of specific social arrangements. Sexuality is also socially constructed, whereby sexual meanings, identities, and categories are socially situated within a given historical point in time and negotiated intersubjectively (Foucault 1978 [1976]; Epstein 1994). To fully conceptualize our understandings of sexuality, we find it imperative to define the following terms: sexual orientation, gender identity, and the gendering of sexuality. Sexual orientation refers to how we define a person's sexual identity relative to their own gender and whom they are attracted to. Iterations of sexual orientation include heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian, pan-sexual, or other types of orientation. However, attraction, sexual behavior, or the erotic in a person's life may "spill over" these sexual orientation categories; that is, attraction, behavior, and other forms of eroticism are not in neat alignment, or always easily contained, within the categories, even in seemingly fluid terms such as bisexual or pan-sexual.

Gender identity indexes how individuals understand their gender and does not necessarily correspond to one's gender assigned at birth. Gender, gender identity, and gender expression are also complex in their relationship to each other, as well as to notions of sex; furthermore, gendering takes shape in racialized ways (Kitch 2009) and in reference to corporeality, embodiment, and body shape, but also class, citizenship, and culture. The gendering of sexuality speaks to the conflation of gender and sexuality, and asserts that one's gender is informed by one's self-concepts and others' perception of one's sexuality, such that to be a man is imagined also to be heterosexual.

Sex, gender, and sexuality are intrinsically connected – and they organize the set of values around expectations of being sexed, gendered, and one's sexuality. These values are not "natural" but part of our social organization. One main undertaking in unmasking the social meaning of sexual identities and relations is Adrienne Rich's (1980) concept of "compulsory heterosexuality." This concept is often credited as a foundational idea within queer theory for it describes

heterosexuality, in western societies, as a patriarchal institution that tries to make obligatory heterosexual relations, constructing non-heterosexual relations, such as lesbian relations, as abnormal. Furthermore, Gayle Rubin, in her influential 1984 essay titled "Thinking Sex," introduced the idea of the "charmed circle." Despite the conviction that one's sexuality is a personal and intimate detail of one's life, Rubin's work uncovered the relationship between sexuality and the state. According to Rubin, sexuality becomes politically mapped and valued along binary lines of "good" or "bad" in concentric circles. In most western societies, sex is often seen as dangerous and constructed within a negativity discourse (Rubin 1993 [1984]). However, certain sexuality – primarily marital, reproductive heterosexuality – is hierarchically ranked as the most socially respectable, conferring upon individuals who enact and embody this form of sexuality many rewards, including legal, social, physical, material, and institutional benefits. This ranking creates a sexual stigma against those who do not perform this mode of sexual enactment and embodiment, relegating non-heterosexual individuals and non-heteronormative sexual practices to a lower realm of social approvability. This logic shapes many state practices and policies, not limited to access to marriage and state-sanctioned benefits for monogamous, heterosexual, married couples. (In Rubin's analysis, what's not evident – race and racializing practices – emerges as an important silence; we denote how race becomes an inherent addition to the aforementioned socially disapproved beings and stigmatized categories.)

Sexuality is also mapped along a hetero/homo binary that shapes people's thinking of sexuality and that can limit people's sexual enactments, embodiments, and desires (Sedgwick 1990). This binary is so powerful that men who engage in any form of same-sex sexual behavior are often seen as gay, erasing the possibility of bisexuality or any other identity. Likewise, bisexuality is seen as illegitimate within the hetero/homo binary, whereby bisexuality is constructed as a "phase" one goes through to then become one's "authentic"

sexual self (Callis 2013). In this regard, the hetero/homo binary structures much of life and is linked to the gender binary of man/woman, their reproductive capacities, and the expectation of romantic, dyad relationships, whether in same- or opposite-sex unions.

Therefore, the meaning of sexuality is also tied to gender, whereby in many societies gender is often seen as a binary of man and woman. Within this binary, men and women are seen as "naturally" different and as having complementary characteristics. This binary framing erases the lives of people who do not fit neatly into it, including some transgender people, genderqueer people, and gender-expansive and non-binary individuals. Indeed, the term "cisgender" has been coined to acknowledge the privileges that people who identify with and conform to the gender they were assigned at birth receive in society compared to transgender and gender-expansive individuals.

Today, sexuality and gender are often intimately related within societies. Sexual desire – one's erotic longings and fantasies or how one thinks about one's sex life (Laumann et al. 1994) – is often related to one's gender desires (i.e., a desire for a man and/or a woman and/or a person with another gender identity/presentation). These desires and attractions often play a main role in the construction of one's sexual identity. If a woman is attracted exclusively or mainly to men, she may identify as heterosexual. Likewise, to be a man is often to be perceived/assumed to be heterosexual, that is, dominant notions of masculinity rely upon dominant notions of (hetero)sexuality. However, this is based on a construction of a gender binary and a cisgender identity; transgender people tend to challenge the assumption that to have a sexual orientation, one must identify with or require a gender (Vidal-Ortiz 2002). But not all transgender people reject a gender identification of themselves and their partners; furthermore, a fluid set of identities for some transgender people may not always represent the same experience for their partners, especially when coming from gay, lesbian, or bisexual communities (Pfeffer 2014).

Sociohistorical context that organizes our book's argument

Although a lot of the examples provided in this book are contemporary, it is important to establish the racial/sexual specificity in US soil in a sociohistorical context. To speak of racial formations as the foundation of the United States (Omi and Winant 1986) requires a brief discussion of the raced and classed aspects of slavery and the wealthy, and the classed, raced, and gender lines sustained in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such racial formation – already classed and demarcating a distinctive set of social relations between the two established genders – was compulsorily heterosexual as well. Furthermore, while sexuality was not as visible in these social relations among people, racial/sexual lines were not to be crossed: white women's sexuality was innocent and protected, while African enslaved women's sense of self was not acknowledged, much less respected, by the masters, who often saw African women's sexuality as just (re-)producing more slaves. After slavery ended, African-American males could not demonstrate attraction toward white women, thus racially restricting a sexual crossing. Late in the 1880s and into the 1890s, in the so-called post-Reconstruction Era, the increased public portrayal of black men as rapists, combined with the previously mentioned gendered-racialized perception of white women as innocent, resulted in the lynchings of African-American men (Bederman 1995; Gunning 1996; see also Kitch 2009). The abolition of slavery only symbolically broke some aspects of this divide, but it would not succeed in formulating a racial/sexual crossing that permitted cross-racial relationships for at least another century.

In addition to constructing a lasting stigma against cross-racial relationships, black sexual politics in a US context was ultimately shaped by and through the binary juxtaposition of presumed white (moral) sexuality against black (immoral) hypersexuality, which was almost always constructed as criminal (it was certainly seen as deviant enough to be

suspect). Collins (2004) links norms of sexuality to raced and classed epithets born from this era (e.g., the jezebel, mammy, black buck) not only in cross-racial relationships, but in racialized conceptualizations of femininity, masculinity, and gender ideology as well.

In the meantime, with temporal migration and a geopolitical reconfiguration of the US borders in the second half of the nineteenth century, this racial/sexual divide was complicated further by eroding the racial binary in the racial/sexual divide already established through ownership of land and enslaved people. With the increased temporal arrival of Asian immigrant workers (in particular, Chinese men; see Nakano Glenn 2002), and after the 1848 US claiming of a large portion of Mexico and the presence of Mexicans in California (Almaguer 1994) and the Southwest, the racial understandings of citizenship made for a rocky set of legal battles, while immigration and settlement continued to make the United States, in particular the West, more Asian than before (Shah 2011; see also Zia 2000). In the case of immigrant men who wanted to achieve US citizenship, masculinity, not just sexuality and race, became a relevant factor. Significantly, while the last decades of the nineteenth century presented the hyper-masculinization of black men (read as being on the prowl) through processes of gendered migration and temporary employment in the United States, Asian men were portrayed as effeminate and asexual.

In 1898, when the Spanish-American war resulted in the conquering of Puerto Rico, the separation of Cuba from Spain, and the complicated relationship with the Philippines and other Pacific islands, the United States provoked a series of added migrations from the Caribbean and the Pacific, given this more complex geopolitical relationship. After this war, Manila, in the Philippines, became for many a place for temporary employment as a means to (eventually) migrate to the United States (Shah 2011). Although Cubans and Puerto Ricans were politically aligned in New York City during the late part of the nineteenth century, the Spanish-American war produced different readings of

the two Caribbean countries, with Puerto Rico inherently associated with the United States (for more on Cubans' racial and sexual readings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see the magnificent 2017 book by Mirabal). The beginning of the twentieth century saw increased militarization internationally, which also meant that further power relations with many Global South countries were solidified.[7]

There was an increase in Puerto Rican migration to the United States during the first half of the twentieth century (Vázquez-Hernández 2017; Whalen 2001), and in African Americans moving from the South to the North and the West (Ferguson 2004) – this after the official granting of US citizenship to Puerto Ricans (and their almost immediate draft into World War I). These migrations (and militarization across the board) increased interracial interactions, and challenged in significant ways the status quo that perpetuates a gender/sexual and racial purity ideology. The use of racial categories was subjective and related to aspects of citizenship and class, not just race; there was also elasticity for some groups – Mexicans, for instance, were considered a race in the 1930 Census, later on returning to a different nomenclature (Nobles 2000). (Incidentally, like Cuba and like African Americans in the United States, Mexico also produced racial discourses in their late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century literature in response to the expansion of the United States; see Luis-Brown 2008.) During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, the social mobility of race and class was tested constantly; these swings also caused commotion within the realms of erotic labor and sexual desire (McClintock 1992, 1995).

