

Why Can't We Just Get Along? Interpersonal Biases and Interracial Distrust

JOHN F. DOVIDIO
Colgate University

SAMUEL L. GAERTNER
University of Delaware

KERRY KAWAKAMI
University of Nijmegen

GORDON HODSON
University of Western Ontario and Colgate University

The authors review a series of studies that illustrate how one form of contemporary racial bias of Whites, aversive racism, can shape different perspectives of Blacks and Whites in ways that can undermine race relations. This research demonstrates that contemporary racism among Whites is subtle, often unintentional, and unconscious but that its effects are systematically damaging to race relations by fostering miscommunication and distrust. In particular, the authors examine the effects of aversive racism on outcomes for Blacks (e.g., in selection decisions), on the ways that Whites behave in interracial interactions, in the impressions that Whites and Blacks form of each other in these interactions, and on the task efficiency of interracial dyads.

• prejudice • discrimination • intergroup bias • nonverbal behavior • implicit attitudes

White and Blacks in the United States have developed widely diverging views on the conditions of racial disparities and perceptions of their causes. Whites greatly under-

estimate the existence of racial disparities. For instance, despite the compelling evidence of contemporary racial disparities (Blank, 2001), between 40% to 60% of

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- John F. Dovidio, Department of Psychology, Colgate University; Samuel L. Gaertner, Department of Psychology, University of Delaware; Kerry Kawakami, Department of Psychology, University of Nijmegen, Nijmegen, the Netherlands; Gordon Hodson, Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario, Ontario, Canada, and Department of Psychology, Colgate University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to John F. Dovidio, Department of Psychology, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York 13346. E-mail: jdovidio@mail.colgate.edu

Whites responding to a recent survey, depending on the question asked, viewed the average Black in the United States as faring about as well, and often better, than the average White (Morin, 2001). Whites and Blacks also differ substantially in their perceptions of the prevalence and impact of discrimination on the well-being of Blacks. Overall, Blacks perceive racial discrimination to be more pervasive and damaging to Blacks than do Whites (Davis & Smith, 1994; Hochschild, 1995). Blacks view discrimination as a dominant force in their lives. Within the government, 55% of Blacks (and 28% of Hispanics) reported that they believe that discrimination hinders their career advancement (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1997). Within the military, only 39% of Blacks (compared with 68% of Whites) described race relations as good, and 25% of Blacks described discrimination in performance evaluation as their most bothersome incident in the military (Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey, 1999).

In the general public, nearly half of Black Americans (47%) reported on a recent survey (Gallup, 2001) that they were treated unfairly in their own community in at least one of five common situations (while shopping, at work, in restaurants or other entertainment places, in dealing with the police, and using public transportation) during the previous month. Whereas the vast majority (69%) of Whites perceived that Blacks were treated "the same as Whites," the majority of Blacks (59%) reported that Blacks were treated "more badly" than Whites. These differences in perceptions have persisted for over 35 years, with only a modest narrowing of perspectives. Across five surveys conducted in the 1960s that included this item, 67% of Whites felt that Blacks were treated as well as Whites, whereas 72% of Blacks reported that Blacks were treated worse (Gallup, 2001).

Given the magnitude and persistence of these different views held by Blacks and Whites, it is not surprising that current race relations in the United States are characterized by racial distrust. The majority of Blacks

in America today have a profound distrust for the police and legal system, and about a third are overtly distrustful of Whites in general (Anderson, 1996). In addition, Blacks commonly believe that conspiracies inhibit the progress of Blacks (Crocker, Luhtanen, Broadnax, & Blaine, 1999; DeParle, 1990, 1991). In the present article, we examine how interpersonal biases can contribute to these different perspectives and ultimately to interracial distrust that can undermine race relations.

We contend that, among other forces, the nature of contemporary biases can shape the everyday perceptions of White and Black Americans in ways that interfere with a foundation of communication and trust that is critical to developing long-term positive intergroup relations. Although we recognize that a variety of historical and social forces are involved, we suggest that the different perspectives and experiences of Whites and Blacks in interracial interaction, which can occur daily and have summative effects over time (Feagin & Sikes, 1994), help to contribute to the climate of miscommunication, misperception, and distrust that characterizes contemporary race relations in the United States. In particular, we propose that there are four aspects of contemporary prejudices held by Whites toward Blacks in the United States that contribute to the divergence of perceptions and interracial distrust in the United States today: (a) Contemporary racism among Whites is subtle, (b) these racial biases are often unintentional and unconscious, (c) these biases influence the perceptions that Whites and Blacks have of these same behaviors or events, and (d) these racial biases have different consequences on the outcomes for Blacks and Whites. These four points are considered in separate sections below.

