

Understanding and Addressing Contemporary Racism: From Aversive Racism to the Common Ingroup Identity Model



Samuel L. Gaertner*
University of Delaware



John F. Dovidio
University of Connecticut

This article describes our collaborative research on aversive racism and a strategy we developed to combat it, the Common Ingroup Identity Model. In addition, we reveal some details about our personal and professional relationship in pursuit of our scientific agenda. We begin by discussing evidence for the existence of aversive racism, a subtle, unintentional form bias that can have pernicious effects. Then we review research concerning how a common ingroup identity can combat aversive racism by redirecting the forces of social categorization and social identity, such that “Us” and “Them” are regarded as “We.” We conclude with a brief discussion of where we may look next for clues toward helping to achieve a fairer, more just society.

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Samuel L. Gaertner, Department of Psychology, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19713 [e-mail: gaertner@psych.edel.edu] or to John F. Dovidio, Department of Psychology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269 [e-mail: John.Dovidio@uconn.edu].

We are grateful to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the Office of Naval Research, the National Institutes of Mental Health, the University of Delaware Research Foundation, and the Colgate University Research Council, who over the years supported the research reported in this article and to our colleagues and students who have contributed significantly to the work described in this article.

Our article is divided into two sections that reflect the two major research questions we have pursued together. The first question is, What are the dynamics of a subtle form of racism, aversive racism, that exists among well-intentioned Whites? The second question is, What can we do about it? The research developed out of a collaboration that began almost 35 years ago. Sam Gaertner, an assistant professor at the University of Delaware, a new Ph.D. from the City University of New York Graduate Center in 1970, had been working on the topic of aversive racism, a contemporary and subtle, but insidious, manifestation of racial bias. His work on this topic began with his Ph.D. dissertation that obtained a provocative and serendipitous finding in what otherwise would have been an interesting but theoretically unexciting field experiment.

The study (Gaertner, 1973) involved the willingness of registered Liberal and Conservative Party members in New York City to help a Black or White motorist whose car had broken down on a local highway. Confederates, who were identifiable as Black or White on the basis of their dialects, made telephone calls, claiming to have been dialing their mechanic's number from a public telephone along the highway. The callers explained that they now needed the respondent's help to call the mechanic because they used their last coin for this wrong-number call. Consistent with previous research, Conservative Party members discriminated by helping Black callers less frequently than White callers, whereas Liberal Party members did not discriminate in terms of helping. Surprisingly, however, Liberal Party members discriminated in a different way. Although Liberals helped Black and White callers equivalently when they knew their assistance was needed, they terminated this encounter more readily for Black than for White callers *prior to* learning fully of the caller's need for their help. That is, they hung up prematurely. The results were puzzling, and we began by applying the notion of aversive racism (Kovel, 1970) to explain why supposedly nonprejudiced Liberals discriminated against Blacks, but only when they were not sure their help was needed.

In 1973, Jack Dovidio, following the advice of his undergraduate advisor, Bill Morris, and with the encouragement of another of his professors, John Lanzetta, came to Delaware as a graduate student after earning his B.A. at Dartmouth. He came with a range of interests, including altruism and nonverbal behavior, but with a primary personal interest in intergroup relations and prejudice. After about 2 years, our role boundaries as faculty advisor and graduate student disintegrated and we became colleagues and close personal friends ever since. We both feel the same way about the honor of the Lewin Award: It means even more because we have the opportunity to share it with each other.

There are three key elements for the effectiveness and longevity of our collaboration. One element is the complementary interests, talents, and priorities that each of us has brought to our work. We are different people, and we often look at the same problem from different perspectives. The second element is trust. We trust that any criticism or change the other offers is motivated to make the work

better. We do not always agree initially, but we have learned that the synthesis of our ideas is so much better than where we began individually. The third element is shared passion for research. It involves a mixture of intellectual curiosity, idealism, and a practical concern for making society a better and fairer place.

Our presentation illustrates the development of our collaborative research over the past 35 years. It describes our personal journey and is a case study illustrating the evolving nature of research. Kurt Lewin argued that psychologists should appreciate how laboratory experiments and field research can inform one another in important ways. He advocated action research, research designed for social change. At one level, our research is in this Lewinian tradition. As the wrong-number field study with Liberals and Conservatives demonstrated, an unexpected finding on a measure that would not have been included in a tightly designed laboratory experiment, premature hang-ups, stimulated the development of a theoretical framework and years of laboratory research.

At another level, however, our approach has deviated a bit from the Lewinian ideal. We have spent considerable time in the laboratory, venturing out into the “real world” to test or apply our ideas and to get new ideas probably less frequently than Lewin would have liked. Still, we did bring our experiences as expert witnesses, consultants, speakers to lay audiences, and program evaluators to bear upon, and often to shape in important ways, the direction of our research. What our presentation will most clearly illustrate, though, is that our research has evolved primarily through opportunism. Unexpected findings are opportunities.

The first major section of our collaborative research is an overview of our work on aversive racism. We have collaborated on many articles, chapters, and books on a variety of topics. But our work on aversive racism was the start and is at the heart of it all. The research on aversive racism helped to identify the subtlety, complexity, and pervasiveness of contemporary racism. The second major section of our presentation focuses on our research on the Common Ingroup Identity Model. This research has investigated strategies and interventions to combat contemporary racism. We conclude our presentation with a brief discussion of future challenges.

Contemporary Bias: Aversive Racism

Our work on aversive racism has been motivated, in part, by the goal of understanding the seemingly conflicting nature of the racial attitudes of Whites in the United States. Gunnar Myrdal (1944) identified the paradox between egalitarian values and racist traditions in the United States, describing it as the “American dilemma.” This dilemma reflects the tension between central principles of equality and fairness in the society and the daily operation of systematic prejudice and discrimination, at an individual and societal level, which produces racial inequality and reinforces racial disparities.

