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dog
The
racializa-
tion of pit
bulls

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THE BLACK DOG

By: The riddler

It has been brought to my attention that pit bulls, a popular dog bread among African Americans, has been labeled in relation to their black owners. The breed is popularly considered aggressive and untamable for any family looking to add another member and are more then not used in illegal dog fights, allegedly orchestrated by the very African Americans people have deemed as aggressive as their pets. The question to be asked here is why? How does a dog become black and for the sake of the lord above, how do we not make that a bad thing.

The study we will be referencing today is of high importance, it will show us just how much humanity we have gained. In the span of only 6 surveys and a sample of 6000 National participants we learn the extraordinarily wrong attribution of blackness to pit bulls and how that correlation is seen in a negative light. You're gonna want to get a nice warm cup of milk for this one ladies and gentlemen, because it truly is a marvel how stupid people can be. For reference, here's the article: [The racialization of pit bulls: What dogs can teach us about racial politics.](#)

In the following surveys there was a single point; to determine if anti-black attitudes are significant, independent, predictors of negative views towards pit bulls. It didn't take a rocket scientist to find the results significant and valid. Before the results were even presented we were given numerous accounts of journalists and scientists giving their two cents on the whole dilemma.

"A 2016 op-ed in the Washington Post...contended that breed-specific legislation (BSL) banning pit bulls are likely "proxies by which uneasy majorities can register their suspicions about the race, class and ethnicity of the people who own those dogs""

"After documenting the racialization of pit bulls, Claire Kim [1, pg 273] concludes, "Pit bulls are dying for being Black.""

"B  n  dicte Boisseron [11, pg. 152] argues in her book, Afro-Dog, "When one becomes aware of the racialization of the pit bull through putative black ownership, pit bull bans across America take on the appearance of a modern version of the plantation-era ban [on Black people owning canines].""

These quotes are all the proof i need to convince you that the racialization of dogs are a real problem, but indulge me, there is more i would like to say.

The surveys for one. We will be talking about 2 of them in depth. The first consisted of 7 questions and was taken by different people in 2005 and 2008. The questions and answers are shown In [figure 1](#) with NAES representing the 2005 sample and Pew being the 2008 one. Here we see that though black people statistically owned less dogs than whites, they still interacted more with pit bulls and were more likely to rate them as their favorite breed. This is only one piece of the puzzle.

The next table shows which dog breeds people believe are to be owned by black people more than whites. I didn't include the table because there's really only two dogs on the list that matter. Rottweilers, who were assumed to be owned by African Americans more than whites with a percentage of roughly 54% to 45% and pit bulls with the same dynamic at roughly 60% to 39%. As the article explains:

"It's hardly a coincidence, either, that the two dog breeds stereotyped as Black-owned are the two breeds that evoke the most fear from the public. Over 40 percent of respondents in a 2018 Lucid survey we conducted, for example, said that "scary" described pit bulls and rottweilers "extremely" or "very well""

With this new information, the racialization of dogs is seeming less and less like a baseless rumor and more like a dog whistle, no pun intended.