Contemporary Racism Is Subtle

Prejudice serves a range of functions: individual (Wills, 1981), group (Sherif & Sherif,

1969), and social (Hechter, 1975). As a consequence, it tends to persist over time within a society, although its nature and expression may be shaped by historical, political, economic, and contextual factors (see Dovidio, 2001; Duckitt, 1992). As we have argued in detail elsewhere (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), due in part to changing norms and to the Civil Rights Act and other legislative interventions that have made discrimination not simply immoral but also illegal, many overt expressions of prejudice have declined significantly over the past 35 years (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, 1998). Whites, for instance, have become substantially more supportive of residential integration and less opposed to interracial marriage over time (Bobo, 2001). Contemporary forms of prejudice, however, continue to exist and affect the lives of people in subtle but significant ways. For these subtle, contemporary forms of prejudice, bias is expressed in indirect ways that can typically be justified on the basis of nonracial factors. Nevertheless, the consequences of these prejudices (e.g., the restriction of economic opportunity) may be as significant for people of color and as pernicious as those of the traditional, overt form of discrimination (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Sears, 1988; Sears, Henry, & Kosterman, 2000).

Our work has focused on one form of contemporary bias of Whites in the United States: aversive racism (Kovel, 1970). In contrast to "old-fashioned" racism, which is blatant, aversive racism represents a subtle, often unintentional form of bias that characterizes many White Americans who possess strong egalitarian values and who believe that they are nonprejudiced. Because of the central role that racial politics have played in the history of the United States, our work has mainly considered the influence of contemporary racial attitudes of Whites toward Blacks. Nevertheless, we note that many of the findings and principles we discuss extend to Whites' biases toward other groups (e.g., Hispanics) as well (Dovidio, Gaertner, Anastasio, & Sanitioso,

1992). Although we also acknowledge that minority groups may also hold negative attitudes toward majority groups and to other racial or ethnic groups, we have focused on the attitudes of Whites because they have traditionally held a disproportionate amount of political, social, and economic power in the United States. Thus, addressing and improving Whites' attitudes can potentially have a significant effect on social change.

A critical aspect of the aversive racism framework, similar to the position of other types of subtle biases such as modern or symbolic racism (McConahay, 1986), is the conflict between the denial of personal prejudice and the underlying unconscious negative feelings and beliefs. In contrast to traditional approaches that emphasize the psychopathology of prejudice, however, the negative feelings and beliefs that underlie aversive racism are hypothesized to be rooted in normal, often adaptive, psychological processes (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). These processes involve both individual factors (such as cognitive and motivational biases and socialization) and intergroup functions (such as realistic group conflict or biases associated with the mere categorization of people into ingroups and outgroups). In contrast to the feelings of open hostility and clear dislike of Blacks, the negative feelings that aversive racists experience are typically more diffuse, such as feelings of anxiety and uneasiness.

Because aversive racists consciously endorse egalitarian values and deny their negative feelings about Blacks, they will not discriminate directly and openly in ways that can be attributed to racism. However, because of their negative feelings, they will discriminate, often unintentionally, when their behavior can be justified on the basis of some factor other than race (e.g., questionable qualifications for a position). Aversive racists may therefore regularly engage in discrimination while they maintain a nonprejudiced self-image. The term *aversive* in this form of racism thus refers to two aspects of

this bias. It reflects to the nature of the emotions associated with Blacks, such as anxiety, which lead to avoidance and social awkwardness rather than to open antagonism. It also reflects the fact that, because of their conscious adherence to egalitarian principles, these Whites would find any thought that they might be prejudiced to be aversive.

We have found consistent support for the basic proposition of the aversive racism framework that contemporary biases are expressed in subtle rather than in blatant ways across a broad range of situations (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Gaertner et al., 1997). The evidence we present next comes from paradigms involving emergency intervention and employment or admissions decisions.

Emergency Intervention

In one of the early tests of our framework (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977), we modeled a situation in the laboratory after a classic study by Darley and Latané (1968) of diffusion of responsibility. Darley and Latané's research was inspired by an incident in the mid-1960s in which 38 people witnessed the stabbing of a woman, Kitty Genovese, without a single bystander intervening to help. The researchers reasoned that when a person is the only witness to an emergency, the bystander bears 100% responsibility for helping and 100% of the guilt and blame for not helping. The appropriate behavior in this situation, helping, is clearly defined. If, however, a person witnesses an emergency but believes that somebody else is available who can help or will help, then that bystander's personal responsibility is less clearly defined. Under these circumstances, the bystander could rationalize not helping by coming to believe that someone else will intervene.