Sixty years after Myrdal's (1944) observation, the American dilemma is still evident. The principle of equality remains a fundamental social value and, since the civil rights legislation of the 1960s that made racial discrimination not simply immoral but also illegal, overt expressions of prejudice of Whites toward Blacks in the United States have declined significantly over the past several decades. Nevertheless, evidence of racial disparity and discrimination still remains (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004).

Our initial insights into the phenomenon of aversive racism were derived from the work of Joel Kovel (1970), who coined the term "aversive racism" and distinguished it from the traditional form of bigotry, which he called "dominative racism." According to Kovel, the dominative racist is the "type who acts out bigoted beliefs—he represents the open flame of racial hatred" (p. 54). Aversive racists, in comparison, sympathize with victims of past injustice, support the principle of racial equality, and regard themselves as nonprejudiced, but, at the same time, possess negative feelings and beliefs about Blacks, which may be unconscious. Aversive racism is hypothesized to be qualitatively different from blatant, "old-fashioned," racism. It is more subtle and is presumed to characterize the racial attitudes of most well-educated and liberal Whites in the United States. Nevertheless, the consequences of aversive racism (e.g., the restriction of economic opportunity) are as significant and pernicious as those of the traditional, overt form.

The Nature of Aversive Racism

The fundamental premise of our research on aversive racism is that many Whites who consciously, explicitly, and sincerely support egalitarian principles and believe themselves to be nonprejudiced also harbor negative feelings and beliefs about Blacks and other historically disadvantaged groups. These unconscious negative feelings and beliefs develop as a consequence of normal, almost unavoidable and frequently functional, cognitive, motivational, and social-cultural processes. In terms of cognitive processes, people normally categorize others into groups, typically in terms that delineate one's own group from other groups. This mere classification of people into the ingroup and outgroups is sufficient to initiate bias (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). In the United States, Whites automatically categorize people on the basis of race, and this categorization spontaneously elicits evaluative racial biases and stereotypes. With respect to motivational processes, people have basic needs of power, status, and control not only for themselves but also for their group, which exacerbates bias and often produces intergroup conflict (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). With regard to socio-cultural influences, people often adopt, without question, cultural stereotypes and justifying ideologies for group inequalities that reinforce group hierarchy.

Nevertheless, current cultural values may also be partly responsible for perpetuating the strong convictions concerning fairness, justice, and racial equality held by most White Americans. The existence of both the conscious endorsement of egalitarian values and unconscious negative feelings toward Blacks makes aversive racists' attitudes complex and produces a distinct pattern of discriminatory behavior.

Aversive racists can thus be identified by a constellation of characteristic responses to racial issues and interracial situations. Aversive racists, in contrast to old-fashioned racists, endorse fair and just treatment of all groups, but they unconsciously harbor feelings of uneasiness toward Blacks, and thus try to avoid interracial interaction. When interracial interaction is unavoidable, aversive racists experience anxiety and discomfort, and consequently they try to disengage from the interaction as quickly as possible. In addition, because part of the discomfort that aversive racists experience is due to a concern about acting inappropriately and appearing prejudiced, aversive racists are motivated primarily by avoiding wrongdoing in interracial interactions. Nevertheless, their negative feelings often are manifested in subtle, indirect, or rationalizable ways.

The "aversive" in aversive racism therefore reflects two types of aversion. Because of the anxiety and discomfort that aversive racists experience, they find interracial interaction aversive and try to avoid it. The Liberals in the wrong-number study (Gaertner, 1973) described earlier quickly disengaged from conversation with Blacks, producing a relatively high level of premature hang-ups. Also, aversive racists, who believe that they are nonprejudiced and who consciously embrace egalitarian ideals, would find aversive any thought or indication that they might be racist. As a consequence, aversive racists are primarily motivated to avoid wrongdoing or acting inappropriately in interracial situations. They try to avoid thinking bad thoughts about Blacks, experiencing bad feelings toward Blacks, and behaving in a discriminatory way toward Blacks. These efforts to preserve their nonprejudiced self-image, although with some apparent benefits, can also prove to be a costly strategy in many ways.

Although our research has focused on race relations in the United States, the processes of aversive racism are not limited by national or geographic boundaries and could reflect attitudes toward a number of different groups when overt forms of discrimination are recognized as inappropriate (see Kleinpenning & Hagendoorn, 1993; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995).

The Expression of Subtle Bias

The aversive racism framework helps to identify when discrimination against Blacks and other minority groups will or will not occur. Whereas old-fashioned racists exhibit a direct and overt pattern of discrimination, aversive racists' actions may appear more variable and inconsistent. At times they discriminate (manifesting

their negative feelings), and at other times they do not (reflecting their egalitarian beliefs). Our research has provided a framework for understanding this complex pattern of discrimination.

Because aversive racists consciously recognize and endorse egalitarian values, and because they truly aspire to be nonprejudiced, they will *not* discriminate in situations with strong social norms when discrimination would be obvious to others and to themselves. Specifically, we propose that when people are presented with a situation in which the normatively appropriate response is clear (when right and wrong are clearly defined), aversive racists will not discriminate against Blacks. In these circumstances, aversive racists will be especially motivated to avoid feelings, beliefs, and behaviors that could be associated with racist intent.

However, because aversive racists also possess, often unconsciously, negative feelings toward Blacks, these feelings will eventually be expressed, but in subtle, indirect, and rationalizable ways. Discrimination will tend to occur in situations in which normative structure is weak, when the guidelines for appropriate behavior are vague, or when the basis for social judgment is ambiguous. In addition, discrimination will occur when an aversive racist can justify or rationalize a negative response on the basis of some factor other than race. Under these circumstances, aversive racists may engage in behaviors that ultimately harm Blacks, but in ways that allow them to maintain their self-image as nonprejudiced. We have found consistent support across a broad range of situations for the basic proposition that contemporary biases are expressed in subtle rather than blatant ways (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986).