The civil rights efforts of the mid-1960s also resulted in challenges to the status quo. A consciousness-raising around equal rights for black people invigorated a challenge to the law and the imposition of segregated spaces. The revision of immigration laws in 1965 initiated the arrival of large numbers of migrants (from Latin American and Asian

countries in particular), which further cemented a more complex set of social–racial interactions. The following decades changed the (primarily) black/white racial binary that had marked much of the racial/sexual negotiations. By the late twentieth century, many social spaces, including schools and places of employment, were no longer racially homogeneous. (Unlike the melting pot assimilationist project earlier in the century, the end of the century marked a distinct difference and attempt to celebrate people's places of origin, race, and other social markers.) As issues pertaining to gender and sexuality came to the fore, these social spaces carried the legacy of racial conflict from years prior, while simultaneously hosting newly growing tensions relative to other axes of identity. For example, movies such as *West Side Story*, early on, and later *Do the Right Thing*, became stories about gender and sexuality, not just tensions or mixings of race and nationality. The intermingling of different nationalities and races meant a sexual and reproductive (and thus, social) threat to USAmerican society's racial-normative order. Citizenry (literal and symbolic) started to be heavily contested through people's relationship to the nation-state and the land (Brandzel 2016), to language (Urciuoli 1996), and even to notions of Latinas/os as inherently (and only as undocumented) immigrants (Chavez 2013).

The last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century have shown an even more complex relationship of racial groups, with the events of September 11, 2001, namely, the attacks attributed to al-Qaeda that destroyed the Twin Towers in New York City. The US response to these attacks was to begin wars against several countries, with an increased stigmatization of Arabs, Muslims, Middle Easterners, and South Asians (a disparate group of peoples whose range of ethno-racial, religious, and geographical differences do not merit profiling). But the fusion of sexuality and race in anti-Muslim portrayals as "monster-terrorist-fags" (Puar and Rai 2002) by the US military post-9/11 demonstrates the power of racialized sexualities and racism.

Studying sexuality and race

While this book is written by three sociologists, and many of the sources we cite are from the social sciences, we approach the study of these elements of structured forms of power through an interdisciplinary lens. This multidisciplinary approach prompts us to map our view of the fields that influence this book and to delineate the uneven influence of the fields of study we depend on. While the humanities and social sciences have been the primary fields examining this interaction between race and sexuality as a topic of analysis, their work on these connections has been unequal. Race and sexuality are often not linked in productively analytical ways in the social sciences but are often more connected (and productively so) in the humanities (important exceptions to mention, at a minimum, include Joane Nagel's *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*; Roderick Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*; Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Sexual Politics*; and Cathy Cohen's *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*). For the social sciences, feminist studies and black studies have operated implicitly as distinct fields – with black studies mainly focusing on race and feminist studies mainly focusing on gender – until intersectionality emerged.

As we discuss more fully in chapter 1, intersectionality – the tripartite of race, class, and gender – was a central analytical framework for understanding social locations – an individual's or group's placement in the social world – excluding other markers (and lenses) as potentially productive elements of social analysis. In fields such as sexuality and queer studies, the linkages to thinking about this tripartite are still seldom evidenced – the dearth of queer theoretical scholarship addressing these as interlocked forms of regulation has only been redressed in the last few years, given the newer waves of queer migration, queer diasporas, queer-of-color critiques, and a new queer cultural studies lens.

The humanities, on the other hand, have more actively produced scholarship that views race, gender, and sexuality in inherently interconnected ways. As a case in point, we follow in the footsteps of Kitch's *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States* (2009), which foregrounds a gendered lens as an analytic in race and racial formations. With strong undertones of a gendered sexualities analysis, Kitch's book centers "racial discourse as a *consistent historical analytic*; that is, in terms of the persistent use of gendered norms and judgments about appropriate or inappropriate gender standards to describe, classify, and stratify racial groups" (2009: 1). Kitch's work explores, through a historical lens, the intertwined processes through which racial formation becomes gendered, and shows how a genealogy of cultural norms developed. More specifically, Kitch demonstrates how, even as racial systems became elastic to accommodate newer racial groups and categories, there remained a gendered structure that was enacted through a set of specific variables, which she explores: bodies, blood, and citizenship. The inherent evaluation of approaches to gender that were read as racially deficient or successful is at the core of the book's historical analysis.

Other work in the humanities (some already mentioned) has also documented the interconnectivities of race and sexuality. McClintock (1995), Somerville (2000), and Smith (2005) have shown historically how colonialism, slavery, and genocide have shaped the racial and sexual formations of society in inter-articulated ways. Ross (2004) documents how same-sex sexuality is constitutive of the historical construction of black manhood, and Johnson (2008) records oral histories from black gay men in the South to challenge regional stereotypes about people in the South and to recover untold stories about men of color building sexual relationships with each other. Likewise, Muñoz's (1999) *Disidentifications* turns to queer people of color to theorize how minoritarian subjects work both within and against dominant structures and discourses in order to make space

in the world (we discuss queer-of-color studies further in chapter 1).

Standing on the shoulders of some of these giants, this book delves into questions of the interrelation of aspects of sexuality and race as intrinsically inseparable elements constitutive of the social organization of our contemporary world. It does so by treating race and sexuality, together, as a critical lens through which to understand social arrangements and hierarchies, and the resulting sociocultural readings of difference. Our book connects these areas of study and lived experiences in ways that aim to loop back into black feminist thought, other feminists-of-color theorizing, and other linkages of sexed, sexualized, and racial matters. While race and sexuality have historically been associated with the biological, we treat these matters as culturally and socially produced and, as Somerville (2000) would argue, as intrinsically related moments that touched each other (in the case of *Queering the Color Line*, around the end of the nineteenth century, when homosexuality was emerging as a category, while a strong hold on the black/white racial binary was being solidified). In doing so, we interrogate the rigidity of constructions not only of race but of gender and sexuality as well. This notion of cultural and social production spans the cross-cultural, through which it becomes evident that what essentially counts as race or sexuality and the ways those things are discussed varies across time and space.

To fully contextualize the relationship between race and sexuality, we include historical examples that illustrate the interconnected relationship between the two. Racial and sexual formations are discussed in terms of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the war on terrorism, and various examples of the treatment of Global South countries throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We use frameworks that trace fields of study in social scientific and humanities studies; from sexuality and ethnic studies to intersectionality, to an understanding of mutually constitutive, or interarticulation-based analyses. This approach is informed by sociology of sexuality, critical race studies, queer theory,

queer-of-color critique, queer diaspora/migrations, transgender studies, transnational and postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality.

Chapter overview

This book hails a newer understanding of how these raced readings (as in the "welfare queen," or the hypersexual and reproductively active Latina teenager) are sexualized, and how sexualized readings (such as gayness being systematically produced as male and white, and homophobia most often imagined to happen in non-white communities) are always already raced. We move beyond the media-driven aspect of representation into a structural, discursive, and even an everyday level of analysis. The chapters you are about to read speak to lived experiences relative to sexuality and race, especially their intertwining constitution. The following chapters also speak to the institutions and systems that perpetuate the racial and sexual hierarchies ingrained in many societies today, but which were not established recently (indeed, it is the inheritance of these systems, in our view, that solidifies their impact today).

Part I brings together two conceptual chapters that discuss, as two sides of the same coin, the systems that operate to make race and sexuality so compatible in these social and cultural readings, as well as the interactional level of experience – the mundane – in the connection of these two axes of power. Through critical theorists and a review of relevant literature, chapter 1 articulates the racial system that distinguishes ethno-racial categories both historically and, in present times, with an eye for the discursive strategies of demarcating said racial system's hierarchical structure. The discussion also includes processes of sexualization as a way of understanding the role of sexual systems and gendered sexualities in conjunction with an ethno-racial analysis. The chapter contributes to the discussion by addressing the debates of the inclusion and exclusion of sexualities from the tripartite of intersectionality (race,

class, and gender), as well as discussing embodiment and racialized sexualities.

Chapter 2 outlines the everyday accomplishment of these arrangements of racialized sexualities. This chapter combines the discussion about racial and sexual stereotypes in order to talk back to the systems in place by showing the centrality of whiteness, as well as heterosexism and homonormativity, in producing individualized notions of choice in race and sexuality biases. In this chapter, we seek to dismantle some of the recent neoliberal notions of racial and sexual discrimination as being about personal choice, especially with reference to dating preferences. We also think through "coming out" strategies and their relation to race and sexuality.

Part II of the book brings together three different case studies to show what we articulate as racialized sexualities and sexualized readings of race. Chapter 3 centers racialized sexualization in transnational human rights, where we examine the processes of sexualization rooted in the imaginaries of the Global South. We define transnational migration as the movement of individuals between countries and continents, which facilitates a complex constellation of networks and relationships between countries of origin and new countries. We situate migration in the relationship between the Global North and the Global South. These terms evolved in postcolonial studies to contextualize the relationship between countries in the West (otherwise known as the Global North) which possess a history of colonization and imperialism relative to Global South countries, which are the developing nations. By noting the inter-articulated nature of race and sexuality in a transnational context, we uncover the linkages between presumed victimhood on behalf of the Global South and its relationship to the imperialism and colonization of the West.