As in Darley and Latané's (1968) experiment, we led some of our participants to believe that they would be the only witness to this emergency, while we led others to believe that there would be other people present in this situation who heard the

emergency as well. We also introduced a second dimension: We varied the race of the victim. In half of the cases the victim was White; in the other half of the cases the victim was Black. The participants in the study were White, as were the other people who were sometimes presumed to be present.

We predicted that when people were the only witness to the emergency, aversive racists would not discriminate against the Black victim. In this situation, appropriate behavior is clearly defined. To not help a Black victim could easily be interpreted, by oneself or others, as racial bias. We predicted, however, that because aversive racists have unconscious negative feelings toward Blacks, they would discriminate when they could justify their behavior on the basis of some factor other than race—such as the belief that someone else would help the victim (i.e., the ability to diffuse responsibility). Specifically, we expected that Blacks would be helped less than Whites only when White bystanders believed that there were other witnesses to the emergency.

The results of the study supported our predictions. When White bystanders were the only witness to the emergency, they helped very frequently and equivalently for Black and White victims (95% vs. 83%). There was no evidence of blatant racism. In contrast, when White bystanders were given an opportunity to rationalize not helping on the basis of the belief that the other witnesses could intervene, they were less likely to help, particularly when the victim was Black. When participants believed that there were other bystanders, they helped the Black victim half as often as they helped the White victim (38% vs. 75%). Thus, these results illustrate the operation of subtle biases in relatively dramatic, spontaneous, and life-threatening circumstances. Although the bias may be subtle, its consequences may be severe.

We designed subsequent research to extend the work on aversive racism by exploring its potential effects in more everyday situations of potential discrimination, such as on hiring recommendations and college

admission decisions for a Black or White applicant. Our primary hypothesis in this research was that bias against Blacks would be more likely to be manifested when the appropriate decision is unclear, for example, because of ambiguous evidence about whether the candidate's qualifications meet the criteria for selection or admission, than when the appropriate response is perceived to be well-defined.

Hiring Decisions

In one study (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), we asked participants to evaluate candidates for a position in an ostensibly new program for peer counseling at their university on the basis of excerpts from an interview. White participants evaluated a Black or White candidate who had credentials that we systematically manipulated to represent very strong, moderate, or very weak qualifications for the position. Their responses were supportive of the aversive racism framework. As we predicted, when the candidates' credentials clearly qualified them for the position or the credentials clearly were not appropriate, there was no discrimination against the Black candidate. In the strong-qualifications condition, the Black candidate was recommended for the position 91% of the time, whereas the White candidate was recommended 85% of the time. In the weak-qualifications condition, the Black candidate was recommended 13% of the time, and the White candidate was recommended 6% of the time. However, when candidates' qualifications for the position were less obvious and the appropriate decision more ambiguous, White participants recommended the Black candidate significantly less often than the White candidate (45% vs. 76%) with exactly the same credentials.

These findings suggest that when given latitude for interpretation, as in the moderate-qualifications condition, Whites may give White candidates the "benefit of the doubt," a benefit that is not extended to outgroup members (i.e., to Black candidates). As a

consequence, as demonstrated in this study, moderate qualifications are responded to like strong qualifications when the candidate is White but like weak qualifications when the candidate is Black.

The data collected in this study also permitted an examination of potential changes in racism over time. The study involved one group of college students who participated during the 1988–1989 academic year and another group of students from the same institution who participated in the 1998–1999 academic year. Whereas self-reported prejudice was lower for the more recent sample, the pattern of subtle discrimination was equivalent across the samples. Despite reductions in direct expressions of prejudice, the evidence for aversive racism was more persistent.

College Admissions Decisions

We extended this line of research further by exploring more directly how Whites weigh different types of information in making their selection decisions for Whites and Blacks in another context: college admissions decisions. Whereas the previous experiment examined racial biases against job candidates with uniformly strong, moderate, or weak qualifications, this study (Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002) compared racial biases toward college applicants with consistent or mixed (i.e., conflicting) qualifications, specifically: (a) consistently strong Scholastic Aptitude Test (i.e., college board examination) scores and high school performance; (b) consistently weak college board scores and high school record; (c) mixed qualifications, with strong college board test scores and a weak high school record; or (d) mixed qualifications, with weak college board test scores and a strong high school record. The use of mixed qualifications allowed us to ask White college student participants not only to make their selection decisions but also to provide rankings of the different criteria relevant to their decisions. This procedure enabled us to examine the ways that people weigh applicant informa-

tion, particularly conflicting information, when assessing Black and White college applications.