Empirical Evidence of the Influence of Aversive Racism

One of our early experiments (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977) demonstrated how aversive racism can operate in dramatic and consequential ways. The scenario for the experiment 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. What accounted for this behavior? Feelings of responsibility play a key role (see Darley & Latané, 1968). If a person witnesses an emergency knowing that he or she is the only bystander, that person bears all of the responsibility for helping and, consequently, the likelihood of helping is high. In contrast, if a person witnesses an emergency but believes that there are several other witnesses who might help, then the responsibility for helping is shared. Moreover, if the person believes that someone else will help or has already helped, the likelihood of that bystander taking action is significantly reduced.

We created a situation in the laboratory in which White participants witnessed a staged emergency involving a Black or White victim. 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 White people who also witnessed

the emergency. We predicted that, because aversive racists do not act in overtly bigoted ways, Whites would not discriminate when they were the only witness and the responsibility for helping was clearly focused on them. However, we anticipated that Whites would be much less helpful to Black than to White victims when they had a justifiable excuse not to get involved, such as the belief that one of the *other* witnesses would take responsibility for helping.

The results supported these predictions. When White participants believed that they were the only witness, they helped both White and Black victims very frequently (over 85% of the time) and equivalently. There was no evidence of blatant racism. In contrast, when they thought there were other witnesses and they could rationalize a decision not to help on the basis of some factor other than race, they helped Black victims only half as often as White victims (37.5% vs. 75%). Thus, these results illustrate the operation of subtle biases in relatively dramatic, spontaneous, and life-threatening circumstances involving a failure to help, rather than an action intentionally aimed at doing harm. This research, therefore, shows that although the bias may be subtle and the people involved may be well intentioned, its consequences may be severe.

Across a range of other studies using a number of helping paradigms, we found evidence that discrimination by Whites against Blacks occurs primarily when norms for appropriate behavior are weak or ambiguous (Frey & Gaertner, 1986; see also Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005) and tend to be more pronounced when the interaction involves potential threats to the traditionally superior status of Whites relative to Blacks (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1981).

We believe that aversive racism is pervasive and that it affects the quality of life of Blacks in the United States in a broad variety of ways. Whites' failures to provide specific types of assistance to Blacks as often as to Whites can have a significant impact on individuals' lives. However, the same process, when applied to different contexts such as personnel selection decisions, can have far-reaching social consequences.

Labor statistics in the United States continue to demonstrate fundamental disparities in the economic status of Blacks relative to Whites—a gap that has not only persisted but also widened in recent years for some important indicators, such as family income (see Blank, 2001). Aversive racism may be one contributing factor helping to maintain this disparity. To explore this possibility, in one selection decision study (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000) we varied the clarity of applicants' qualifications for a job and examined recommendations for hiring. Specifically, White college students were presented with excerpts from an interview and were then asked to evaluate Black and White candidates for a position as a peer counselor at their university. We varied the materials to represent very strong, moderate, or very weak qualifications for the position.

As predicted by the aversive racism framework, when candidates' credentials clearly qualified them for the position (strong qualifications) or when the

credentials were clearly inappropriate (weak qualifications), there was no discrimination against the Black candidate. However, when the candidates' qualifications for the position were less obvious and the appropriate decision was more ambiguous (moderate qualifications), White participants recommended Black candidates significantly less often than a White candidate. Moreover, when the responses of participants from 1989 were compared to those of 1999, overt expressions of prejudice (measured by items on a self-report prejudice scale) declined over this 10-year period, but the pattern of subtle discrimination in selection decisions remained essentially unchanged.

Subsequent research, investigating recommendations for college admission (Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002) identified a key mechanism underlying this effect, the weight that people give to different types of information when they make their decisions. Specifically, Hodson et al. found that more racially biased Whites weighed the *weaker* aspect of the applicant's credentials (e.g., standardized test scores or high school grades) as *more important* for admissions decisions when the candidate was Black than when the candidate was White.

Examining the generalizability of the operation of aversive racism in other domains, we explored its potential impact in areas in which fairness is paramount, the *justice* system. Despite the importance of equal treatment under the law in both principle and practice in the justice system, there is evidence that Blacks and Whites have not been treated equally under the law. Across time and locations in the United States, Blacks have been more likely to be convicted of crimes and, if convicted, sentenced to longer terms for similar crimes, particularly if the victim is White (see Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1998). We propose that the aversive racism is particularly pertinent in the legal context because the body of evidence may offer nonracial justifications for actions, and punishment is formally endorsed and supported under these conditions.

Whereas the expression of overt forms of prejudice can be readily detected and addressed through existing procedures (e.g., the *voir dire*) in the courts, aversive racism, which is difficult to detect with the normal legal procedures, can exert its subtle influence. One way it can operate is by influencing how evidence is weighed in decisions (Hodson et al., 2002). For example, building on related work by Johnson, Whitestone, Jackson, & Gatto (1995) we explored the impact of inadmissible DNA evidence on judgments of guilt and the severity of sentencing of Black and White defendants in the United Kingdom (Hodson, Hooper, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2005).

In this study, White participants were exposed to DNA evidence that was damaging to the case of a White or Black defendant accused of a robbery. In one condition, the DNA evidence was ruled inadmissible by the judge. Consistent with our predictions, we found that after receiving orders from a judge stipulating that incriminating DNA evidence should not be utilized in making upcoming decisions, the Black defendant, compared to the White defendant, was considered to be more guilty, given longer sentence recommendations, seen as more likely to

re-offend, and rated less likely to be rehabilitated. White participants appropriately corrected their judgments by effectively discounting the inadmissible evidence, judging the defendant as less guilty when the damaging evidence was inadmissible than when it was admissible. In contrast, White participants had difficulty suppressing the inadmissible evidence when the defendant was Black; they demonstrated a rebound effect, tending to judge the Black defendant as more guilty when the evidence was inadmissible than when it was admissible.