In chapter 4, we spotlight the relationship between race and sex work through various examples of sexual labor. In this chapter, we elucidate the interconnected nature of sexual fantasy imaginaries, specifically those enacted in various

forms of erotic labor, to show how, for women of color, the limited availability of such imaginaries results in differential material realities as a result of participating in sexual labor. Discourses on erotic labor are owed to feminist interventions within the subfield, which received increased attention during the "sex wars" of the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 5 offers a timely review of the relationship between sexualities and migration, through which we uncover the multiple ways in which immigration and the mainstream portrayal of migrants in the Global North reflect problematic stereotypes rooted in the racist pathologizing of migrants as brown "Others." This chapter also evokes a historical view of sexuality and race in terms of gendered readings of Asianness, and the regulation of femininity (and in some ways, sexuality) through racial difference.

Lastly, the conclusion offers a revisitation of the major themes discussed throughout the text. Through this revisitation, we link the myriad areas implicated by racialized sexualities to demonstrate their inextricability from our daily lives. This book centers on the many ways in which racialized sexualities are communicated through what are understood as distinct experiences, including migration, sex work, and transnational human rights. By highlighting the shared significance of race and sexuality throughout all of these processes, we aim to demonstrate its power to constantly shape our experiences and realities in tangible ways.

While we cannot discuss every one of the influential texts, nor engage in all discussions that pertain to the topic of racialized sexualities, we aim to offer a foundational premise from which to build and form more scholarship. In a way, this book serves as a formulation of an argument that will endure in future arguments – whether in the social sciences, the humanities, or other interdisciplinary fields – so that the scholarship on race and sexuality continues to evolve into a study of sexualities that are often, if not already, racialized. From the introduction to the conclusion, we have considered race and sexuality as separate categories, then united them through an articulation of something more – what we call

racialized sexualities. These are both everyday arguments, and subtle and complex ones – as the fabric of the social world. We expect that, in reading through these pages, you will consider and evaluate your own knowledge of cases of racialized sexualities in order to further show how race and sexuality are intertwined. Waking those examples up, and putting them in conversation with our case studies, is a crucial endeavor of thinking anew. We welcome you to thinking, analyzing, and writing on these topics with us.

PART I

Discourses of Race/Sexuality

1

Two Systems Operating Synchronously

In August of 2016, Kimberlé William Crenshaw offered a presentation at the American Sociological Association's annual meeting, entitled "Rethinking Social Movements: Can Changing the Conversation Change the World?". Crenshaw's intervention aligned with her decades-old work on critical race theory. Charlene Carruthers and Mariame Kaba, feminist and queer activists involved in Black Youth Project 100 and movement-building work against police brutality across the country, accompanied Crenshaw during this presentation. Alongside these activists, Crenshaw's focus was on her most recent project that makes visible the often hidden violence faced by black women and her campaign entitled #SayHerName. Crenshaw notes in this and other presentations how the Black Lives Matter visibility in the media tends to foreground the lives of (cisgender) black men, to the detriment of as many (if not more) women of color facing violence and death at the hands of police. The invisibility of gender violence (faced, every day, by cisgender and transgender women of color) in the women's interactions with police – as an extension of the gendered raced state violence faced by all women of color – provoked Crenshaw's focus on #SayHerName as an extension of her intersectionality work from the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, sexuality is often left without articulation in this work on gendered and racialized violence. More precisely, the inherently gendered

> and sexualized violence faced by transgender women – for breaking gendered and sex expectations, for embodying what is stereotyped as hypersexualized bodies that are also commodified and placed on a sexualized gendered market – merits as much attention as the ability to connect #SayHerName to queer and sexuality-specific racialized work (which the other activists-scholars more clearly did).[1]

As noted in the introduction, *racialized sexualities* is a new area of study that is influenced by sociology, anthropology, history, American Studies, queer studies, feminist and gender studies, critical race theory, literary studies, English, rhetoric, political science, and geography. Our purpose in this book is to advance a more focused understanding of the notion that racialization is always already sexual, and sexualization is always already raced. How these categories are mutually co-constituted is in many ways the purpose of this chapter. We delve into the various theoretical approaches and conceptual discussions on the topic, as well as interrogate the tenets of some of their propositions. Race and sexuality as mutually constituted is something that scholars in the field of the queer-of-color critique (Cohen 1997; Reddy 1998; Muñoz 1999; Ferguson 2004) have already argued. Some of these arguments are based upon women-of-color feminism – mainly lesbians of color – who articulated how gender, sexuality, race, and class are interconnected (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Lorde 1984; Barbara Smith, Demita Frazier, and all of the other authors of the Combahee River Collective Statement 1977).[2] More recently, queer theoretical formulations of race and sexuality, with the work of scholars such as Manalansan IV (2003), Guzmán (2006), Decena (2011), and Pérez (2015), emerged as both support for, as well as a challenge to, some feminist and gender studies scholarship. In this and other chapters we approach this theoretical and conceptual discussion as a scaffolding of layers that will, eventually, illustrate the connections between these fields of study, as well as how the notion of racialized sexualities differs from these other scholarly arenas. Whereas

the introduction portrayed works at the disciplinary level, in this chapter, we embrace critiques, conceptual approaches, and contributions to knowledge production from smaller (non-disciplinary) projects, as well as interdisciplinarily.

Notice that, in our opening vignette, Crenshaw, a lawyer, is speaking at a sociology conference and is returning to intersectionality – a term she coined – and to the conceptual paradigm of exploring the place of women of color in feminist and race studies. We also frame the chapter with Crenshaw's intervention as it serves a dual purpose: it allows for the introduction of one of the topics we discuss in this chapter – intersectionality – while also breaking away from disciplinary structures (sociology, anthropology) and into a field of study with more specificity. But Crenshaw's appearance among a panel of activist women of color also introduces a break with the typical academic/activist binary so many of us operate in. Crenshaw and her fellow panelists draw attention to the lack of state intervention in the violence experienced by women of color. Crenshaw weaves together this structural phenomenon with the interpersonal by insisting on naming the axes of power that contribute to the lack of attention such events receive. By deliberately naming the perpetuation of structural violence (and subsequent invisibility) experienced by women of color, Crenshaw lays bare how the politics of invisibility are embedded in racialized and gendered discourses.

Thus we begin chapter 1 by discussing the different conceptualizations of race and how historical moments, structures, and processes impact racial formations. We focus in on main contributors to critical race theory, as well as the criticisms of some omissions from these theories. We also think through some potential (and current) expansions of such work. We then move to scholarship on sexuality using the very same structure, and addressing the connection between feminist and gender studies and queer theoretical formulations. In these two sections, we reveal how sexuality is often erased or invisible in how most people conceptualize racial formations, and we think through the implications of

previous theorizing of race without thinking about sexuality. We then move to think about how sexuality and sexualization are conceptualized, and also interrogate the absence of race in these conceptualizations. We discuss the implications around the invisibility of race in discussions of sexual formations and also the tension created by including sexuality within an intersectional analysis – an important focus in the latter part of this chapter. We conclude chapter 1 by thinking through the academic, social, political, and cultural stakes of imagining sexuality and race as mutually exclusive analytical concepts versus co-constitutive social formations.

In the end, this chapter illuminates the conceptualization and utility of discursive practices in order to rethink the relationship of race and sexuality, in ways that will inform the next chapter, which focuses on lived experiences. Because we treat racialization and sexualization as discursive practices that have to be continually untangled and produced as distinctive, on and off the same grid, this conceptual chapter oscillates between earlier discussions by feminist and gender studies and racial formation theory, then delves into sexuality and queer theory in order to discuss intersectionality. Indeed, as we will show, we see both race and sexuality operating in and through each other all the time, so that racialization is not just about race and sexualization is not just about sexualities, although they are often continuously produced as supposedly being distinctive.

Race systems: the deployment of an ideology of raced beings

Conceptually, and building off the definitions and historical context provided in the introduction, this section expands on our understandings of race, racial formations, and racialization: To begin, the history of the United States is rooted in genocide, slavery, and the imperial foundation of the thirteen colonies' project of "manifest destiny" (a doctrine that alluded to the inherent and unstoppable urge to conquer all land west and south of the colonies). Colonial encounters

acted as the foundation of the distribution of wealth; colonizers marginalized and dehumanized Native Americans and enslaved African peoples, and established the inherited systemic disadvantages – measured by resources such as land and freedom – that benefited white people over the rest. These historical processes of racial formation are an important historical point of departure. These power encounters that enforced labor and control, along with subhuman treatment, became part of the early racializing practices of domination that marked certain groups of people as inferior. (In Marxist language, the owners of the means of production controlled the free movement of, and threatened to assault and kill, those who became the enslaved workers producing the goods.) Those processes of demarcating all African enslaved peoples as black and forcing Native Americans off the radar and into imagined "nations within the nation" took decades to solidify. These same processes also signified white people as those who had access to and controlled the resources. Under the continuous expansion of the land by the United States, exploitation became the form of sustaining large quantities of production of buildings, of processing food and raw material, and the overall advancement of resource accumulation for those who became understood as white. The American Civil War began to map out a series of historical interventions to change the treatment of African Americans, but it would take another century for the actual implementation of civil rights (see Kibria, Bowman, and O'Leary 2014).

