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On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice

From Subtle Bias to Severe Consequences

*John F. Dovidio, Adam R. Pearson,
Samuel L. Gaertner, and Gordon Hodson*

Other chapters in this volume describe the fragile nature of intergroup relations and illustrate vividly, with examples from Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and from the Holocaust during World War II, how neighbors who had been living in apparent harmony can suddenly become violent enemies. These chapters describe conditions such as political instability that arouse strong passions, elicit hatred, and produce violence in its most extreme form: genocide. Whereas the other chapters focus on the political, social, structural, and intergroup factors that address the central issue of this volume, why neighbors kill, in this chapter we examine the psychological processes that provide the foundation for transforming basically normal and well-intentioned people into agents of violence under these societal-level conditions.

We use as a case study the attitudes of Whites toward Blacks in the United States. We focus on this topic because of the historical and contemporary importance of race in the United States; racial issues have defined politically, legally, and socially the nature of majority–minority relations throughout the nation's history. It is a history involving absolute oppression and violence associated with the inhumanity of slavery in the past and manifested most overtly in hate crimes, criminal acts motivated in whole or in part by prejudice toward another group (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002), in the present.

Because the standards for reporting hate crimes have varied, it is diffi-cult to determine whether incidences of hate crimes have changed systematically over time. Nevertheless, the number of *reported* hate crimes against Blacks has increased from 1,689 (36% of all reported hate crimes) in 1991 to 3,573 (39% of reported hate crimes) in 1998 (Perry, 2002). In 2006, there were 3,136 anti-Black hate crime offenses (35% of all hate crime offenses; U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Perhaps because of its social importance, racial prejudice has been the primary focus of empirical research on the psychology of prejudice. As experimental social psychologists, this is the approach we adopt in this chapter. Specifically, we draw on psychological theory and research to explore the nature of Whites' contemporary racial attitudes and show how subtle prejudice can represent a catalyst for producing direct, and potentially extreme, harmful actions.

In this chapter, we propose that extreme prejudice is not necessary to produce support for actions that will harm, and ultimately kill, members of other groups. Instead, "everyday" prejudice, bias within the latitude of normal expression, provides a foundation that, under appropriate conditions, can be manifested in actions of physical harm to members of other groups. We first describe the nature of con-temporary prejudice of Whites toward Blacks in the United States and illustrate how it differs from the traditional, overt form. We then apply Sternberg's (2003) model of intergroup hate to understand potential processes that transform subtle bias to direct harm. We conclude by discussing the practical and theoretical implications of this perspective.

The Nature of Contemporary Racism

Overt expressions of prejudice of Whites toward Blacks in the United States have declined significantly over the past several decades (Bobo, 2001). These declines have been attributed, at least in part, to the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s, which made racial dis-crimination illegal and helped to facilitate more egalitarian norms and standards in personal behavior. Only a small minority of Whites still express blatantly prejudiced attitudes. For example, less than 10% of White respondents report on national surveys that, because of race, they would not vote for a well-qualified Black presidential candidate (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). Although we recognize that blatant forms of racism still exist and are frequently the basis of violence of Whites against Blacks, in this chapter we focus on racism among the well intentioned.

We propose that contemporary prejudice in the United States operates largely unconsciously and produces discrimination in ways that occur unintentionally and are often difficult to recognize. Although this contemporary form of racism most typically produces more mild or subtle forms of discrimination, it can elicit more direct and aggressive reactions under conditions of competition and threat. We explore when and how this subtle bias can contribute to direct and significant harm – to understanding why neighbors kill – at least when it occurs within socially condoned circumstances.