Taken together, the results from a substantial number of studies drawing on a range of different paradigms demonstrate the systematic operation of aversive racism producing in Whites a failure to help, to hire or admit, and to treat Blacks fairly under the law. These results, however, posed a particular empirical and theoretical challenge for us. Because self-reported prejudice did not consistently predict Whites' behaviors in these studies, we could not identify who, in particular, is an aversive racist. If a person expresses bigoted views openly, we would consider that person to be an old-fashioned, or dominative racist. If a person denies personal prejudice, we would consider that person as a potential aversive racist. Nevertheless, we recognized that not all Whites are racist. As we were pursuing our traditional line of research, however, we became interested in advances that were occurring in attitude measurement, particularly in terms of the assessment of attitudes and beliefs that are out of conscious awareness (i.e., implicit attitudes). Utilizing these techniques permitted a closer examination of how the conscious and unconscious forces hypothesized within the aversive racism framework operate.

Dissociated Attitudes: Explicit and Implicit

The distinction between Whites' conscious egalitarian values and unconscious negative feelings has been a traditional cornerstone of the aversive racism framework. Our position was thus compatible with developing work in cognition more generally that 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.

We, along with other researchers using response-time measures based on the assumption that racial attitudes operate like other stimuli to facilitate responses and decision making about related concepts (e.g., doctor-nurse), have revealed consistent evidence of Whites' implicit (unconscious) racial bias (e.g., Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Gaertner & McLaughlin,

1983). For instance, we found that subliminally presenting schematic faces of Blacks and Whites systematically influenced the speed with which Whites indicated whether positive or negative traits could describe a person. Faster response times are assumed to reflect greater association. We found that White participants had more positive associations with Whites than with Blacks as well as more negative associations with Blacks than with Whites, even though they were not aware of the schematic faces or that the study tested their racial attitudes (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997). Moreover, supportive of the aversive racism framework, Whites' unconscious attitudes are largely dissociated from their conscious, self-reported attitudes. A meta-analytic review of the literature revealed that the correlation between these different types of attitudes is, on average, .24 (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Beach, 2001). We pursued the implications of dissociated explicit and implicit attitudes in subsequent research on interracial interaction.

Implicit Bias and Interracial Interaction

We hypothesized that if aversive racists 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 (Shelton & Richeson, 2005).

In particular, we proposed that conscious and unconscious attitudes influence behavior in different ways and under different conditions (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Dovidio et al., 1997; Fazio et al., 1995). Conscious 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. Unconscious attitudes influence responses that are more difficult to monitor and control (e.g., some nonverbal behaviors; see McConnell & Leibold, 2001) or responses that people do not view as an indication of their attitude and thus do not try to control. For instance, we have found that Whites' unconscious negative attitudes predict nonverbal cues of discomfort (increased rate of blinking) and aversion (decreased eye contact) toward Blacks, whereas Whites self-reported, conscious attitudes predict overt evaluations and indications of liking toward Blacks (Dovidio et al., 1997). Thus, aversive racists, who have positive conscious attitudes and who want to be supportive of Blacks but who also harbor unconscious negative attitudes or associations, are likely to convey mixed messages in interracial interactions. Given these conflicting signals, it is not surprising that Blacks are likely to approach interracial interactions with anxiety, guardedness, and underlying mistrust.

In a study that demonstrated direct support for this reasoning, Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, and Hodson (2002) assessed the explicit and implicit racial attitudes of White participants before they engaged in an interracial interaction and same-race interaction. Whites' explicit racial attitudes primarily predicted bias in their more conscious and controllable interpersonal behavior, their verbal friendliness, during their interactions with Black and White partners. Whites who reported that they were more prejudiced behaved in a less verbally friendly way toward a Black relative to a White partner. However, it was Whites' implicit racial attitudes (assessed with a response-latency procedure), not their self-reported prejudice, which predicted bias in their less controllable and monitorable nonverbal behaviors.

In addition, as expected, White participants' impressions of the friendliness of their behavior, were significantly related to their explicit, self-reported racial attitudes and their verbal behavior. Whites who reported that they were less prejudiced behaved in a more friendly manner verbally during the interracial interaction. As a consequence, they perceived that they did behave in a friendly way. Because their implicit and nonverbal behaviors were less accessible to them, these measures did not relate to their impressions of how friendly their behavior was. In contrast, when asked their impressions of how friendly the White person's behavior toward them was, Black partners' judgments were predicted by the White person's nonverbal behavior, not their verbal behavior. Thus, particularly for Whites who were low in explicit prejudice and high in implicit prejudice (which characterizes an aversive racist), Blacks and Whites had divergent views of the quality of the interaction. In general, White participants believed that they behaved in a friendly and nonprejudiced way, and that the interaction was positive and productive. However, their Black partners typically perceived that Whites were less friendly than they thought they were, and Blacks were less satisfied with the interaction than were Whites. Moreover, the Black and White interactants were unaware that the other person viewed the experience differently than they did. These interracial interactions were thus characterized by fundamental misunderstandings.

The different and potentially divergent impressions that Blacks and Whites may form during interracial interactions can have a significant impact on their effectiveness in task-oriented situations. We examined this possibility further in interracial dyads in which a Black participant was paired with a White student who was identified as a traditionally high prejudiced person (who expressed their bias openly), an aversive racist (who expressed egalitarian views but who showed evidence of unconscious bias), or a low prejudiced White (who held egalitarian views and showed little evidence of unconscious bias) (Dovidio et al., 2002). We examined the quality of the interaction, as reflected in participants' perceptions of friendliness and trustworthiness, and the effectiveness of the interracial pairs, as measured by the time taken to complete the task.

