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Interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Although both the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act were repealed in 1985, for the most part, interracial intimate relationships continue to be fraught with controversy. It was hypothesised that discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa would intersect with racist and/or antiracist discourses. This study sought to identify and explore discourses on these relationships, and to investigate the possible intersections with discourses on racism. Thompson's method of depth hermeneutics (of which critical discourse analysis was a component) was employed to analyse data generated by two focus group discussions and two interviews with interracial couples. The study yielded a wealth of data. This research report presents significant findings in terms of how discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa intersect with discourses on race and racism. The three main discursive themes were on race, whiteness, and interracial intimate relationships, with the latter theme dominating. Of particular significance was how discursive strategies were employed in order to deny, negate and justify racism. The most striking findings relate to how discourses on interracial relationships intersect with discourses on three main themes: i) experimentation, as depicted by discourses on developmental psychology, ii) geographical locations, socio-economic status, and class, as manifested in the discourse of "It depends on where you go", and iii) the ideological construction of the family, which functions to maintain a racially stratified society that maintains the status quo.