In the project of "manifest destiny," and the expansion of the wealth and power of the United States, the solidification of whiteness, as one extreme, and its counterpart, blackness, became the solid stones on which the country was built. This history haunts white people in the United States today, even when there are dismissive strategies and forms of rewriting history (people in the United States may recall the 2015 discussion about a high-school textbook produced by the publisher McGraw-Hill Education – one of the biggest textbook suppliers to the country – that discussed African

enslaved people as "workers")[3] or other strategies of deflection that take place in order to avoid the historical structural violence and internal genocide of African enslaved peoples and Native Americans.

Omi and Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986, 1994, 2015) is squarely located at the center of this chapter in terms of thinking about the history of the United States, the forcefulness of the racial system, racial categories, and processes of racialization and nation-building. In particular, their conceptualization of racial formation theory as the mechanism through which racial categories were and are "created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed" (1994: 55) serves our framing of this chapter. Racial formation theory ties together the historical processes of racialization with the understandings of race. *Racial Formation* continues to influence these discussions, especially as we think about a notion of a "post-racial" society – a myth that continues to be enacted by multiple streams of conservatism and some forms of liberalism to dismantle denunciations of racism and discrimination. In this post-racial society, a social justice project gets rebranded as a "diversity" framework based on "inclusion" and "difference" – without bringing power into these discussions.

The twenty-first century brought a set of challenges to this black/white binary that had been so ingrained in the USAmerican imaginary of race. This obstinate binary could also be seen in the so-called "race relations" (Steinberg 2007) that arrived with multiculturalism, which accompanied us until the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, until the Twin Towers attack on September 11, 2001, the black/white binary still ruled the racial landscape in the USAmerican imaginary. This black/white binary was intact in spite of the 1965 immigration law changes that opened the doors to millions of immigrants who, according to Steinberg, were seen as the "new ethnics." However, when we insert 9/11 into conversations about racialization of Arabs/South Asians/Middle Easterners, and those (of any ethno-racial background) who are Muslim, we are not talking about immigration – and

culture – but of groups associated with immigrant communities that have been racialized in powerful enough ways so as to authorize black and Latina/o people to endorse the surveil and register practices of those most targeted (Ahmad 2002). Historical discussions of racial classifications and the subjective meaning of race (for instance, the use of the documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion, The House We Live In*) are important, but changes in the structural view of who becomes part of the groups at the "bottom" of the social-racial ladder (such as how 9/11 altered racial formations and meanings) are necessary.

Scholars have advanced the initial theoretical mapping and development of central concepts (such as racial formation and racialization) by pointing to the blind spots in Omi and Winant's theoretical contributions in terms of gender and sexuality (just as earlier scholars debated the saliency and centrality of class versus race – in particular, liberal thinking that it is not about race, but class), and what ultimately is foregrounded. For instance, the polarizing way in which the two (whiteness and blackness) were never to meet (literally, as in public space, and figuratively, as in interracial eroticism) was structured around ideas of access through gender and sexuality (e.g., anti-miscegenation laws). Likewise, African enslaved peoples were unable to sustain hegemonic ideas of familial structures, furthering experiences of domination and of dehumanizing them. Black women were often raped by their owners, and black men were feared because of the stereotypical perception of their being "on the prowl" and having the potential to emasculate white men (Davis 1981; Collins 2004). The scholars whose work challenges the racial lens think about the impact that race and sexuality have in the social imaginary of figures such as the "welfare queen" – as associated with African-American women (Kandaswamy 2012) and with the simplifying of feminist and queer efforts to counter some of these issues during the decades of the 1960s through the 1980s – at the very same time that Omi and Winant explored their racial formation theory (Ferguson 2012). Yet, historically,

this work had not been connected in the fields of intersectionality, critical race theory, black feminist thought, or Latina/o scholarship; much less critical masculinity studies, queer theory, or queer-of-color critique. Until the Combahee River Collective, Moraga and Anzaldúa's work, and others connecting the two, the dearth of such conceptual crossings was only superceded by activists and artists on the fringes of academic work. But between the 1960s and into the 1980s, issues of same-sex rights and black civil rights were often explicitly managed through different lenses and by different actors in and outside academia.

Today, racialization processes, far from being about race as fixed or essential or biological, are being elucidated through their discursive lens (although one understands the genesis of racialization through bodies, hair texture, and skin color, racialization has moved away from the body and essential black/white binaries and onto social readings of perceived threat). "Doing" race does not only occur through phenotype, physical differences, but through religion, ethnicity, nation, sexuality, and so forth. Our point is that an evolution from embodied senses of racialization to structural enactments of racialization has occurred – and that one extends the others.

The (mis)uses of the cultural and ethnic vis-à-vis the racial is the closing aspect for this section – one that allows for our discussion to move, from race as oppositional to race as relational. While ethnic is often used in Europe to speak to national groups of people who have settled in certain host countries, we differentiate that term as used in the United States, which is about the diluted discussion of the racial through the image of the ethnic. Such reduction of racial discrimination, prejudice, and racism to ethnic groups and the ethnicization of racial difference prevent us from identifying a racial sexualization. Put another way, if our social lens/gaze is clouded by "ethnic" or "cultural" difference, we fail to see inequalities based on power relations and structures operating through the ethnic gaze.

The discussion of ethno-racial thus far has not extended to whiteness, which is often produced and deployed (through its omnipresence) as *lacking*. In his first essay on the topic, "Feeling Brown" (2000), José Esteban Muñoz, a performance studies queer theorist, moved the paradigm of racial difference and an oppositional binary to notions of race as relational. When whiteness is presented as devoid of culture, and yet results in culturally consuming the Other (hooks 1992), whiteness is both a racial agent but becomes invisible (and overarching). Muñoz theorizes a move away from Hispanic and Latina/o, as categories that stay within the ethnic and the racial, and onto brownness as a way of being (drawing from Raymond Williams's "structures of feeling," exploring the work of affective responses). For Muñoz, when Latinas/os such as Jennifer López or Marc Anthony are the Latina/o images that circulate, then a notion of Latinas/os as a group is created. When that notion is juxtaposed to whiteness in the USAmerican imaginary, it is not that Latinas/os such as Jennifer López or Marc Anthony are spicy, excessive, or exaggerated, but that white people are seen, in comparison, as lacking a production of affective responses vis-à-vis that imagery of Latinidad. This notion of race as relational informs debates about racialization for the study of its linkages with sexuality. Indeed, in Muñoz's work, it is queer and gender expansive Latina/o/x, black, Asian, and multiracial people who invoke a utopic space. The excessive sense of identification on both racial and sexual accounts signals the importance of taking both elements/sides of this equation equally seriously in order to produce an argument that is about the constitution of the sexualized and racialized through the (invisible) center (of whiteness and, as an extension, heterosexuality as norms).

The next section begins to illustrate the discursive aspects of sexuality by expanding on the previous discussion of racialization, but alongside the history of sexuality and sexual formations, gender studies, and queer theory.

Sexuality, sexualization, and gender and sexual norms

Like race, sexuality has a long history of being managed and regulated through agents of social control – in sexuality's case, religion and church as an institution, as well as psychiatry, medicine, and the social sciences (Foucault 1978 [1976]). This management and regulation is part of what we refer to as sexual formation – the historical placement of certain forms of sexuality and sexual identity in the foreground, while others are conspicuously absent. Today's social organization of sexuality is varied and open to several models of experience, but that has not always been the case. Furthermore, forceful deployments aimed at eliminating any kind of sexual variance in the past were as much about the regulation of crossing racial/sexual lines as they were about sexual activity and sexual identification.

Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, discussions of sexuality have taken place through the lens of gender inversion. The actual categorizations of (first) homo- then heterosexual nomenclatures emerged in the late nineteenth century (Katz 2005) but they were not based on sexual attraction toward members of a different gender altogether – they were about gender inversion in a person's own sense of self. The subjective meaning of being a gay man or a lesbian woman, or even assuming a heterosexual identity, did not materialize until the twentieth century (D'Emilio 1993; Chauncey 1994). Even by the mid-twentieth century, and in spite of the advancement of a homophile movement, readings based on sexual behavior and attraction were elements resisted by people whose social organization was centered on a heterosexual way of life (see Humphreys 1970; for a different argument on the disentangled readings of sexual activity and a heterosexual sexual identity, see Ward 2015).

The literature on sexual formations is sometimes useful, given the normative and controlling images of a straight state (Canaday 2009) where heterosexual and citizen have been, historically, one and the same. Sexual formations, like racial

formations, are about the processes of control – in this case, of any visibility outside the norm – in ways that mask the power relations involved in normalizing people. Yet a lot of the history of sexuality studies has inherently sustained non-normative sexualities as white, and cultures of resistance to such non-normativity as non-white (and homophobic). For instance, the invisibility of various racial groups in sex work research (refer to Frank 2002; Bernstein 2007; Chapkis 1997) fosters a similar characterization – more recent work has troubled those assumptions (Maia 2012; Miller-Young 2014; Brooks 2011; Jones 2015). Similarly, comparisons between marriage and issues of race and sexuality fail to be as congruent as social movement efforts might like them to be (Cahill 2005; but especially Reddy 2011). In sum, while structural issues of race and sexuality cross currents, they are by no means always analogous to one another.