Aversive racism

According to the aversive racism perspective, many people who consciously, explicitly, and sincerely support egalitarian principles and believe themselves to be nonprejudiced also harbor negative feelings about Blacks and other historically disadvantaged groups. A critical aspect of the aversive racism framework (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) is the development of underlying unconscious negative feelings by Whites toward Blacks 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 ingroups and outgroups is sufficient to initiate bias (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). In the United States, Whites automatically categorize people on the basis of race, and this categorization spontaneously elicits evaluative racial biases and stereotypes (Blair, 2001). 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; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also chapter 10, this volume). With regard to sociocultural influences, people often adopt, without question, cultural stereotypes and justifying ideologies for group inequalities that reinforce group hierarchy (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

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. In the next section, we

examine the implications of the aversive racism framework and illustrate how bias expressed in subtle ways can have profound consequences.

Expressions 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.

We have found consistent support across a broad range of situations for the basic proposition that contemporary biases tend to be expressed in subtle rather than blatant ways (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). 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. Wrongdoing, which could directly threaten their nonprejudiced self-image, would be too costly.

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.

In our initial studies on this topic, which usually involved situations in which Blacks were not personally responsible for their predicament (e.g., being the victim of an emergency; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977), self-reported racial attitudes were generally unrelated to manifestations

in aversive racism. That is, both relatively high and low prejudice-scoring Whites generally did not discriminate against Blacks when appropriate behavior was clear. In addition, low prejudiced Whites discriminated against Blacks as much as high prejudiced Whites when they could justify their behavior on the basis of some factor other than race. Even high prejudice-scoring college students, however, are relatively low in prejudice compared to the general population. Also, they may not perceive their responses to prejudice inventories as reflective of prejudicial feelings but rather as an objective assessment of reality. Thus, both high and low prejudice-scoring students could maintain the belief that they are not prejudiced.

However, subsequent research has suggested that when a Black person's actions are clearly responsible for their situation *and* a negative response can be justified on the basis of a factor other than race (e.g., with convincing evidence that the person committed a serious crime), relatively high and low prejudice-scoring White college students often show divergent responses. In particular, relatively high prejudice-scoring Whites, who are less able or less motivated to suppress their bias on prejudice questions, tend to show more direct behavioral evidence of bias, which resembles blatant bias but is revealed only under these justifiable circumstances. Low prejudice-scoring White students also show bias in these situations, but it is typically manifested in an even more indirect way (e.g., in terms of amplified ingroup favoritism). Thus, there may be systematic shades of subtlety in the subtle bias associated with aversive racism.

In the next section, we illustrate how contemporary bias may inhibit Whites' helping of Blacks and, under some circumstances, facilitate the harming of Blacks.

Bystander intervention

One of our earliest experiments (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977) demonstrates how aversive racism can operate in dramatic and consequential ways. The study built upon the work of Darley and Latané (1968), who demonstrated how the presence of other witnesses in an emergency can reduce the likelihood that any given person will intervene. In particular, if a person witnesses an emergency knowing that he or she is the only bystander, that person bears all of the responsibility for helping. 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 that the bystander will take

action is reduced. We extended these ideas to study subtle racial bias. Specifically, in addition to leading White participants to believe that they were the only witness to an emergency or that there was another witness who could help, we varied the race of the victim (Black or White). We predicted that discrimination against Blacks would occur only when Whites could rationalize not helping, when there was another witness who presumably could help, not when they were the only bystander.

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 others had witnessed the emergency and could therefore rationalize a decision not to help on the basis of a factor other than race, they helped Black victims only half as often as White victims (37.5% vs. 75%). High and low prejudice-scoring participants showed a very similar pattern of response in this study.

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. Nevertheless, when the situation permits discrimination while allowing a White person to avoid an attribution of bigotry, aversive racism can have consequences as profound as racism motivated by overt hatred.

In a society in which norms against discrimination and physical harm are strong, the most common expressions of aversive racism may involve "biases of omission," such as failing to offer as much assistance to an outgroup member as to an ingroup member. Nevertheless, we further propose that when the norms change, when social inhibitions are relieved and harm can be socially rationalized or justified, the effects of aversive racism will be manifested in more directly harmful ways. We consider this implication in the current section in terms of experiments on interracial aggression and juridic decisions involving guilt or innocence, recommended length of sentencing, and support for the death penalty.