As we predicted, and consistent with the earlier research, discrimination against Black applicants relative to White applicants did not occur when the applicants' credentials were consistently strong or weak. However, discrimination in terms of weaker support for admission for Black relative to White applicants with the same qualifications did emerge, mainly for relatively high prejudice-scoring students (who are low-to-moderate in prejudice compared with the general public), when the credentials were mixed and hence ambiguous. Moreover, relatively high prejudice-scoring students weighed the different, conflicting criteria in ways that could justify or rationalize discrimination against Black applicants. In particular, higher prejudice-scoring students tended to weigh college board scores unusually low in importance when the Black applicant had high college board scores but weak scholastic achievement, and they tended to rank high school achievement lower in importance when Black applicants had strong scholastic achievement but weak college board scores. Thus, the higher prejudice-scoring participants weighed application criteria in ways that systematically justified or rationalized the discrimination against Blacks.

Bias and Perceptions of Bias

These three research examples do more than illustrate the pervasive influence that subtle biases may have on the personal, economic, and educational outcomes for Blacks. They also suggest how subtle biases may produce different perceptions of discrimination by Whites and Blacks. To the extent that Whites discriminate against Blacks only when this bias can be attributed to factors other than race and adopt or construct these explanations as the justification for their behavior, they are unlikely to recognize fully that their behavior was racially motivated. For instance, during debriefing

in the emergency intervention study described earlier, White participants who did not help a Black victim typically said that they thought that someone else already had or would soon intervene, and thus they thought that their help was not needed. They denied, often vociferously, that race had anything to do with their decision. Yet, experimentally, race was the key determinant of differences in helping. Nevertheless, the ability to justify one's behavior on the basis of factors other than race allows Whites to underestimate the effects of racism and discrimination on the lives of Blacks generally and the effects of racism on their own behavior particularly.

In contrast to these isolated and relatively rare interracial encounters for Whites, Blacks may experience disparate treatment and outcomes more consistently and across a range of situations (see Smelser, Wilson, & Mitchell, 2001). Because the nonracial explanations for different treatment and outcomes vary across these situations, attributions to racial bias may offer the most parsimonious explanation for these disparities from the perspectives of Blacks. Consequently, whereas the subtle nature of contemporary biases may lead Whites to underestimate the impact of racial prejudice, it may lead Blacks and other disadvantaged group members to be particularly attuned to negative behaviors of majority group members that could reveal their prejudice (Shelton, 2000; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001). Thus, Whites and Blacks are likely to develop different, and potentially conflicting, views about the roles that racial prejudice plays in their lives.

These divergent views are particularly likely to occur when these biases are unconscious and thus unintentional. We consider this possibility in the next section.

Racial Biases Can Be Unconscious

In the social psychological literature on attitudes and stereotyping, researchers, bor-

rowing from work in cognition more generally, have recently made a fundamental distinction between explicit and implicit processes (Devine, 1989; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Explicit attitudes and stereotyping operate in a conscious mode and are exemplified by traditional, self-report measures of these constructs. Implicit attitudes and stereotypes, in contrast, are evaluations and beliefs that are automatically activated by the mere presence (actual or symbolic) of the attitude object. They commonly function in an unconscious and unintentional fashion. Implicit attitudes and stereotypes are typically assessed using response latency procedures, memory tasks, physiological measures (e.g., galvanic skin response), and indirect self-report measures (e.g., involving attributional biases).

In a series of studies, for instance, we used a variety of different response latency procedures to assess the implicit (and presumably unconscious) racial attitudes of Whites toward Blacks (e.g., Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1993; Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983). These procedures are based on the assumption that racial attitudes operate like other stimuli to facilitate responses and decision making about related concepts (e.g., doctor–nurse). In general, the greater the associative strength between two stimuli, the faster people can make decisions about them. For example, we have found, using subliminally presented schematic faces of Blacks and Whites as primes, that White participants have faster response times to negative traits after Black than White primes and faster response times to positive traits after White than Black primes (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997, Study 1; see also Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997). Convergent evidence has been obtained with a variety of different priming procedures (see Blair, 2001; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Beach, 2001), as well as with other response latency techniques such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998).

Moreover, consistent with the aversive

racism framework, Whites' implicit attitudes, which are negative on average, are largely dissociated from their explicit attitudes, which are frequently relatively positive and egalitarian (Dovidio et al., 2001). Implicit and explicit (i.e., self-report) attitudes may thus reflect the components of a system of "dual attitudes." According to Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler (2000), dual attitudes commonly arise developmentally. With experience or socialization, people change their attitudes. However, the original attitude is not replaced, but rather it is stored in memory and becomes implicit, whereas the newer attitude is conscious and explicit. Because Whites are exposed to negative images of Blacks through the media and to pervasive stereotypes about Blacks through common socialization experiences (Devine, 1989), they may initially develop largely negative attitudes toward Blacks. Later, when as personal and social norms change to become more egalitarian or as an individual is exposed to new normative prescriptions that dictate that people should not have these negative feelings toward Blacks, Whites may adopt explicit unbiased or even positive racial attitudes. Nevertheless, these negative implicit attitudes linger. This combination of explicit egalitarian attitudes and implicit negative attitudes thus characterizes the racial attitudes of aversive racists.

