



## Gender Activists Urge Anthropologists To Stop Labeling Human Remains ‘Male’ Or ‘Female’

### Description

**There is an interesting controversy brewing in anthropology departments where professors have called for researchers to stop identifying ancient human remains by biological gender because they cannot gauge how a person identified at that the time.**



**Other scholars are calling for researchers to stop identifying race as a practice because it fuels white supremacy.** One of the academics objecting to this effort to stop gender identifications, San Jose State archaeology Professor Elizabeth Weiss, is currently suing her school. Weiss maintains that she was barred from access to the human remains collection due to her opposition to the repatriation of human remains. The school objected that she [posted a picture](#) holding a skull from the collection on social media, expressing how she was “so happy to be back with some old friends.”

The conservative site College Fix quotes various academics in challenging the identification of gender and notes the campaign of the Trans Doe Task Force to ***“explore ways in which current standards in forensic human identification do a disservice to people who do not clearly fit the gender binary.”***

University of Kansas Associate Professor Jennifer Raff argued in a paper, “Origin: A Genetic History of the Americas,” that there are “no neat divisions between physically or genetically ‘male’ or ‘female’ individuals.” Her best selling book has been featured on various news outlets like MSNBC.

Weiss has criticized the book as “just plain wrong” critical points of history and objects that Raff seems “eager to pay homage to every current progressive orthodoxy.”

However, Raff is not alone. Graduate students like Emma Palladino have [objected](#) that “the archaeologists who find your bones one day will assign you the same gender as you had at birth, so regardless of whether you transition, you can’t escape your assigned sex.”

Professors Elizabeth DiGangi of Binghamton University and Jonathan Bethard of the University of South Florida have also challenge the use of racial classifications in a study, objecting that ***“[a]ncestry estimation contributes to white supremacy.”*** The authors write that “we use critical race theory to interrogate the approaches utilized to estimate ancestry to include a critique of the continued use of morphoscopic traits, and we assert that the practice of ancestry estimation contributes to white supremacy.”

The professors refer to the practice as “dangerous” and wrote in a letter to the editor that such practices must be changed in light of recent racial justice concerns.

“Between the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and the homicides of numerous Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement officials, we have all been reminded about the fragility of life, and the failures of our society to live up to the ideals enshrined in the foundational documents which established the United States of America over two centuries ago. Tackling these failures seems overwhelming at times; however, changes can be enacted with candid and reflexive discussions about the status quo. In writing this letter, we direct our comments to the forensic anthropology community in the United States in hopes of sparking a discussion about the long-standing practice of ancestry estimation and changes that are frankly long overdue.”

**The end result of such proposals would be to curtail or bar the classification of human remains by gender or ancestral heritage by anthropologists.**

This has long been a matter of heated exchanges in this field.

Indeed, a [furious debate](#) erupted after the publication of the book by former *New York Times* science writer Nicholas Wade, [A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History](#). The book contends that human races are a biological reality and genetic differences may help explain why some people live in tribal societies and some in advanced civilizations.

In [one survey](#), the authors found:

**“Based on our studies, anthropologists are more aptly describable as ‘squatters’ (i.e., those who maintain race is not biologically meaningful), ‘shifters’ (i.e., those who maintain race is not biologically meaningful but is a social reality), and ‘straddlers’ (i.e., those who recognize the significance and relevance of both biologically informed and sociocultural conceptualizations of race).”**

It appears that this debate is no closer to reaching a consensus though “squatters” and “shifters” appear to dominate academic journals and faculties.

For some, this debate fulfills the old joke in teaching: “What do you call an academic who apologizes all the time? An anthropologist.” Ok bad pun but the effort to bar the collection or classification of the data is hard to understand.

There is no question that these studies raise important questions of whether gender or racial bias can distort our understanding of human evolution and movement. Yet, it seems curious to some of us (admittedly, in my case, from another discipline) that you would not want this data point among the array of data used to analyze such discoveries. For example, it would seem that gender does reflect physical distinctions that impact elements of society, migration, and other relevant issues.

I am not sure if that make me a “squatter” but more likely an interloper. However, given the reliance on legal and political events by some of these writers, it is worth having a broader debate over whether such concerns should be used to limit scientific inquiry or classification on these points. It would seem to some of us that the focus should be not on the collection but the importance given such data.

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## Category

1. Main
2. NWO-Deep State-Dictatorship-Tyrrany
3. Racism-Trans/Gender-LGBTQ+-Sex. crimes
4. Society-Family-Education

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