In general, Whites' impressions of their behavior were related primarily to their self-reported expressed attitudes, whereas Blacks' impressions of Whites were related mainly to Whites' unconscious attitudes. Whites who expressed egalitarian ideals (i.e., low prejudiced Whites and aversive racists) reported that they behaved in more friendly ways than did those who expressed their bias openly (i.e., high prejudiced Whites). Black partners perceived only Whites who showed no evidence of unconscious bias (i.e., low prejudiced Whites) to be more friendly than those who had unconscious biases (aversive racists and high prejudiced Whites). Of all three groups, Blacks were least trustful of aversive racists.

Our results further revealed that Whites' racial attitudes could be systematically related to the efficiency of the interracial dyads. Pairs with low prejudiced Whites solved the problem most quickly. Interracial pairs involving high prejudiced Whites were the next most efficient. The dyads 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 team's effectiveness. To the extent that Blacks are in the minority in an organization and are dependent on high prejudiced Whites or aversive racists, 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 overt racists.

Overall, we have offered evidence across time, populations, and paradigms that illustrates how aversive racism—racism among people who are good and well-intentioned—can influence the nature of interracial interactions and directly or indirectly produce disparate outcomes between Blacks and Whites. As we noted earlier, although the bias of aversive racists may be subtle and unintentional, its consequences may ultimately be just as debilitating for Blacks as old-fashioned racism. In the next section we examine a promising strategy for combating this insidious type of bias. This development of strategy that represented a significant new direction of our work, evolving from the practical challenges associated with the pervasiveness of aversive racism.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model

As our work on aversive racism progressed, we began to consider what strategies might be useful to mitigate this type of bias. Preaching about the evils of prejudice would likely be ineffective because aversive racists already agree with the message and regard themselves to be nonprejudiced. Thus, what could we do to induce more favorable thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward Blacks in circumstances in which guidelines for appropriate behavior are ambiguous or when

there are justifiable reasons to respond negatively—the situations in which aversive racists discriminate?

As we searched for strategies to bring the behavior of aversive racists into closer alignment with a professed nonprejudiced self-image, we considered the possibility that aversive racism may represent a general indifference to racial outgroup members rather than a sharply focused negative orientation against them. That is, the behavior of aversive racists may not necessarily reflect negative feelings toward Blacks *per se*, but instead may represent the indifference people often normally accord to strangers. From this perspective, the discrimination we observed among aversive racists may have represented a motivation to respond especially favorably to racial ingroup members (Gaertner et al., 1997). Thus, we began seeking a remedy for aversive racism that reduces indifference and increases the perceptions of connectedness between people across group lines.

Social Categorization and Social Identity

This line of research was inspired by the ideas about the importance of social categorization and social identity that were blossoming at the time, particularly among European social psychologists. This work demonstrated that upon social categorization people favor ingroup members over outgroup members in their evaluations, feelings, and actions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1985). Bias that is due merely to categorization, however, seems primarily to represent a pro-ingroup rather than an anti-outgroup orientation (Brewer, 1979). In view of the fundamental role of social categorization in the creation of intergroup bias, there seemed to be some convergence of opinion that degrading the salience of a two-group, categorized representation through individuation (Wilder, 1981) or personalizing interactions (Brewer & Miller, 1984), should decrease intergroup bias (cf., Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

What struck us as especially intriguing was the notion emerging from this literature that “the attractiveness of an individual is not constant, but varies with ingroup membership” (Turner, 1985, p. 60). In this regard, Brewer (1979) suggested that the creation of an ingroup-outgroup boundary is associated with the perception that ingroup members are closer and less differentiated from the self. This conceptualization of the process of ingroup-outgroup differentiation shifts attention from the *negative* implications of outgroup perceptions to the *positive* consequences of ingroup formation (Brewer, 1979). Allport (1954) also recognized the potential value of perceiving ingroup membership, but he applied the idea across racial group lines when he asked hopefully, “Can a loyalty to [hu]mankind be fashioned before interracial warfare breaks out?” (p. 44). Our own work, leading to the development of the Common Ingroup Identity Model, capitalized on the proposed *positive* consequences of ingroup membership. Rather than focusing on the benefits of decategorization in which members of two groups are induced to regard

the aggregate as individuals, we began to explore the potential benefits of recategorization. Specifically, we hypothesized that if members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves as a single group rather than as two completely separate groups, attitudes toward former outgroup members will become more positive through the cognitive and motivational forces that result from ingroup formation—a consequence that could increase the sense of connectedness across group lines.

Thus, whereas it may be impossible to short-circuit the social categorization process altogether, it may be possible to affect the level of category inclusiveness people use when categorizing other people, including themselves. Relatedly, it may be possible to alter whether people identify themselves as distinct individuals or as group members. Thus it may be possible to engineer a *recategorization* or *decategorization* of perceived group boundaries in ways that reduce the original intergroup bias and conflict.