The disassociation between the explicit and implicit attitudes of aversive racists can subtly shape the ways that Whites and Blacks interact and further contribute to the different perceptions that Whites and Blacks develop about their situations. If Whites are unaware of their negative implicit attitudes, they may also be unaware of how their behaviors in interracial interactions may be influenced by these racial biases. In contrast, Blacks, who can observe the negative behaviors of Whites with whom they are interacting, may form very different impressions about whether racial bias is operating and the degree to which it is intentionally determined. Blacks (and other minority groups) may be vigilant to signs of bias and readily

attribute these actions to intentional racism. We examine the implications of this aspect of our framework in the next section.

Implicit Biases Influence Interracial Behaviors and Perceptions

The dissociation between implicit and explicit attitudes that aversive racists experience can have significant, tangible effects on how Whites and Blacks interact in ways that contribute substantially to their divergent perspectives. Implicit and explicit attitudes can influence behavior in different ways and under different conditions (Dovidio & Fazio, 1992; Fazio, 1990; Wilson et al., 2000). Explicit attitudes shape deliberative, well-considered responses for which people have the motivation and opportunity to weigh the costs and benefits of various courses of action. Implicit attitudes influence responses that are more difficult to monitor and control (e.g., some nonverbal behaviors; see Chen & Bargh, 1997; McConnell & Liebold, 2001) or responses that people do not view as an indication of their attitude and thus do not try to control. Thus the relative impact of implicit and explicit attitudes is a function of the context in which the attitudinal object appears, the motivation and opportunity to engage in deliberative processes, and the nature of the behavioral response.

Consistent with the work of other researchers in this area (Fazio, Jackson, Dutton, & Williams, 1995), we have also found evidence in a series of experiments that implicit and explicit attitudes influence different types of race-relevant behaviors of Whites (Dovidio et al., 1997). One study (Dovidio et al., 1997, Study 3), for example, involved two ostensibly unrelated parts: (a) measures of racial attitudes and (b) interaction with a Black and White interviewer sequentially. The measures of racial attitudes included a response latency task and two self-report measures, McConahay's (1986) Old-Fashioned Racism and Modern Racism scales. Measures of deliberative and spontaneous behaviors were assessed during the interaction. As a measure of deliberative be-

havior, participants were asked to evaluate both other interactants (i.e., the Black and White interviewers) on a series of rating scales. As measures of spontaneous behavior, the nonverbal behaviors of eye contact and blinking were coded from videotapes of the interactions. Higher levels of visual contact (i.e., time spent looking at another person) reflect greater attraction, intimacy, and respect. Higher rates of blinking are related to higher levels of negative arousal and tension. Both of these types of nonverbal behaviors are particularly difficult to monitor and control. It was predicted that explicit measures of prejudice would primarily relate to bias in the evaluations of Black relative to White interviewers by White participants. In contrast, the response latency measure of implicit negative racial attitude was expected to be the best predictor of nonverbal reactions, specifically higher rates of blinking and less visual contact with the Black relative to the White interviewer.

The results supported the predictions. Bias in terms of more negative judgments about Black than White interviewers was correlated with the two explicit measures of prejudice, old-fashioned racism ($r = .37$) and modern racism ($r = .54$), but was uncorrelated with implicit prejudice ($r = .02$). In contrast, implicit prejudice predicted lower levels of visual contact ($r = -.40$) and higher rates of blinking ($r = .43$), but old-fashioned racism ($r_s = .02, -.04$) and modern racism ($r_s = .20, .07$) did not. Given these conflicting signals, it is not surprising that Blacks are likely to approach interracial interactions with anxiety, guardedness, and underlying mistrust (Hyers & Swim, 1998; Shelton, 2000).