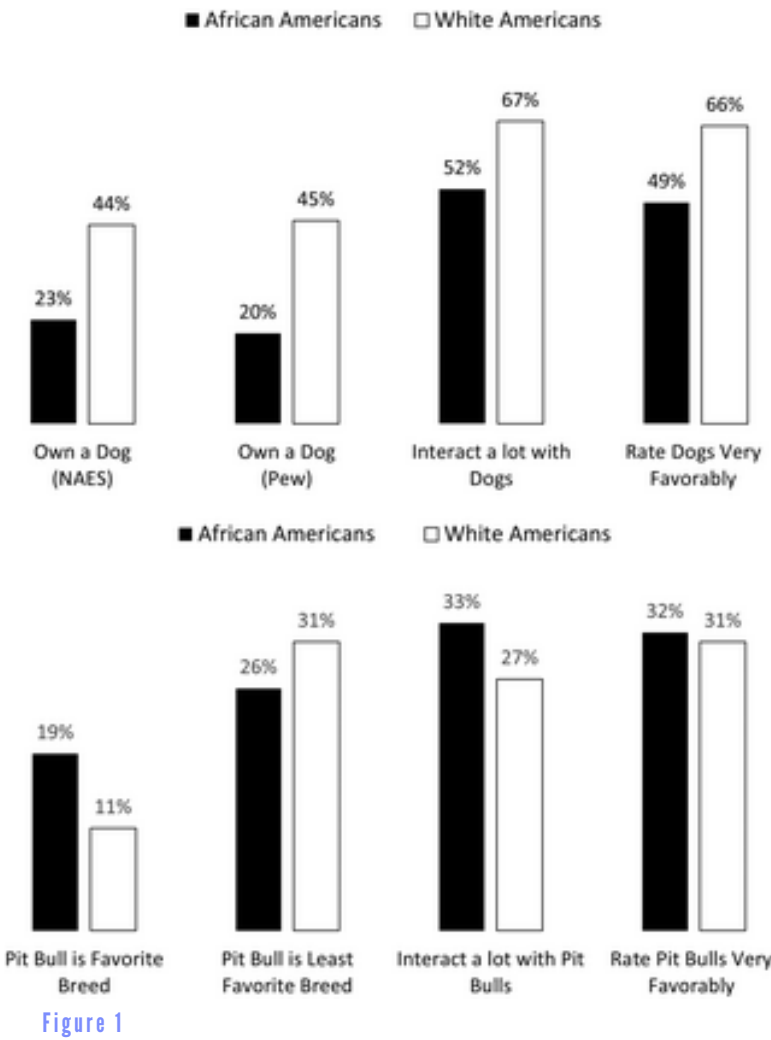


Figure 1



Before i move on to the next survey I want to acknowledge something, pit bulls are racialized to be “black” however they are more related to black men who also have the misfortune of being labeled as violent or naturally strong. The lies told during slavery of their higher endurance and naturally athletic builds is still prevalent today and doing no one any favors. Pit bulls are often seen the same way. The breed can look very strong and have a muscular build with the right diet and excersize which often leads people to make stupid assumptions like thinking pit bulls have the ability to lock their jaw after they bite. It is said that they are the only breed who can do this and the only way to get free from this grip is to stick a pole between their teeth or kill them. Obviously whoever says this is taking psychedelics and should not be trusted within 10 miles of a dog shelter. The authors of the study agree.

”These same exaggerated fears of Black men might also be implicated in opposition to pit bulls. After all, Guenther [10, pg 154–55] describes pit bulls as “synonymous with Black masculinity,””

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Let’s add more color

Ah, a breath of fresh air isn't it? Sorry for the abrupt change but i needed a second to go modern for the sake of these photos as i did on the side. Now on to the surveyed results where the correlation really comes to light. In the article, the 6 surveys i mentioned before (Taken from 2018-2021) along with another survey that was put on a more secure platform and had the same questions, were examined beside one another. The questions they each had were:

- If it should be legal or illegal to own a pit bull.
- If pit bulls are naturally more aggressive then other breeds.
- If its safe or too dangerous to have pit bulls in residential areas.
- If the respondent would consider adopting a pit bull.

The surveys were also infused with two blatant tones of racial prejudice. The first was a five-category scale of favorable or unfavorable ratings of African Americans. The second was a two-item scale of old-fashioned racism, or OFR as they call it in the study, which clocked peoples inner bias of interracial intimacy. They were asked how strongly they disagreed or agreed with 2 statements:



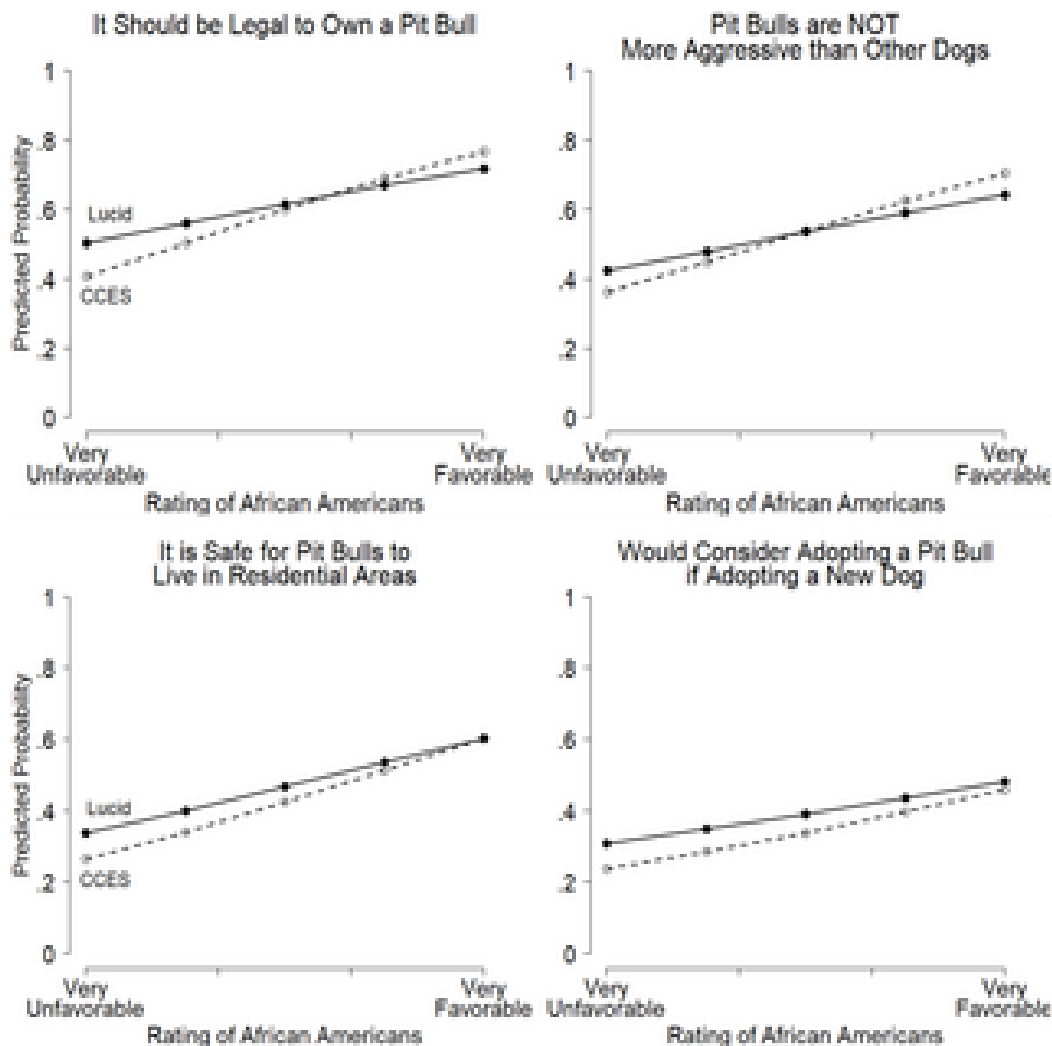


Figure 2

I prefer that my close relatives marry spouses of their same race.

I think it's alright for Blacks and whites to date each other.

How well "violent" describes various racial/gender groups.

In addition to those questions 3/6 of the surveys used a "racially evocative term" which was the word inner-city. Through figure 2 we see how the surveys came together to create the bigger picture.

"white Americans' favorability ratings of African Americans were consistent predictors of support for pit bulls in both surveys...anti-Black attitudes are correlated with unfavorable opinions of pit bulls..."

The graph on the left representing figure 2 finally shows the phenomenon we have been chasing and answers our question. Pit bulls are black because of their integration as loyal companions and guard dogs to the black community, the same community people view negatively and involving the same men that are seen as violent.

That included with many other factors from our history is the why. If you're interested in learning a bit more about that history i highly suggest the YouTube video ["A black people's history of dogs"](#).

Ok, we see that the initial claim that anti-black attitudes are significant, independent, predictors of negative views towards pit bulls is true but that is only the start. We've recognized the racialization of "aggressive" Dog breeds such as pit bulls and Rottweilers, but how do we change their negative reputation? And consequently, can we change ours?

Heros in white armor

Truthfully its a losing battle, to fight stereotypes is to attempt to undue thousands of years of prejudice and assumptions. They are passed down through generations and reinforced through daily interactions. "The angry black woman" was a thing when my mother was my age and her mother and her mother. Same with my father, he's spent his whole life trying to become something to get away from being labeled a bum or useless. No race can break free from their stereotypes, its ingrained in us at this point. However, the things we associate with are different. People follow the crowd, things become trends or popular with certain groups; with teen boys or teen girls, with children, with the elderly. Objects have the advantage of being labeled temporarily or with less malice attached to them, so with the right push, their reputation can change drastically. Now all that's left is to identify the one thing capable of completely altering a societies opinions. The solution is simple: Whiteness.

Whiteness has always equated to purity and innocence. When whites, specifically white woman, love anything it is immediately deemed sacred. So my solution, let white people love pit bulls. The article already states in the conclusion how pit bulls reputation has been making a turn around. This is due to many factors of course like the higher percentage of college educated people and the fact that they have less racial biases, the lack of support for breed based bans, and the ever healing relationship between black people and dogs but a big part as well is the white savers on social media educating other white people. It's necessary for progress, some white people hate to listen to those who don't look like them. The article ends on this bitter note as it explains the difference of having the influence of a African American and the influence of a Caucasian:

"Like other prominent issues, pit bull negativity is racialized as Black but pit bull positivity has a white face."

Essentially, there is no changing our reputation. This is white America, and I'm not supposed to be here; but there is hope for the lives we touch. And I'm not saying whiteness is the solution, it's not, but I also don't know what is.