Because sexualization should be understood as a process (instead of being fixed), and as a discursive effect instead of an essentialist fact (as in the clichéd sense of gay and lesbian people having been "born this way"), the power relations embedded in sexuality need to be critiqued. Sexuality does not only occur through the skin and sexual acts, but in fact its interpellation happens through religion, ethnicity, nation, race, and so forth. We are sexual beings in a multitude of ways. In this chapter, and the next, we have wanted to denote the differences between embodied senses of becoming a sexual being versus structural enactments of sexuality. If care is not taken in making that distinction, normativity around sexuality, sexual formations, and the relationship to the state is simplified.

Sexualization, as the inherently imposed and reductionist reading of someone's sexuality, differs from our understanding of sexuality in four ways (American Psychological Association, cited in Egan 2014): it is the foregrounding of someone's sexuality (to the detriment of all of their other characteristics): (1) as their currency; (2) as the imposition of exclusive definitions of sexiness on someone based on physical attractiveness; (3) as sexual objectification that imposes

a reading of oneself as a "thing;" and, lastly, (4) as the imposition of sexuality onto someone. To be sexualized is to carry (with that reading) connotations that vary from the animalistic to the primal (and devoid of reason since they are attitude-driven and not based on any rational assessment). Thus to be sexualized is not just to be dehumanized; it is also to be infantilized, minimized, reduced to body parts, and thus, like race, propping up the hierarchy.

The product of the institutions and structural arrangements noted earlier helped establish a heteronormative form of intelligibility, and a subsequent unintelligibility for those who did not abide by such norms. Those are norms that are interlocked with sexism and misogyny as parallel operating systems. Indeed, sexuality discussions often tend to be restricted to men – most often gay men serving as the "subject" of this imagined topic – even though most people have the capacity for sexual desire. In particular, discussions of female desire and sexuality are often absent in most analyses of sexuality, whether the topic is cisgender women – be they heterosexual, lesbian, or bisexual – or some other sexual identity. The primary reading of the discussions on women's sexuality is foregrounded by their gender. They become understood as mothers, not sexual women or women with desires; their reproductive capacity is perceived to be their main social status. Or their sexual identity is neutralized by the aforementioned male-dominated categories (lesbian women are spoken of as *gay* women, understood as part of an "umbrella" term for sexual minorities). Similarly, when "gay" or "woman" are spoken of, the gender of sexuality, or the sexuality within the gender, gets erased for lesbian women.

There are other ways in which sexualization is tied to social identity and is also relational: as noted before, sexualization and gender (e.g., when women are understood only to be valuable if "pretty") but also racial sexualization (e.g., Craig, *Sorry I Don't Dance*, where white men are presumed not to want to move), and in terms of complicating understandings of race/class (e.g., Wilkins, *Puerto Rican*

"*Wannabes*," where white heterosexual women interested in men of color perform a racialized Puerto Rican gendered expression in order to get themselves space within black/ Latina/o groups).

As noted in the opening vignette, sexualization also happens to transgender women, and their experiences of being both gendered and continuously hypersexualized impact a structural perception of them (e.g., stereotypes, stigma), as well as their lived experience. Transgender women of color in particular face specific charges with regard to their ability to operate outside a sex-work framework – in many countries they live within very challenging situations where the levels of engagement are through prostitution (often where such labor is not an actual choice). Speaking of a trans-inclusive lens merits attention to gender frameworks that have incorporated gender, gender and sexuality, gendered sexualities, and race and sexuality around trans people, and trans women in particular.

Scholars in a specific framework of ethnomethodology have considered the symbolic boundaries of gender expression and trans identity. Harold Garfinkel (1967) was one of the earlier scholars whose work explored the gendered and sexualized experiences of a specific case study, Agnes (for more on this, see also Kessler and McKenna 1978; for transgender within a social institution, see Risman 1982). In much of that scholarship, transgender people challenged a dual-sexed way of operating in the world. The ethnomethodological scholarship expanded to incorporate linguistic practices and analyses of experience. According to sociologists Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman (1987), gender is an activity or accomplishment (something people *do*), managing one's behaviors within everyday life. Gender is more than being a man or a woman; gender is also about how masculinities and femininities become embodied and enacted. However, within our everyday interactions of "doing gender," people often reify institutional arrangements of men as dominant and women as subordinate. Gender and gender inequality are partially

constituted through interaction, and through our interactions gender becomes naturalized (West and Zimmerman 1987; see also Butler 1990). Key though to West and Zimmerman's formulation of doing gender is that people cannot avoid "doing gender," as other people are always holding us accountable for our gender enactments. As Butler (2004) later stated, gender and other categories such as sexuality are dispossessed possessions or modes of relation, present in society before we are born and shaping how we relate to others.

Gender scholarship, either from specific frameworks such as ethnomethodology or from other areas of analysis, intended to explore the hierarchical aspects of difference, not merely to denote such difference. For much of this gender scholarship, difference was inherently about power and thus not an innocent articulation. This notion of power becomes important in thinking about the role of "doing gender" and how scholars such as West and Fenstermarker expanded this lens to "doing difference" (1995). Part of the insistence in feminist and gender studies (from an array of areas and as different paradigms) has been the necessity to remind everyone that women, as a category of analysis, were often forgotten, in spite of the necessity to preserve a diversity of women's experiences. Any scholarship and activism that produces a reminder of or an awakening to these erasures – be they women with disabilities, cisgender black women, transgender and transsexual women, women engaged in sex work – is inherently feminist. But often much of this scholarship did not examine or articulate the co-constitutive ways in which gender and other modes of difference are produced by and through each other. That is, things like doing gender are already raced, sexualized, and classed, and the failure to capture these complexities of power, difference, and hierarchies does not account for the intricate interactional and structural ways that shape lived experiences and inequalities. The rise of intersectionality began to address some of these lacunas.

Understanding the interlocking fields of study before, and through, racialized sexualities

Feminist studies and gender studies interrogated the normativity of elements such as sex/gender roles, moving society to newer family/work configurations (and the distribution of the private/public spheres) with work and family as nonoppositional. The study of sexism and the institutional barriers that precluded society from eliminating gender inequality were also central to such studies. Sexuality studies emerged along a continuum of work that insisted on class, race, and sexuality as equally important markers of identity and experience (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Hollibaugh and Moraga 2000), and, at the same time, an emergent gay and lesbian studies, portions of which resulted in the coining of queer theory (de Lauretis 1991). The fields became intertwined with Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality framework, and then with the advancement of scholarly work on queer theory and race, within specialized areas – some of which have already been mentioned (such as the queer-of-color critique), and others like queer diasporas (Gopinath 2005; Manalansan IV 2003) and queer migrations (Luibhéid 2002; Cantú 2009).

Intersectionality, first with Crenshaw and then Patricia Hill Collins, established itself as a crucial framework for social scientific analysis. But it has not gone without challenges to the situated knowledge it produced. In Crenshaw's launching of the paradigm, we see black womanhood unapologetically as the central point of theorizing and analysis. Crenshaw's initial proposition noticed the inherent racism and sexism in the treatment of black women and the inability of institutions (the law was a concentrated object of analysis for her) to recognize and respond to these dimensions of social life and experience which were already connected for black women (Crenshaw 1991; see also Grzanka 2014). Thus intersectionality began to flourish from a grounded set of denunciations of discriminatory practices and a well-defined embodied set of lived experiences.

Critical race scholar Angela Davis (1981) also denounced the oppressions of these multiple axes of power and continues to do so today in terms of the prison industrial complex, although in conversation with immigrant rights, disability rights, and anti-normative queer rights, as did Barbara Smith, a member of the Combahee River Collective. Patricia Hill Collins, too, began to engage in the project of studying intersectionality and expanded its scope.

Collins, a sociologist, first published *Black Feminist Thought* in 1990 (reprinting a second edition in 2000). She then developed her arguments for racialized sexualities in *Black Sexual Politics* (2004), where the interplay of race and sexuality came to the forefront. She addressed the interlocked forms of oppression for African-American and black diasporic women, and how black women are particularly sexualized. Yet in an early chapter she introduces, as an example of someone's black embodiment, the performer/dancer/singer/actress Jennifer López ("J-Lo" was the artistic name she was using then) to denote her voluptuous buttocks as a sign of López's inherent sexualized blackness. Instead of opening up the notion of black sexual politics to incorporate other women of color, Collins circumscribes López's experience in a black diasporic lens, thus reifying the very same black/white racial binary through the processes of sexualization that Jennifer López goes through. Ironically, López and other women of color are not recognized within the framework of this new intersectional lens, circumscribed as it was by African-American women's experiences of oppression. Thus, while intersectionality may be of utility to the rethinking of racial formation and sexualization, we seek to further unpack the various positionalities and experiences of non-black women, expanding to trans women of color and other social locations.

Also, intersectionality still, at times, operates within heteronormative logics. Again, in *Black Sexual Politics*, Collins sees men on the "down low" as being gay or bisexual, not allowing for the possibility of black men who engage in same-sex sexual behaviors having a heterosexual identity

(reinforcing a "one-drop rule" that if a man engages in any type of same-sex sexual behavior, then they cannot be heterosexual; see Guzmán 2006). Collins links her discussion of the "down low" to HIV/AIDS – a topic we explore and critique in the next chapter as being a neoliberal strategy of furthering the pathologization of black sexuality and masking the structural causes of HIV within black communities. That is, within this intersectional framework, certain non-heteronormative forms of black male sexualities are still pathologized through dominant white logics of black men being hypersexual and hyper-masculine.

