



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## Hold Science to Higher Standards on Racism

**Emily Klancher Merchant**, University of California, Davis

Shortly before an 18-year-old white supremacist entered a supermarket in a Black neighborhood of **Buffalo, N.Y.**, and **shot 13 shoppers and employees** with an assault rifle bearing a racist epithet, he posted an online diatribe. Other white nationalist terrorists have done that, but this one was different: It cited a considerable quantity of scientific research to support its author's racist claims and actions.

In the weeks since the mid-May shooting, journalists and **scientists have discussed** what to make of the Buffalo terrorist's references to science. Overwhelmingly, these discussions describe the diatribe as relying on **pseudoscience** or **discredited science** and **co-opting or misreading** mainstream science.