These communication obstacles and interaction problems are exacerbated by the fact that Whites and Blacks have fundamentally different perspectives on the attitudes implied and the actions demonstrated by Whites during these interactions. Whites have full access to their explicit attitudes and are able to monitor and control their more overt and deliberative behaviors. They do not have such full access to their implicit

attitudes or to their less monitorable behaviors. As a consequence, Whites' beliefs about how they are behaving or how Blacks perceive them would be expected to be based primarily on their explicit attitudes and their more overt behaviors, such as the verbal content of their interaction with Blacks, and not on their implicit attitudes or less deliberative (i.e., nonverbal) behaviors. In contrast to the perspective of Whites, the perspective of Black partners in these interracial interactions allows them to attend to both the spontaneous (e.g., nonverbal) and the deliberative (e.g., verbal) behaviors of Whites. To the extent that the Black partners attend to Whites' nonverbal behaviors, which may signal more negativity than their verbal behaviors, Blacks are likely to form more negative impressions of the encounter and be less satisfied with the interaction than are Whites (Shelton, 2000).

To investigate this possibility, we conducted another experiment (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). We assessed perceptions of interracial interactions by Whites and Blacks, and we related these perceptions to White participants' explicit and implicit attitudes. We first assessed the implicit attitudes using Dovidio et al.'s (1997) response-latency priming technique and explicit racial attitudes using Brigham's (1993) Attitudes Toward Blacks Scale. Then we arranged interracial conversations with a Black and a White dyad partner around a race-neutral topic. We videotaped the interactions and subsequently had one set of coders rate the nonverbal and verbal behaviors of White participants and another set of observers rate their global impressions of participants from a videotape recorded from their partners' perspective.

We hypothesized that in these interracial interactions White participants would rely on their explicit, self-reported racial attitudes to shape deliberative behaviors such as their friendliness of verbal behavior toward Black relative to White partners. Explicit racial attitudes and participants' verbal behavior, in turn, were expected to predict Whites' impressions of how friendly they be-

haved in interactions with the Black relative to the White partner. Implicit racial attitudes, measured with response latencies, and racial bias in White participants' nonverbal behaviors, because they are not easily monitored by the participants, were not expected to predict these impressions.

We also anticipated, based on our previous research, that White participants' implicit racial attitudes would predict biases in their nonverbal friendliness. We further hypothesized that for Black and White partners and independent observers, who could monitor both the White participants' deliberative actions (verbal behaviors) and more spontaneous and subtle behaviors (nonverbal behaviors), perceptions of bias in participants' friendliness would relate significantly to perceptions of bias in participants' nonverbal behaviors and to participants' implicit attitudes. Finally, as a consequence of their different perspectives and their reliance on different cues, we also expected that participants' perceptions of their own racial biases and their partners' perceptions would be only weakly related.

The results, which are summarized in Figure 1, are consistent with our predictions. Implicit attitudes predicted nonverbal friendliness ($r = .41$) but not verbal friendliness ($r = .04$). Less implicitly biased Whites behaved in a more friendly nonverbal manner. In contrast, the explicit, self-report measure of prejudice predicted verbal ($r = .40$) but not nonverbal ($r = .02$) friendliness. Less explicitly prejudiced Whites had more favorable verbal behaviors with the Black partner. Also as anticipated, White participants and Black partners developed very different impressions. As presented in Figure 1, more negative impressions of the friendliness of the White participant as judged by the partners were related to his or her nonverbal behavior ($r = .34$) but not to the White participants' verbal behavior ($r = -.17$). White participants' impressions of their own friendliness were related more to their verbal behavior ($r = .36$) than to their nonverbal behavior ($r = -.07$). Ultimately, the impressions of the friendliness of White

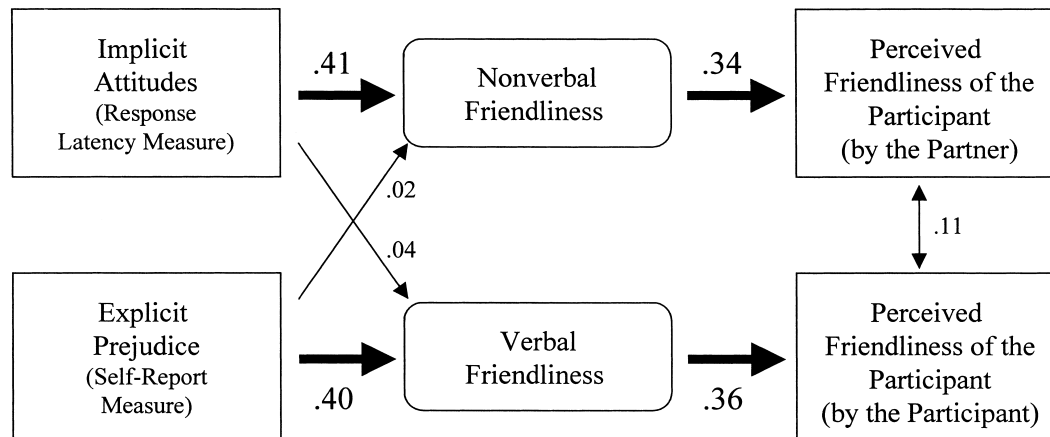


Figure 1. The relationships (correlations) between measures of prejudice and participant behavior and impressions.

participants by themselves and by their partners were essentially unrelated ($r = .11$). Thus, because of their very different perspectives and reliance on different information, Whites and Blacks left the same interaction with very different impressions.