Queer-of-color critique emerges to queer intersectionality and to bring sexuality to critical race studies and race to feminist and queer studies. In "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," Cathy Cohen (1997) argues that feminist and queer scholarship must contend with how heterosexual norms do not privilege all heterosexuals; that is, heterosexual people are not a monolithic group (and some queer people experience privilege). For example, the figure of the "welfare queen," single parents, and even interracial relationships are also outside of the hegemonic heterosexual norms of society. In this regard, one must begin to think about how the existence of single mothers or "welfare queens" – racialized figures and stereotypes – may also be sites to challenge compulsory heterosexuality and heteronormativity.

Furthermore, in *Aberrations in Black*, Ferguson (2004) utilizes a queer-of-color analysis through his documentation of how nationalist ideologies, liberal ideologies, and sociological research all came together to maintain the white hetero-patriarchy. In one of his chapters, Ferguson turns to the Moynihan Report – a report by a sociologist who implied, perhaps inadvertently (and through a heteronormative, masculinist lens), that black families are in poverty because black women run the households and in the process emasculate their male partners. Moynihan calls for a reinscription of a patriarchal household within black families and communities as the solution to black poverty. Ferguson argues that Moynihan (along with the other sociologists, such as the

Chicago school of ethnography that Ferguson critiques) often assumed that patriarchy and heterosexuality were "natural" and right. In the mid-twentieth century, sociologists saw the social decay (e.g., non-heterosexual relationships, non-nuclear families) and social disorganization caused by capitalism within black and other communities of color as inherently bad. Instead of seeing these non-heterosexual and non-nuclear relationships as sites to critique larger structures of society, sociologists instead called for black communities to return to patriarchal, heterosexual family structures in order to end discrimination against them. In these instances, because black communities did not give in to compulsory heterosexuality (often because they could not, due to factors like poverty and incarceration that render relationships for people of color extremely tenuous), discrimination against people of color was justified. An understanding is needed of how heteronormativity is also used to support racial and class inequality alongside gender inequality. Therefore, a queer-of-color analysis calls for and shows how social formations and their resulting inequalities and constructions of social difference operate in and through the inter-articulations of gender, race, sexuality, and class.

Now the field of racialized sexualities addresses those complexities in various parts of the globe, engaging in colonial and diasporic lenses, engaging cisgender women, trans women of color, immigrants, and transnational groups of people. The scope of the fields of study influencing the newer racialized sexualities studies is still expanding, and our efforts in this book are a small step in that direction.

Conclusion

In closing, the importance of considering both race and sexuality together cannot be overstated. We have been thinking through how sexuality and race are often imagined as mutually exclusive analytical concepts, as in some applications of intersectionality, versus co-constitutive social formations, as in racialized sexualities. But these fields are not

impermeable, and they continue to expand and relate to each other in more intimate ways.

While these concepts are not always variables with exactly the same levels of analysis, they provide us with a powerful analytics to see the connections of stereotypes, power, and prejudice. In the final analysis, what is lost when we ignore one or the other is the ability to provide a nuanced account of whatever social issue we want to explore. In this chapter, we have identified crucial aspects of racialization and sexualization that merit attention. For example, the fear of talking about race or racism in a "post-racial" era or denying the relevance of race in contexts that are racially mixed are aspects of the cross-over between the two elements that have to be overcome.

We find it necessary to insist on this relationship at a time where the hyper-visibility of racialization and sexualization is more evident than ever, as the following chapter will show.

2

Race and Sexualities in Everyday Life

In April of 2017, professional football player Aaron Josef Hernandez allegedly committed suicide while serving a life sentence for first-degree murder. Following the news, a lot of media attention (mostly from gossip columns, although *Newsweek*, and gay newspapers such as the *Washington Blade*, included coverage) produced a "hidden bisexual orientation" narrative as the cause for both his murder case, as well as his eventual suicide – some going so far as to note that Hernandez left a note to his "jail boyfriend" before committing suicide. Aaron, of Puerto Rican and Italian descent, was said to be fearful of the possibility that his sexuality would be publicly known; and that, combined with his ethno-racial heritage, this would amount to unbearable social stigma.

Stories such as this one reveal the media's obsession with promoting non-normative sexualities as shameful, and construct narratives of guilt and suicide based on these reasons. Bisexual people are often stereotyped as dangerous and hypersexual, whereby bisexuality is often seen as a "phase" but not a legitimate sexuality or identity (Callis 2013). While self-identified bisexual people have been openly so (to their families and friends, and to the media) in recent decades (partially working to dispel some stereotypes about bisexual

people), the challenge posed to Hernandez's biography is one that is also raced – coming from Puerto Rican and Italian parents, his suicide may be more easily co-produced as a recognition that non-normative sexualities do not operate in the lives of people other than white people. Constructions of homophobia in communities of color, and of pride in white communities of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or queer, abound in white USAmerican narratives. For example, in 2008, voters in California elected Barack Obama to the presidency while also passing Proposition 8 – a ban on same-sex marriage. A dominant narrative that grew out of Proposition 8 was that people of color voted for this ban, even as (white) LGBT people voted for a black president. This discourse often erased the existence of LGBT people of color, while constructing people of color as homophobic, also erasing how US society as a whole is heteronormative and homophobic. This chapter will illustrate how the discursive practice of a socially shared agreement about these presumed silences is deployed, as both producers and consumers of media – an important social institution – enact a "common sense" narrative that is tacitly agreed upon and subsequently achieves traction (enough so that it makes this "common sense" knowledge float unquestioned). We seek to dismantle that perceived common sense with an analysis of the structural aspects of race and sexuality.

Thus, in this chapter, we move the discussion to show how racialized sexualities affect people's everyday lives. We reveal how the discursive and structural elements of society around race and sexualities produce certain raced sexual readings of particular bodies. We discuss how race-based sexual stereotyping shapes people's desires, as well as who is desired, and how people are desired in particular ways. We also illuminate how neoliberal discourses around "personal preference" justify people's discriminatory acts, masking the structural inequalities that shape these desires. From there, we explore how racial and sexual embodiments and their meanings can vary by context, and how the intersections of race and sexualities generate particular social inequalities for

different groups of people. We conclude this chapter by thinking about the timely issue of "coming out" as an LGBT political strategy, and how race, ethnicity, and nationality can complicate and challenge this strategy.

Race, sexualities, and the quotidian

Bodies, individuals, and communities all experience structural and discursive elements of raced sexual readings; in turn, as members of society, people reinscribe those readings and categorizations. All bodies are raced, just as they are gendered and sexualized; however, their markings are given different meanings depending on the relational potentiality between them, the social context of bodies, acts, activities, and, overall, their social location versus established hierarchical structures. This chapter engages the linkages between a raced/sexualized (and often gendered and classed) body, or constituency, and the social systems that race/sexualize it. We begin with the commonplace or routine (the seemingly mundane, unscripted, or unmarked, set of experiences of being in the world) and move back and forth between those and a set of social systems that regulate the quotidian.

Following the discussion in the previous chapter, we engage with questions of being racialized (and existing within an ethno-racial system) and how this relates to sexualities at the micro/experiential levels. To say that someone (or something) is racialized is to recognize the perception of a behavior attributed to a person/group of people in ways that may create false perceptions of them *as representative of a group* (Omi and Winant 1994). Thus such a reading incorporates a particular value – a value that is never about that person, or that element, but about a community of people (hence, being racialized as a member of an ethno-racial minority group often carries stereotypes and stigmatizing messages of some sort). There are different types of racialization: religious, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and other forms of racialization. In the context of this chapter, gendered and sexual racializations are front and center. For instance, stereotypes that function to racialize black and Latina women

on the basis of their sexuality, race, and gender include the imaginary of Latina women having multiple babies, when they are thought of as hyper-reproductive (García 2012) and the figure of the "welfare queen" in government policies (Bensonsmith 2005; Kandaswamy 2012; Schram 2005). These are but two examples of how Latina and black women are particularly racialized, on the basis of a combination of their sexuality, gender, and race. It is important to note that white people are racialized too, although the stigma, or sense of capital, given to each form of being racialized varies – not just in mainstream USAmerican contexts, but in subcultural spaces (for instance, being racialized as a "thug" may offer cachet to some men and women; for more on the latter, see Wilkins 2004).

We should not confuse ethnic and racial readings in this ethno-racial landscape. Being racialized and being ethnicized carry different connotations. To be ethnicized is to have a culturalized reading of one's self (or of one's food, clothing, accent, gendered being), which is often devoid of any significant political, social, or economic value. Ethnic use of clothing or language (as in Spanish folk songs) is seen as ethnicized, because, among other things, these readings are rendered innocent (Urciuoli 1996). However, scholars such as Grosfoguel (2004) have complicated the relationship between these two markers by signaling the porousness of both as "racialized ethnicities" or "ethnicized races." But to be racialized is to carry specific connotations about a group of people in ways that, at the least, create a specific orientation of such groups (for instance, all black people behave a particular way, or all Latinas/os are Mexican undocumented immigrants, because that's what we see in the news). At worst, this sustains stereotypes or perpetuates violence against such groups. Many USAmericans ethnicize people of color in order to avoid thinking of the hard reality of systematic racism in society, but they may quickly turn to racializing when historically biased norms of social order cues are threatened – voting for bilingual education, speaking a different language at work, or seeking citizenship and claiming the very same sense of Americanness.