Initial Empirical Investigations

In our first experiment exploring the potential of these categorization-based strategies for reducing intergroup bias (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989) we asked, what would happen if we induced two 3-person ad hoc laboratory groups of college students to regard themselves as either one group, two groups, or separate individuals. To vary the representation participants would utilize to represent the aggregate we systematically manipulated the spatial arrangement of the members (i.e., integrated, segregated, or separated seating patterns), whether the groups wore the same or different colored t-shirts or just their regular clothing, the nature of the interdependence among the participants and the assignment of names to represent either all of the participants as one group, the two original groups or nicknames for each individual. Indeed, participant responses on a postexperimental questionnaire confirmed that our manipulation was highly effective in changing participants' representations of the six participants. Furthermore, as we predicted, participants in the One Group and Separate Individuals conditions reported lower bias (in liking and other evaluative characteristics) of the original ingroup and outgroup members relative to those in the Two Groups condition. In addition, participants in the One Group and Separate Individuals conditions, reduced bias in different ways, as we expected. In the One group condition, bias was reduced primarily because evaluations of former outgroup members became more positive, whereas in the Separate Individuals condition, evaluations of former ingroup members became less positive.

Encouraged by the findings of our first experiment, we thought about what features, beyond the walls of our laboratory, might induce more inclusive group representations among the members of different groups, especially different racial groups. Psychologists have known for some time that feelings and behaviors toward

outgroup members become more positive and intergroup relations become more harmonious when groups are brought together under certain specifiable conditions. These conditions, which are outlined in the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), involve cooperative intergroup interaction (see Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), equal status between the groups, opportunities for self-revealing interactions, and equalitarian norms endorsed by relevant authority. What has been more elusive, however, has been the identification of the psychological processes that are activated by these conditions of contact, which in turn, lead to these positive intergroup consequences. It seemed reasonable to us that these conditions of contact specified by the Contact Hypothesis may share the capacity to induce more inclusive representations among the memberships. From this perspective, for example, cooperative interaction among Sherif et al.'s groups of summer campers reduced intergroup conflict because it transformed their representations of themselves from "Us" and "Them," to a more inclusive "We." These ideas led to our specification of the Common Ingroup Identity Model.

The Dynamics of the Common Ingroup Identity Model

This Common Ingroup Identity Model identifies potential antecedents and outcomes of recategorization, as well as mediating processes (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). This model outlines how different types of intergroup interdependence (as well as other contact hypothesis variables) and cognitive, perceptual, linguistic, affective, and environmental factors can either independently or in concert alter individuals' cognitive representations of the aggregate. These cognitive representations (i.e., one group, two subgroups with one group [i.e., a dual identity], two groups, or separate individuals) are then proposed to result in specific cognitive, affective, and overt behavioral consequences. Thus, contextual factors, which include features specified by the Contact Hypothesis, are proposed to influence members, cognitive representations of the memberships, which in turn mediate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences. In addition, we proposed that common ingroup identity may be achieved by increasing the salience of existing common superordinate memberships (e.g., a school) or by introducing factors (e.g., common goals) that are perceived to be shared by the memberships.

As we proposed initially (Gaertner et al., 1989; see also Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), the development of a common ingroup identity does not necessarily require each group to forsake its less inclusive group identity completely. As depicted by the "two subgroups within one group" (i.e., a dual identity) representation, we believe that it is possible for members to conceive of two groups (e.g., Blacks and Whites) as distinct units within the context of a superordinate (e.g., high school) identity. In this regard, the dual identity is somewhat similar to Brown and Hewstone's (2005) idea that it would be most effective during contact for groups

to maintain mutual differentiation during intergroup cooperation (see Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998).

When group identities and the associated cultural values are central to members' functioning or when they are associated with high status or highly visible cues to group membership, it would be undesirable or impossible for people to relinquish these group identities or, as perceivers, to be "color blind." If, however, people continued to regard themselves as members of different groups but all playing on the same team or as part of the same superordinate entity, intergroup relations between these "subgroups" would be more positive than if members only considered themselves as "separate groups." In addition, maintaining the salience of the subgroup identities within a common superordinate identity could facilitate the generalization of the positive effects of intergroup contact to the other group as a whole (i.e., beyond those who were present during intergroup contact).

Empirical Tests of the Model

Our second experiment (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990), which was based in a broader articulation of the model, directly tested whether intergroup cooperative interaction, a requisite feature of the Contact Hypothesis, achieves its positive effect on intergroup attitudes, at least in part, by transforming members' representations of the memberships from separate groups to one, more inclusive group. As in our first study, we brought two 3-person laboratory groups together under conditions designed to vary independently the members' representations of the aggregate as one group or two groups (by varying factors such as seating arrangement) and the presence or absence of intergroup cooperation interaction.

Supportive of the hypothesis concerning how cooperation reduces bias, among participants induced to feel like two groups, the introduction of cooperative interaction increased their perceptions of one group and also reduced their bias in evaluative ratings relative to those who did not cooperate during the contact period. Also, consistent with the Common Ingroup Identity Model, reduced bias associated with introducing cooperation was due primarily to enhanced favorable evaluations of outgroup members.

In addition, we conducted three survey studies in natural settings across different domains of intergroup life, which offered converging support for the idea that features specified by the Contact Hypothesis increase intergroup harmony, in part, because they transform members' representations of the memberships from separate groups to one more inclusive group. Participants in these studies included students attending a multi-ethnic high school (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1996); banking executives who had experienced a corporate merger involving a wide variety of banks across the United States (Bachman, 1993), and college students who are members of blended families whose households are

composed of two formerly separate families trying to unite into one (Banker & Gaertner, 1998).

These surveys included items (specifically designed for each context) to measure participants' perceptions of the conditions of contact (i.e., equal status, self-revealing interaction, cooperation, equalitarian norms), their representations of the aggregate (i.e., one group, two subgroups within one group, two separate groups and separate individuals), and a measure of intergroup harmony or bias. For example, Contact Hypothesis items measuring participants' perceptions of equal status between the groups included items such as, "Teachers at this school are fair to all groups of students." Participants' cognitive representations of the aggregate as "one group" were measured by items such as, "Within the merged organization it feels like one group." Although the measures of intergroup bias or harmony were different across the three contexts, each study included some measure of affective reactions (e.g., feeling good, respectful, happy, awkward) to ingroup and outgroup members. Within each setting composite indices were created for each of the major components of our model, that is, the Conditions of Contact, the representations, and intergroup harmony or bias.