Our postexperimental discussions with White participants and their Black partners separately provided vivid illustrations of the discordance. White participants typically described that they found the interaction satisfying and expressed contentment with their contributions. Their Black partners, however, reported being relatively dissatisfied with the exchange and were uneasy about their partners' behaviors. Moreover, both dyad members, when asked, usually assumed that their partner shared the impression of the interaction that they did.

Biases Have Different Consequences for Blacks and Whites

The different and potentially divergent impressions that Blacks and Whites may form during interracial interactions can have significant impact on their coordination and thus their effectiveness in task-oriented situations. Cannon-Bowers and Salas (1999) argued that effective teamwork requires two types of skills, those associated with the tech-

nical aspects of the job and those associated with being a member of the team. For this latter factor, team competencies include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to work effectively with others. Besides manifesting itself in terms of different impressions and perceptions, contemporary bias can therefore also influence personal relations and group processes in ways that unintentionally but adversely affect outcomes for Blacks.

We propose that for interracial teams, both implicit and explicit racial attitudes are important for effective teamwork. To the extent that explicit attitudes are manifested overtly in less friendly and less supportive actions, interracial interactions involving more highly prejudiced Whites would be expected to be less productive. To the extent that implicit racial attitudes may also be detected, at least by a Black partner, through more subtle manifestations such as nonverbal behavior, these unconscious biases can erode the trust between group members and negatively affect group performance.

In our research on this issue (Dovidio, in press), White college students were classified on the basis of their self-reported racial attitudes (Brigham's, 1993, Attitudes Toward Blacks Scale) and our response latency measure of bias (Dovidio et al., 1997). A portion of the participants was identified as be-

ing low in prejudice on the self-report measure and unbiased on the unconscious (i.e., response latency) measure (nonprejudiced, about 25%). Another group appeared low in prejudice on the self-report measure but had implicit racial biases (aversive racists, about 40%). A third group was relatively prejudiced on the self-report measure as well as biased on the implicit measure (prejudiced, about 20%). (About 15% of the total sample could not be clearly classified into one of these three categories.) We then examined how friendly these participants felt they behaved during an interracial interaction, how friendly and trustful their Black partners perceived them, and how effective the group performed (i.e., how quickly they could decide which items would be most valuable for an incoming student to bring to college).

As we found in our earlier research, Whites' impressions of their behavior were related primarily to their explicit attitudes, whereas Blacks' impressions of Whites were related mainly to Whites' implicit attitudes. Specifically, Whites who appeared low in prejudice on the self-report measure (i.e., nonprejudiced Whites and aversive racists) reported that they behaved more friendly than did those who scored high (prejudiced Whites). Black partners perceived Whites who were unbiased on the implicit, response latency measure (nonprejudiced Whites) to be more friendly than those who had unconscious biases (aversive racists and prejudiced Whites). Blacks were also less trustful of prejudiced Whites and particularly of aversive racists and than of nonprejudiced Whites.

Our results further revealed that Whites' racial attitudes were systematically related to the efficiency of the interracial teams. Teams with nonprejudiced Whites solved the problem most quickly. Interracial teams involving prejudiced Whites were next most efficient. Teams with aversive racists were the least efficient. Presumably, the conflicting messages displayed by aversive racists and the divergent impressions of the team members' interaction interfered with the

task effectiveness of the team. To the extent that Blacks are in the minority in an organization and are dependent on high-prejudiced Whites or aversive racists on work-related tasks, their performance is likely to be objectively poorer than the performance of Whites who predominantly interact with other Whites. Thus, even when Whites harbor unconscious and unintentional biases toward Blacks, their actions can have effects sometimes even more detrimental than those of old-fashioned racists on interracial processes and outcomes.