Racialization at a local level is distinctively unique and cannot be simplified to national media soundbites of immigration and undocumented status. What racialization at the local level may mean, in a US context for instance, is that Californians may racialize Latin American immigrants as Mexican and Central American, and most often as undocumented, when in reality more than half of those who are identified as Latina/o or Latin American are residents or US citizens. Or people make assumptions that racialize as undocumented many Asian/Pacific Islander immigrants who are Chinese or Filipino, even though many in such groups have already (re)produced several generations in the region – thus creating a blurry confusion between those whom USAmericans racialize as immigrants and those who are actually new migrants to the country. If we take New York as another example of local racializations that clash with national imaginaries, we see how Latinas/os (including Puerto Ricans who are fourth- and fifth-generation migrants, a group of people who have been moving to NYC since the nineteenth century) are *still* considered (and called) "Spanish" folk by USAmericans, even though most Dominican, Colombian, and Mexican immigrants to NYC are far removed from those categorizations. And if we take the rest of the US southern border – Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas – we notice the critical racialization that Mexican Americans and other US-born Latinas/os go through, as they are often marked/racialized as "undocumented immigrants" by a USAmerican white group which is entitled, conservative, and a ruling group whose basis for hate is fear of the immigrant. Even though those they see are US citizens, their race becomes a target, in spite of their citizenship (and non-immigrant status). These slippages are important, as a lot of stereotyping flows from these readings of Otherness, when race and migration are tied together, yet remain unproblematized.

At the intimate and erotic level, race-based sexual stereotyping often casts black and (when mentioned) Native American men as hypersexual, Latinos as exotic "others," and Asian men as effeminate and asexual (see Wilson et al.

2009), while retaining whiteness as innocence – ever since the historical contrast made between black male slaves as hypersexual and predatory and white females as delicate but desiring of a perceived black male's sexual potency (see Kitch 2009). These stereotypes work to establish whiteness as the structuring mode of sexual propriety and to justify discrimination against people of color for failing to align with such standards (failing to align with them also makes them less desirable as partners). In the private sphere, as well as in erotic dancing and porn, (female) whiteness is understood as the basis of sexual patterns of desire, and white (female) bodies are given the advantage in embodying sexualized fantasies – bride, schoolgirl, and so forth – whereas women of color are reduced to sexualities framed as "animalistic" (Khan 2015). These stereotypes – which creep into the social imagination/omnipresent discourse of racialized desire – also affect the daily lives of people, especially as they try navigating dating and/or finding sexual partners.

At the present time, many white people may not want to date people of color because of these stereotypes, and (simultaneously) people of color often try to embody these stereotypes in order to be more desirable or give their racial minority status some sexual cachet (Guzmán 2006). Those who do engage in interracial relationships face judgment and suffer from tension within their relationships over issues such as negotiating where to live, where to school their kids, or even facing hostility when perceived as not being the parent (Steinbugler 2012; see also Katz Rothman 2005). These stereotypes erase heterogeneity among people of color, lumping them together in homogeneous categories to be culturally consumed, assumed to be on the prowl (and sexually violent), reduced merely to their genitals (Robinson and Vidal-Ortiz 2013), and/or simply ignored when interacting with other individuals (see Collins 2004; Han 2006a, 2010; Brooks 2010).

Neoliberalism shapes how race and sexualities are experienced today (see Holland 2012), so that "choice" and "individuality" are tenets of social organization, and thus a

biased sexual-racial "preference" (apparent individual choice in dating and sexual hookups) is not read as racism (Robinson 2013, 2015). These "individualistic responsibility" frameworks are a part of larger neoliberal economic policies that have restructured the social through the retrenchment of social welfare programs and through widening economic inequality, all the while placing the burden of economic responsibility on the individual. This same discourse on individual responsibility influences people's discussions of their desires by talking about their "personal preferences," veiling the structural inequalities shaping these desires. Therefore, stereotypes of people of color's sexual behaviors and sexual health are seen as people of color's own moral failings. We hail these larger structural inequalities and discourses behind seemingly personal choices and turn the lens back onto the structures of being that influence people's interpersonal and intrapsychic erotic desires (see Guzmán 2006).

An example of how race-based sexual stereotypes and neoliberal discourses operate with regard to "personal preference" is online dating. The internet was believed by some to be a place where social inequalities could be done away with. Indeed, issues such as segregation could potentially disappear online, as people may interact with people of other races more online than they do offline. However, race-based sexual stereotypes still deeply impact online dating and sexual hookup interactions. In a study on Yahoo Personals, researchers found that white men often exclude black women as potential dating partners, and white women often exclude Asian men (Feliciano, Robnett, and Komaie 2009). In a different study on online dating, it was found that people often contact people of the same race as them and are also more likely to respond to people of the same race or to someone from a dominant racial group (Lin and Lundquist 2013). For multiracial daters, if they identify as part white, their chances of receiving a response on an online dating site improve (Curington, Lin, and Lundquist 2015). When online dating, gay men also often used "personal preference," though this

discourse was adopted to mask cultural assumptions that gay men have of people of color and to justify gay men's preference for white men (Robinson 2015). Such systems even let people filter out someone based upon their race, exacerbating these notions of racial inequality and stereotyping within online dating.

Spotlight 2.1 Racialized Sexualities and the "Down Low"

The construction of the "down low" is a rich example with which to explore race-based sexual stereotypes and the ways in which race, sexuality, and gender intersect to pathologize certain forms of sexual contact and intimacy. In 2003, Benoit Denizet-Lewis – a white man – in his *New York Times* piece "Double Lives on the Down Low" brought the concept of the "down low" (DL) to national attention. In this piece, Denizet-Lewis depicts an underground world of black (and some Latino) men who identify as heterosexual and have wives or girlfriends, but who have sex with other men. In his portrayal of "DL" men, being gay is to be white and effeminate. "DL" men place their racial identity above all other identities, so to be black is to be masculine and heterosexual. Although Denizet-Lewis acknowledges that some black men openly identify as gay, he claims that most black men with same-sex desires and who engage in same-sex intimacy do not. Instead, these "secret lives" of men of color on the "down low" get linked to "unsafe" sex and rising HIV rates among people of color.

A year later, J. L. King released his memoir *On the Down Low*, in which he detailed his own sex life with men. King dedicates the book "to all the women whose health has been jeopardized and emotional state compromised by men living on the DL." Again, the "down low" is linked to the spread of disease, and women in relationships with men on the "DL" get depicted as

passive victims. Similar to Denizet-Lewis's argument, men on the "down low" in King's account are married or date women because if they did not their community would label them as "fags" – a term that is perceived as stripping a black man of his masculinity (King 2004). King hoped that his memoir would inspire men on the "down low" to "come out," presuming that men on the "DL" are really gay or bisexual.

A year after King's memoir, Keith Boykin published *Beyond the Down Low*. In his book, Boykin (2005) challenges the media's construction of those on the "down low" as black, male, HIV-positive, in a relationship with a woman, but sleeping with other men. Boykin asserts that same-gender sexual activity among men happens between and across ethnic and racial lines; white men sleep with other men secretly as well, so why are white men not getting blamed for the spread of HIV/AIDS in the white community? For Boykin, the "down low" construction is a way for "white America" to pathologize black male sexuality. As Boykin asserts, there is no empirical evidence (there still is not) that the "down low" has contributed to the rise in HIV infections within black communities.

From these more popular discourses, two main lines of inquiry followed in scholarly research. First, what is the sexual identity of men on the "down low"? And, second, are "DL" men contributing to the rise of HIV? "Down low" men were seen as bisexually active (Agyemang 2007), as black masculine men having sex with other black masculine men (Phillips 2005), as gay, but using the label "down low" to negotiate their cultural contexts (Valera 2007), and as heterosexual men who have sex with each other but maintain heterosexual lives outside of their same-sex sexual contacts (González 2007). Although without empirical evidence, research also promulgated that men on the "down low" were spreading HIV throughout black communities (Valera 2007). One argument as to why black men are on the

"down low" is that black communities are especially homophobic. Besides the lack of any empirical evidence for this claim, this statement is problematic in that it fails to explain how homophobia is pervasive throughout US society. Instead, this discourse about homophobia in the black community eclipses how poverty – a problem generated partially by structural racism – often underlies rising HIV rates in black communities, more so than men on the "down low" (Phillips 2005).

In effect, discourses about the "down low" have been used to pathologize same-sex sexual behavior among black (and Latino) men. This same-sex behavior is given a deviant label – the "down low" – and then seen as being engendered because of homophobia within black communities, giving rise to the increase in HIV rates within those communities (Han 2015). It bears repeating that there is no empirical evidence for either of these discourses.

Furthermore, research has shown that heterosexual white men are also on the "down low" (Robinson and Vidal-Ortiz 2013; Vidal-Ortiz and Robinson 2016) and engage in same-sex sexual encounters (Ward 2015; Silva 2017). Some white men may claim to be on the "down low" in order to try to attract black and Latino men (Vidal-Ortiz and Robinson 2016). Nonetheless, the fact that there are white men claiming to be on the "down low" challenges the notion that the "down low" is only a person-of-color phenomenon because of homophobia within communities of color (Robinson and Vidal-Ortiz 2013). It also unsettles the link between HIV and the "down low," as white men are engaging in the same types of behaviors yet HIV rates do not seem to be rising in the same ways. This fact points to the need to examine how poverty and discrimination may be the underlying causes of HIV in black and other communities of color, more so than individual sexual behaviors.