In general, the more favorable participants reported the conditions of contact between the groups (e.g., cooperation), the more the school (or company or family) felt like one group. Supportive of the model, the more it felt like one group, the lower the bias in affective reactions in the high school, the lesser the intergroup anxiety among the banking executives, and the greater the amount of stepfamily harmony. Recently, a longitudinal study of stepfamilies found evidence supportive of the direction of causality between the constructs proposed by our model across time (Banker, 2002). Thus, across a variety of intergroup settings and methodological approaches we have found reasonably strong and consistent support for the Common Ingroup Identity Model.

Reducing Racial Biases: Experimental Evidence

To directly determine whether a common ingroup identity can increase positive reactions to racial outgroup members, we executed two additional experiments. In a laboratory experiment (Nier, Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, & Ward, 2001, Study 1) White participants involved in the same session with a Black or White confederate were induced to perceive themselves as separate individuals with no functional connection or as members of the same team. The results revealed that the evaluations of the other White confederate were virtually equivalent in the Individual and Team conditions, whereas the evaluations of the Black confederate was reliably more positive when they were teammates than when they were just individuals without common group connection.

Additionally, a field experiment (Nier et al., 2001, Study 2) conducted at the University of Delaware football stadium prior to a game between the University

of Delaware and Westchester State University demonstrates how a salient superordinate identity can increase behavioral compliance with a request for assistance from a person of a different race. In this experiment, Black and White, male and female students approached fans of the same sex as themselves from both universities just before the fans entered the stadium. These fans were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed about their food preferences. Our student interviewers systematically varied whether they were wearing a University of Delaware or Westchester State University hat. By selecting fans who wore similar clothing that identified their university affiliation, we systematically varied whether fans and our interviewers had common or different university identities in a context where we expected these identities to be particularly salient. Although we planned to over-sample Black fans, the sample was still too small to yield any informative findings.

Among White fans, however, sharing common university identity with the Black interviewers significantly increased their compliance (59%) relative to when they did not share common identity with the Black interviewer (36%). When the interviewers were White, however, there was no significant difference in their levels of compliance as a function of their university identity. They gained equivalent levels of compliance when they shared common university identity with the fan (44%) as when they appeared to be affiliated with the rival university (37%). These findings together with those of the preceding study offer support for the idea that outgroup members will be treated more favorably in terms of evaluations and prosocial behavior when they are perceived to also share a more inclusive, common ingroup affiliation. In the next section, we explore whether a common ingroup identity can make an even more fundamental change in the behavior of Whites during interracial interactions.

Common Identity and Motivation in Interracial Interaction

Within the aversive racism framework, a major motive of Whites in interracial situations is to *avoid wrongdoing*. Supportive of this view, we have found across a variety of different studies that Whites typically do not discriminate against Blacks in situations in which norms for appropriate behaviors are clearly defined. Thus, Whites can, at least under some circumstances, successfully suppress negative beliefs, feelings, and behavior toward Blacks when it is obvious that expressing such reactions reflects racial bias. Unfortunately, in view of recent work on stereotype suppression and rebound, it is possible that once this self-imposed suppression is relaxed, negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors would be even *more likely* than if they were not suppressed initially.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model, because it focuses on redirecting the forces of ingroup favoritism, can potentially change the motivational orientation or

intentions of aversive racists from trying to avoid wrongdoing to trying to *do what is right*. Some preliminary evidence from our laboratory suggests the potential promise of a common ingroup identity to alter motivation in just such a positive way (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

In this experiment, White participants who were about to interact with a White or a Black confederate were either asked to try to avoid wrongdoing, instructed to try to behave correctly toward the other person, informed that they were part of the same team with their partner and competing against a team at a rival institution, or were given no instructions. The dependent measure of interest was the relative accessibility of negative thoughts, as assessed by changes in responses on a Stroop color-naming task after the interaction relative to responses on a baseline Stroop task administered before the interaction. A rebound effect would be reflected in greater accessibility (i.e., longer color-naming latencies) of negative relative to positive words on the posttest Stroop task.

We hypothesized that, because the primary motivation of aversive racists in interracial interaction is to avoid wrongdoing and thus to suppress negative thoughts and feelings, participants explicitly instructed to avoid wrongdoing and those given no instructions would show relatively strong accessibility of negative thoughts after interacting with a Black confederate. In contrast, we expected participants instructed to behave correctly and those in the “same team” condition (who were hypothesized to adopt a positive orientation on their own) would escape such a rebound effect.

The results were encouraging. When the confederate was White, the experimental conditions did not differ significantly in the accessibility of negative thoughts from one another or from baseline. When the confederate was Black, however, the increased accessibility of negative relative to positive characteristics (from the pretest to the posttest) in the avoid wrongdoing and no instructions conditions was significantly greater than in the do right and same team conditions, in which there was an increase in the accessibility of positive relative to negative thoughts. The pattern of these findings suggests that the development of a common ingroup identity can alter motivation in interracial situations from one of suppressing negative thoughts, feelings, and actions to one that is positive, more appetitive and prosocial—and in a way that does not ironically result in further increases in negative thoughts. These findings are particularly encouraging to us because they illustrate the effectiveness of a common ingroup identity for addressing individual-level biases and particularly the underlying motivational dynamics of aversive racism.

In general, when we present this work people frequently question whether the development of a common ingroup identity is a realistic strategy. Our evaluation study of an elementary school antibias education intervention attempts to address this question.

