

August 31, 2023

*New! Extended to March 30, 2024*

**Re: “Black Men, Sexual Tropes, Trauma and Resilience: A transnational portrait of erotic racism, sexual stereotypes and Black men’s lives”**

This qualitative study builds on the autoethnographic, historical and theoretical scholarship presented in my edited book [\*Appealing Because He Is Appalling: Black masculinities, colonialism and erotic racism\*](#) (University of Alberta Press, 2021).

This study will explore the following questions: How do sexual stereotypes about Black men impact their identities, self-concept, self-esteem, life chances and quality of life? Against the backdrop of these stereotypes, how do Black men narrate and cope with being survivors of childhood sexual abuse and coercion and manipulation as adults? What is their level of awareness and what adaptations and protective mechanisms do they employ to protect themselves from the harms of sexual stereotypes? What are the vicarious impacts for their loved ones and communities?

This research invites Black men and their family intimates to participate in a unique research project titled **“Black Men, Sexual Tropes, Trauma and Resilience: A transnational portrait of erotic racism, sexual stereotypes and Black men’s lives”**. The project involves recording the stories, narratives, coping mechanisms and perspectives of Black men and their loved ones about the impact of erotic racism, sexual stereotypes (e.g., hypersexuality, priapism and propensity to rape) and sexual trauma on the self-concept, life chances, intimate lives and help-seeking and resiliency of Black men.

I seek to interview 40 Black men inclusive of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, nationalities and countries of origin/residence about the impacts of erotic racism, sexual stereotypes and subjection to sexual trauma.

This project takes a holistic approach to exploring how Black men are impacted by erotic racism, sexual stereotypes, childhood sexual abuse and subjection to manipulation and sexual violence. In view of these issues, I seek 10 persons who are family members (e.g., spouses [regardless of race and sexual orientation] and female relations [e.g., mothers, sisters etc) to share their stories of awareness, support and protection for Black men (and boys) around issues of sexual stereotypes, trauma and resilience.

The Principal Investigator is Dr. Tamari Kitossa, professor of sociology at Brock University. He can be reached at [tkitossa@brocku.ca](mailto:tkitossa@brocku.ca) or [Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca](mailto:Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca). This qualitative research extends Dr. Kitossa’s historical and theoretical inquiry into erotic racism and Black masculinities explored in his edited collection [\*Appealing Because He Is Appalling: Black masculinities, colonialism and erotic racism\*](#) (University of Alberta Press, 2021). As a Black

man and researcher committed to ensuring the dignified representation of Black men (and boys) the principle of do no harm is fundamental to this research.

The Brock University Research Ethics Board reviewed and granted ethical clearance for this research (file #21-279 - KITOSSA). Should you have questions about which you may feel more comfortable directing to the Office of Research Ethics, you may do so at reb@brocku.ca or (905) 688-5550, ext. 3035. Alternatively, I may be reached at [tkitossa@brocku.ca](mailto:tkitossa@brocku.ca), [Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca](mailto:Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca) or (905) 688-5550, ext 5672.

This project is funded by the Council for Research in the Social Sciences (CRISS), Faculty of Humanities, Brock University.

### **Project aims and questions:**

This project aims to contribute to a well-rounded and empathetic examination of how erotic racism, sexual stereotypes (e.g., hypersexuality, priapism and propensity to rape) and sexual trauma informs Black men's lives and resiliency. I seek to explore:

- 1) Are Black men conscious about erotic racism and sexual stereotypes about them (hypersexuality, priapism and rape propensity)? How do they believe sexual tropes are circulated/popularized? Have they experienced being desired, dehumanized or humiliated by erotic racism and sexual stereotypes? What effect have these stereotypes had on their gender, racial and sexual identity? Do they believe erotic racism and sexual stereotypes have impacted their life chances and opportunities at school, work and elsewhere? And do they believe have they experienced police, prison guard and vigilante violence *because* of erotic racism/sexual stereotypes?
- 2) How do erotic racism, sexual tropes and sexual trauma impact Black men's self-concept and capacity to establish trusting emotional and sexual intimacies?
- 3) do sexual mythologies about Black men
  - a) make it difficult to acknowledge sexual trauma and to develop a language that makes help-seeking possible
  - b) lead to false accusations of sexual impropriety, 'gas lighting', manipulation and sexual violence?
- 4) How are loved ones impacted by the erotic racism, sexual stereotypes and sexual traumas of Black men and how do they offer support and protection?

### **Do No Harm:**

- This project is grounded the principle of do no harm. Participants will be treated with respect and dignity in every aspect of this research. You will be fully and clearly informed of all aspects of the research prior to becoming involved as participant. Beyond the ethical principle of do no harm, this project has the value added objective of promoting access to information that may help individuals identify and respond to the harms of sexual violence experienced by males
- Participants may cease interviews or withdraw without penalty or prejudice

## **Methods**

- Individual interviews may last from 45-90 minutes
- Focus group interviews may last 60-90 minutes
- Interviews will be transcribed by offline computer application
- Transcripts will be cross-referenced with audio recordings for accuracy
- Numerical codes and/or pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant's transcript for analysis and dissemination. Interview data is confidential to the researcher but anonymous for all other purposes. Confidentiality, however, will be maintained through coding procedures throughout all stages of this research and anonymized by pseudonyms in all forms of dissemination
- Personal identifiers shall be kept confidential and will not be associated with participant responses which will be coded and/or renamed as pseudonyms
- Where possible and desirable, participants in the Golden Horseshoe area may choose one of the following interview modalities: a) Zoom (please see their privacy agreement: <https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/>) or b) in-person
- All other participants across Canada and internationally will be interviewed via Zoom (please see their privacy agreement: <https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/>)
- In consideration of a documentary on the topic of this project, you will be asked whether you consent to your confidential and pseudonym transcript being used as a resource.

## **Benefits of research:**

- Toward contributing to an understanding of how sexual tropes and experiences of sexual violence shape the intimate lives of Black men what can you expect?
- Individual participants may benefit from developing and clarifying a vocabulary that helps them to understand and develop awareness that helps them to name and address traumas arising from sexual stereotypes and surviving sexual violence
- Through publication of results, presentations at professional and community-based meetings, this project is expected to contribute to promoting humane understandings of Black men, sexual tropes and intimacies with the aim of strengthening the sovereignty and wellbeing of Black men, boys, families and communities
- Research participants will be remunerated \$40 (CAD) for their participation: a) cash, b) personal cheque or c) e-transfer.

## **Further information contact:**

- Dr. Tamari Kitossa
- [tkitossa@brocku.ca](mailto:tkitossa@brocku.ca)
- [Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca](mailto:Blackmenstudy@brocku.ca)

- Visit "Research page" at [The Professor's Corner – Providing a different perspective on social issues](#)
- Phone: (905) 688-5550, ext 5672