Interracial aggression

The aversive racism perspective suggests that because aggression and intergroup violence are usually normatively sanctioned, aversive racists would be particularly inhibited in engaging in interracial aggression in most contexts. Nevertheless, given their underlying negative feelings and beliefs, aversive racists, compared to truly nonprejudiced people, may also be particularly susceptible to disinhibiting influences,

such as provocation that justifies retaliation or immediate norms or social forces (e.g., behavioral contagion) that promote aggression. Mullen (1986), for instance, found that interracial violence by Whites against Blacks often occurs within a social context that permits or encourages aggression. His analysis of newspaper reports of Blacks being lynched by White mobs revealed that violence against Blacks was more likely when Whites were part of a larger group and experienced greater anonymity and deindividuation. Recent research on hate crimes similarly reveals that the perceived attitudes of others in the situation, even more than an assailant's own attitudes, influences violent action (Franklin, 2000), and a substantial portion of hate crimes involve reactions to perceived threat or provocation (McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002). Thus, factors that normally disinhibit aggressive behavior, such as provocation, deindividuation, peer pressure, and anonymity, may be particularly potent for promoting interracial aggression among Whites who normally appear nonprejudiced but who harbor unconscious negative feelings about Blacks.

Research by Rogers and Prentice-Dunn (1981) illustrates how subtle prejudice, which may not be manifested under most normal circumstances, can be a critical factor in interracial aggression and hostility under certain conditions. Under the guise of a study in behavior modification, White male college students were told that they should administer shocks to another person, actually a Black or White confederate, when a signal indicated that the person's heart rate fell below a predetermined level. In one condition designed to provoke anger, the participant overheard the confederate say to the experimenter (before the task was performed) that the participant looked too "dumb" and "stupid" to operate the apparatus. In a control condition, the confederate simply stated that he was ready to proceed with the experiment and had no objections about participating.

Consistent with the aversive racism perspective, in the control condition, when they were not provoked by the insults and interracial aggression could not be justified by a nonracial factor, White participants administered somewhat lower intensity shocks to Black than to White confederates. However, after being angered by the socially inappropriate remarks, White participants in the insult condition administered substantially higher levels of shock to Black than to White confederates. That is, when they were provoked by the confederate, which aroused anger and provided a nonracial explanation for retaliation, Whites were particularly aggressive to Blacks.

Other research using similar interracial aggression paradigms has also produced results consistent with the operation of aversive racism.

Supportive of the aversive racism framework, Whites' willingness to shock Blacks more than Whites is moderated by situational factors relating the salience of compliance to nonprejudiced norms. Whites' biased aggression is inhibited when Whites anticipate censure from others; it is facilitated when Whites feel freed from prevailing norms through conditions that make them feel anonymous and deindividuated, or when their actions are perceived to be justified (Donnerstein & Donnerstein, 1973; Donnerstein, Donnerstein, Simon, & Ditrichs, 1972; Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1981).

The legal context provides another frame under which aversive racism can operate subtly but have profound influence. Racial biases can influence how evidence is perceived and weighed, affecting assessments of guilt, and once a defendant is judged guilty, can effect the severity of recommended punishment in the context of formal structures and social norms that support punishment.

Bias in legal decisions

Traditionally, Blacks and Whites have not been treated equally under the law (see Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1998). 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. In addition, Blacks are more likely to receive the death penalty (Government Accounting Office, 1990). Baldus, Woodworth, and Pulaski (1990) examined over 2,000 murder cases in Georgia and found that a death sentence was returned in 22% of the cases in which Black defendants were convicted of killing a White victim, but in only 8% of the cases in which the defendant and the victim were White. Paralleling the trends in overt expressions of bias, although differences in judicial outcomes have tended to persist, racial disparities in sentencing are declining over time. 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 that is formally endorsed and supported under these conditions. We illustrate these effects first in terms of how evidence is weighed in judgments of guilt and then with respect to factors involved in supporting a death sentence.