Conclusion

In this article, we have outlined four ways in which aversive racism can adversely influence interpersonal relations to undermine race relations more generally. First, we argued that contemporary forms of racial bias among Whites, such as aversive racism, are less blatant than the traditional form. Although aversive racists' actions are systematically related to their attitudes, the attitudes of aversive racists are complex, including both conscious egalitarian values and unconscious negative feelings and beliefs. As a consequence, as we demonstrated in our research, aversive racists do not discriminate against Blacks when these actions would be recognized, by others or by oneself, as racially motivated. However, aversive racists do discriminate against Blacks when they can justify their behavior on the basis of factors other than race, and they readily adopt or construct these rationalizations. From the perspective of a casual observer, then, the interracial actions of aversive racists could appear inconsistent and unpredictable, or possibly even dishonest and deceitful. This inconsistency could significantly erode Blacks' confidence in the person's overtly well-intentioned motivations and values, which could then lead to interpersonal and, ultimately, interracial distrust.

Second, because aversive racists may not be aware of their implicit negative attitudes

and only discriminate against Blacks when they can justify their behavior on the basis of some factor other than race, they will commonly deny any intentional wrongdoing when confronted with evidence of their bias. Indeed, they do not intentionally discriminate. Nevertheless, because people tend to overattribute intentionality to another person's actions (Jones & Harris, 1967), Blacks who feel discriminated against will likely assume that the White person's behaviors were motivated by conscious, "old-fashioned" racism. An aversive racist's denial of intentionality, although genuine, may then intensify racial conflict and distrust.

Third, because people and their interaction partners have different perspectives and different access to thoughts and observable behaviors, there is significant potential for miscommunication to occur in interactions. This potential is particularly great in interracial interactions involving aversive racists. Even though aversive racists may not consciously endorse or even acknowledge their implicit negative attitudes toward Blacks, this implicit prejudice does significantly influence their behavior. However, as we have shown, implicit attitudes most strongly influence the behaviors that are least controllable and monitorable (e.g., nonverbal behaviors) by the aversive racist. Thus, aversive racists are likely to display mixed messages in interracial interactions while believing that they are behaving consistently appropriately and being confident that they are making the favorable impression that they intended. To the extent that Blacks (Shelton, 2000) and other minority group members (Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001) may, for historical reasons or personal experience, be particularly sensitive to signs of rejection, dislike, or discrimination, they are likely to weigh the negative signals more heavily than the more positive overt behaviors or even view the communication of mixed messages as evidence of ingenuous or deceitful motivations.

And fourth, in the previous section, we

have illustrated how awkward and inefficient interracial communication, which is a consequence of aversive racism, can have a negative impact on group outcomes as well as group processes. Beyond the substantial differences in social and economic power (Blank, 2001) that can limit the control that Blacks and other minorities can exert over their fate, the simple fact that, because of their numerical minority status, Blacks are more likely to engage in interracial interactions than are Whites makes them more vulnerable to the effects of problems in interracial communication. Whereas Whites may have little opportunity to interact with Blacks and may often be motivated to avoid such interactions (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), Blacks commonly must interact with Whites on a regular basis. They are thus susceptible to the cumulative effects of blatant and subtle racism (Feagin & Sikes, 1994) in ways that most Whites do not fully recognize or acknowledge (Morin, 2001).

Although our focus has been on how the racial attitudes of Whites in general and aversive racists in particular can shape racially directed actions and interracial behaviors in ways that contribute to miscommunication and distrust, we conclude by noting that all of the participants in an interaction, Black as well as White, are responsible for the outcomes. Blacks are active participants, and how they react and the actions they take proactively can contribute to more positive race relations. On the one hand, subtle, unconscious biases of one person can systematically affect the responses of others to produce self-fulfilling effects, again without the full awareness of the interactants (Chen & Bargh, 1997). On the other hand, people who are aware of the potential for stigmatization may respond strategically in ways that interfere with this process and produce more positive, individuated, and constructive outcomes (Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). The coordinated roles of both Whites and Blacks in interracial interactions, with greater attention to the explicit and implicit attitudes of Blacks, clearly merit

more attention. As Devine and Vasquez (1998) observed, one fundamental limitation

of existing theory is that the previous work has examined majority group members (e.g., whites and heterosexuals) and minority group members (e.g., blacks and homosexuals) separately . . . We have not yet examined carefully and fully the nature of interpersonal dynamics that emerge between majority and minority group members when they are brought together in a specific interpersonal situation. In other words, we do not know what happens when interaction begins. (pp. 240–241)

Finally, as we noted at the beginning of this article, we have focused our efforts at understanding the problem of race relations in the United States by examining one aspect—the influence of the racial attitudes of Whites in interpersonal interracial encounters. Clearly, the problem of race relations involves intergroup, historical, economic, and cultural issues as well. At an interpersonal level, it also encompasses the behaviors and the psychology of Blacks (see Shelton, 2000). Nevertheless, we believe that increasing an understanding and awareness of one particular aspect of this problem, the subtle biases of Whites, may represent a valuable step for creating more open, harmonious, and productive race relations in the future.

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