The Green Circle Elementary School Anti-Bias Education Program

Several years ago, we became aware of the Green Circle elementary school-based intervention program, which is now run by the National Conference of Community and Justice of Northern Delaware, which is practically and theoretically compatible with the Common Ingroup Identity Model. The guiding assumption of Green Circle is that helping children bring people from different groups conceptually into their own circle of caring and sharing fosters appreciation of their common humanity as well as respect for their differences.

In the program, a Green Circle facilitator visits each class for about 40 minutes per session four times over a 4-week period and shows children a small green circle on a felt board. The facilitator states, "Whenever you see the green circle, you should think about your world of people; the people who you care about and the people who care about you." A stick figure is added to the circle and the students are told that the figure represents themselves. The facilitator explains that each person has "a big job of deciding who is going to be in your circle, how to treat people, and how big your circle will grow," and engages children in a variety of exercises designed to expand the circle. The facilitator points out that, "All of us belong to one family—the human family." Paralleling the Common Ingroup Identity Model, Green Circle assumes that an appreciation of common humanity will increase children's positive attitudes toward people who would otherwise remain outside of their circle of inclusion.

This collaboration with the Green Circle staff provided an applied opportunity to test the general principles of the Common Ingroup Identity model and also offered the Green Circle program an evaluation of their intervention's effectiveness (see Houlette et al., 2004). On the basis of the goals of the Green Circle program and the principles of the Common Ingroup Identity Model, we expected that children receiving the program would be more inclusive of others who are different than themselves in playing and sharing following the implementation of the program relative to pretest levels and also relative to children in a control condition who did not yet receive the program. To evaluate attitudes toward children similar and different in sex, race, and weight children were asked about their willingness to share with and play with each of eight different children depicted in drawings in which sex, race (Black and White), and weight were systematically varied.

Overall, our results revealed that first- and second-grade children in fairly well-integrated classrooms still had a general preference for playing and sharing with children of the same race than a different race. Nevertheless, we also found that the Green Circle intervention did lead children to be more inclusive in terms of their most preferred playmate. Specifically, compared to children in the control condition who did not participate in Green Circle activities, those who were part of Green Circle showed a significantly greater increase in willingness to select as the child from the eight drawings who was different from them (in terms of race,

sex, and weight) as the child they “would most want to play with.” These changes involve greater willingness to cross group boundaries in making friends—a factor that is one of the most potent influences in producing more positive attitudes toward the outgroup as a whole (Pettigrew, 1998).

Conceptually, the Green Circle findings illustrate that it is realistic to operationalize the primary theme underlying the Common Ingroup Identity Model. These findings also demonstrate how interpersonal and intergroup routes toward reducing intergroup biases can involve complementary processes that reciprocally facilitate one another. That is, changes in intergroup boundaries can facilitate the occurrence of positive interpersonal behaviors across group lines such as self-disclosure and helping in college students (see also Dovidio et al., 1997) and, as the Green Circle study illustrates, preferred playmates in children.

Conclusion

We have described our understanding of a contemporary form of racism, considered the factors contributing to aversive racism, demonstrated empirically how it affects outcomes for Blacks and shapes interracial interactions, and explored one particular strategy for how it can be combated. As our presentation also reveals, our program of research is not always direct and linear. Inconsistent data, in our view, are not a problem. It is an opportunity. For instance, in our research on the Common Ingroup Identity Model we have found that although across different domains of group life a purely one-group representation is consistently associated with more harmonious intergroup relations, a dual identity is sometimes associated with positive and sometimes with negative intergroup relations (e.g., Gaertner et al., 1996). In addition, whereas majority group members prefer a one-group representation, a dual identity relates to better adjustment and more positive intergroup attitudes for minority group members (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2000). These are not simply loose ends to be ignored; rather they are clues to a more comprehensive understanding of race and intergroup relations. These clues lead us to other researchers’ work and ideas (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999), which provide us with new insights.

Research on the self, for instance, has conceptualized self-esteem as an interpersonal monitor, a sociometer that alerts people to the possibility of social exclusion. We currently hypothesize that cognitive representations of groups (and particularly a dual identity) operate in an analogous way at the collective level. That is, a dual identity can reflect the degree of social inclusion or exclusion of one’s group, and thus its meaning will vary as a function of the dominant social values in the context and individuals’ motivations, priorities, and perspectives.

Where our latest ideas and interests will lead, we cannot be sure. We do know where Lewin has told us to look—both inside and outside of the laboratory. It is good advice. Because we do not know what is around the next corner, we will

look around as many different corners as we can for the clues. We have learned the enduring value of serendipity and collaboration.

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SAMUEL L. GAERTNER is Professor of Psychology at the University of Delaware. Professor Gaertner earned a BA (1964) and MA (1967) from Brooklyn College and a Ph.D. (1970) from The City University of New York: Graduate Center. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and of the American Psychological Society. Dr. Gaertner is on the editorial boards of: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, and *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. His research interests are in intergroup relations. With Jack Dovidio, Professor Gaertner has shared the SPSSI Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize in 1985 and 1998.

JOHN F. DOVIDIO (MA, PhD in social psychology from the University of Delaware) is currently Professor of Psychology at the University of Connecticut.

Before coming to the university, he was Charles A. Dana Professor of Psychology at Colgate University, where he also served as Provost and Dean of the Faculty. Dr. Dovidio is also Editor of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology – Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes*. He has been Editor of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* and Associate Editor of *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and of the American Psychological Society. Dr. Dovidio has been President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), Division 9 of APA, and Chair of the Executive Committee of the Society for Experimental Social Psychology. Dr. Dovidio's research interests are in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; social power and nonverbal communication; and altruism and helping. He shared the 1985 and 1998 Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize for the best paper of the year on intergroup relations with Samuel L. Gaertner for their work on aversive racism and ways to reduce bias, and the 2001 Prize with Kerry Kawakami for their research on reducing spontaneous stereotyping.