Moreover, whiteness and heterosexual white men get to experience their same-sex sexual encounters

differently than black and Latino men. In *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men*, Ward (2015) argues that heterosexual white men's engagements with one another uphold their whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity. Straight white men have been engaging in sexual encounters with each other for quite a while (e.g., in the military, in biker gangs, in fraternities); however, their same-sex sexual encounters never get pathologized or labeled as the "down low" or justified as happening because of homophobia within white communities or a cause of HIV within white communities. Instead, heterosexual white men get to engage in same-sex sexual behaviors as a way to further their investment in masculinity and heterosexuality. In effect, then, the "down low" is a discourse that relies on racialized sexual stereotypes about men of color being hypersexual and deviant which pathologize their same-sex sexual encounters in ways that do not apply to white men who do the same thing.

The multiple meanings of racial and sexual embodiment vary by context. For example, beauty norms within communities of color may vary, such that white hegemonic beauty norms like being skinny or stereotypically feminine (in particular white-American femininity standards) may not always apply. Although women of color have to contend with these hegemonic beauty standards, things such as being curvy may also be valued by some black and Latina women. Such hegemonic beauty norms may still shape certain practices (e.g., eyelid surgery, lightening skin treatment) based on ideological premises like colorism – discrimination based on one's skin color, whereby lighter skin is privileged over darker skin (Hunter 2005; Nakano Glenn 2009). Physical markers that are associated with the bodies of people of color are often seen as excessive, crude, or unattractive when whiteness is the standard – and these elements are gendered and sexualized (this is the case for cisgender *and* transgender women; Vidal-Ortiz 2014). When

these features have been adopted by white (cisgender) women (i.e., lip injection, "Brazilian" butt lift, etc.), they take on a favorable meaning (Wilkins 2004). White women who embody these features are often seen as exotic and sexually desirable, whereas brown and black women embodying the same features are judged differently. The processes by which this appropriation occurs are ever-changing, meaning that different embodied features reach "trend status" at different points in time, demonstrating the transient nature of racialized desirability.

The intersections of race and sexualities also generate particular social and health inequalities. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, black gay and bisexual men are more affected by HIV than any other group in the United States. Socioeconomic status can influence these disparities, as some black gay and bisexual men may have limited access to quality health care and disproportionately experience mass incarceration. Furthermore, black people develop sexual stories around HIV in order to understand how structural patterns interact and influence their sexual health and lives (Mackenzie 2013). Some black people trace the high rates of HIV within black communities back to the trauma of slavery and the medical experiments done on black people; that is, some black people see the high rates of HIV as another attempt by the state to try to marginalize and discriminate against black people and communities (Mackenzie 2013).

Sexual stigma and discrimination can shape how communities of color respond to and talk about certain sexual topics such as HIV. This stigma can negatively affect testing and seeking treatment. To preserve their privacy, people avoid going to HIV clinics (Lichtenstein 2003). Young women of color have recently carried the stigma of human papilloma virus (HPV) in the United States, and Latina teenagers in particular face challenges based on sexual education, reproductive choice, and teenage pregnancies (García 2012; Mann, Cardona, and Gómez 2015). Women of color also encounter structural barriers when it comes to reproductive

health and are more likely to die during pregnancy compared with white women (Fiscella 2004).

This realm of reproductive health and the barriers that women of color face have played out in important ways within feminist movements. In *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, Nelson (2003) reveals how women of color in the United States and Puerto Rican feminists challenged white feminists to broaden their pro-abortion platform to cover a more expansive reproductive rights framework. White feminism (in Nelson's account, mainly the Redstockings) often only framed reproductive rights around choice of and access to abortion. Feminists of color challenged this narrow vision because women of color often did not even have the "choice" of an abortion because of other social constraints (e.g., poverty, lack of access to a living wage). Likewise, women of color were also dealing with issues of forced sterilization, the state often sterilizing women of color without their consent. Therefore, many white feminists often perceived sterilization as a voluntary procedure, while many women of color saw sterilization as state control of their bodies. Women of color pushed white feminists to pursue a more inclusive reproductive rights framework that would encompass sterilization and other social issues such as employment.

Likewise, women of color often have to deal with nationalist sentiments within their own communities – something again that white women do not have to contend with. During the 1960s and 1970s, black nationalists often wanted black women to keep bearing children in order to combat the perceived racial genocide of their community. Black women not only had to confront white women regarding expanding notions of reproductive rights, but they also had to challenge black men within their own communities about their bodily autonomy. Black women's reproductive experiences were qualitatively different to white women's experiences, and the call for a more inclusive reproductive framework was an outcome of feminists of color challenging both white feminists and black nationalist agendas (Nelson 2003).

Similarly, in *Conquest*, Andrea Smith (2005) also talks about the rape and forced sterilization of Native American women. In addition, Native American women have been medically experimented upon, and they have experienced the environmental degradation of their communities. This pollution of their land also affects Native American women's pregnancies and reproductive capabilities. Andrea Smith reveals how, alongside forced sterilization, issues like environmental racism are also acts of sexual violence on women's bodies and their reproductive health. She calls for doing away with a "pro-choice" framework around reproductive rights, considering this framework too individualistic and consumer-based. She also says that this "pro-choice" rhetoric completely disguises the fact that many women do not even have a "choice" in reproductive decisions. She calls for a more inclusive reproductive rights framework that confronts the many issues that women of color face, including rape, forced sterilization, genocide, and environmental degradation (Smith 2005).

These social inequalities generated through the intersections of race and sexualities are further exacerbated by the law. The criminalization of HIV "is one site in which anti-blackness, AIDS phobia, queer phobia and carceral violence converge" (Gossett 2014: 34). As both mass incarceration and the AIDS epidemic disproportionately affect black and Latina/o populations, the criminalization of HIV continues the surveillance of minority populations. For example, Nushawn Williams became a media example of how the politics around HIV criminalization plays out and impacts men of color. Williams was sentenced to prison in 1997, partially because he knowingly had HIV and had condomless sex with women. Williams's case ignited a media storm about whether HIV should be criminalized and if infecting someone deliberately with HIV should be seen as attempted murder. Within these discussions, Williams was seen as promiscuous and sexually out of control. Black men are often already stereotyped as hypersexual and, through Williams having HIV (and potentially infecting people), this

stereotype was exacerbated by the media spectacle and the courts. Although Williams has served his sentence, he has still been prevented from leaving prison as he is considered a public health "risk" to society.

Outside of health and the law, race, ethnicity, and nationality can also shape "coming out" strategies and narratives as well as different responses to non-heterosexual behaviors and identities. "Coming out" is often depicted as the "authentic" way to be LGBT within US society. However, this construction of coming out of the closet ignores how different people navigate being LGBT, based on their social location and when and how they choose to disclose this information. That is, "coming out" and the closet are often seen as middle-class, white notions of experiencing one's sexual marginality (Ross 2005). Certain people and communities of color may not "come out" in the same ways that the (white) hegemonic gay narrative often requires of people who want to be "authentic" gay subjects (see Decena 2008; Acosta 2013). Some people of color may see no need to "come out" as they may believe their family and friends already know about their non-heterosexuality. For example, in his study on gay Dominican men in the United States, Decena (2011) shows how men tacitly negotiate being gay within their families without having to openly disclose their non-heterosexual identity. In challenging the "compulsory disclosure" that one is supposed to perform as an "authentic" gay subject, some gay men navigate their racial and sexual identities differently to the dominant paradigm. Some black gay men may see their racial and sexual identities as interlocking; other black gay men may perceive them as in opposition to each other. Yet others may base them on space and contexts (Hunter 2010). In effect, LGBT people of color are not a monolithic group and respond to "coming out" and being a racial and sexual minority in a variety of ways. To be clear, plenty of non-white non-heterosexual people "come out" and rejoice in identifying with such nomenclature; but the challenge is to manage what sociologists call the "master status" (i.e., the primary identifying status of a person) and

the assumed contradiction of racial minority status with an LGBT identity – a challenge that somehow makes whiteness invisible in the process of coming out "while white." Likewise, some non-heterosexual people of color may see neither identity as a master status (Hunter 2010).

Conclusion

In the previous chapter and this one, we have moved discussions of racialized sexualities from theoretical and discursive levels to the everyday lived realities of people, the point being that how race and sexuality are operationalized as co-constitutive elements has concrete material and social lived consequences. Racialized sexualities affect dating and relationship formations, embodiment and desire, the criminalization and/or stereotyping of certain people's sex lives and behaviors, sexual health, and even "coming out" strategies. Our lives are influenced daily by the ways in which race and sexuality always operate simultaneously.

In the previous section of the book, we established a common language through key concepts, a core set of definitions, and reviews of critical, relevant literature; we also illustrated both disciplinary influences and more recent contributions as framed by newer fields of study, conveying the discursive, the social, the institutional, and the interpersonal. In the following three chapters, we turn to case studies – transnational human rights, sex work, and immigration – to explore the ways in which the discursive, the macrostructural, and everyday lived realities all shape how racialized sexualities influence these different areas.