Inadmissible evidence and judgments of guilt. Even though the influence of old-fashioned racism in juridic judgments may be waning, aversive racism appears to have a continuing, subtle influence. One way it can operate is by influencing how evidence is weighed in decisions.

For example, in a laboratory simulation study, Johnson, Whitestone, Jackson and Gatto (1995) examined the effect of the introduction of inadmissible evidence, which was damaging to a defendant's case, on Whites' judgments of a Black or White defendant's guilt. No differences in judgments of guilt occurred as a function of defendant race when all the evidence presented was admissible. However, consistent with the aversive racism framework, the presentation of inadmissible evidence increased judgment of guilt when the defendant was Black but not when the defendant was White. We have recently found similar results involving inadmissible DNA evidence and judgments of guilt and severity of sentencing among participants in the United Kingdom (Hodson, Hooper, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2005).

Another study of simulated juridic decisions involving the impact of inadmissible evidence by Faranda and Gaertner (1979; see also Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) demonstrated how individual differences in a prejudice-related personality variable, authoritarianism, can shape perceptions of a defendant's guilt. Authoritarianism is a personality variable involving a constellation of factors, such as rigidity of beliefs and strong perceptions of ingroup–outgroup distinctions (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), associated with negative attitudes toward a number of groups, including Whites' prejudice toward Blacks (Altemeyer, 1996).

In Faranda and Gaertner's (1979) study, both high and low authoritarian participants displayed racial biases in their reactions to inadmissible evidence, but they did so in different ways. In their ratings of certainty of guilt, high authoritarians did not ignore the inadmissible testimony when the victim was Black; they were more certain of the Black defendant's guilt when they were exposed to the inadmissible evidence than when they were not presented with this testimony. For the White defendant, however, high authoritarians followed the judge's instructions appropriately; the inadmissible evidence had no impact on their judgments. Low authoritarian participants, in contrast, followed the judge's instructions about ignoring the inadmissible testimony when the defendant was Black. However, they were biased in favor of the White defendant when the inadmissible evidence was presented. That is, low authoritarians were less certain of the White defendant's guilt when the inadmissible evidence was presented than when it was omitted. Thus, low authoritarian participants demonstrated a pro-ingroup bias. It is important to note that the anti-outgroup bias of high authoritarians and the pro-ingroup bias of low authoritarians both disadvantage Blacks relative to Whites – but in different ways.

As we noted earlier, within the United States the legal system allows for capital sentencing, the death penalty, in a number of states. As we propose in this chapter, the dynamics of aversive racism can lead to actions of direct physical harm when the normative context supports it, as with a government sanctioned death penalty. We explore why neighbors kill in the context of the legal system in the United States in the next section.

Capital sentencing. Using the aversive racism framework, we have investigated evidence of direct and indirect patterns of racial dis-crimination among Whites scoring high and low in self-reported prejudice in recommending the death penalty for Black and White defendants (Dovidio, Smith, Donnella, & Gaertner, 1997). High and low prejudice-scoring White college students read a summary of facts associated with a case in which the offender was found guilty of murdering a White police officer following a robbery. The race of the defendant, Black or White, was systematically varied. After reading the case and before making a decision, participants viewed five other jurors on videotape individually presenting their decisions to vote for the death penalty in the case. In half of the conditions, all of these jurors were White; in the other half of the conditions, the second juror presenting a decision was a Black male student. The main measure of interest was how strongly the participant subsequently recommended the death penalty.

It was hypothesized on the basis of the archival research on racial disparities in death sentencing and on social psychological research on racial biases that, given the established guilt of the defendant and the legal support for applying the death penalty, Black defendants would be discriminated against relative to White defendants. However, the aversive racism framework further suggests that this discrimination would be displayed most broadly when one of the jurors recommending the death penalty was Black, which would allow White participants to avoid attributions of racial bias when recommending the death penalty for a Black offender.

High prejudice-scoring Whites showed a straightforward pat-tern of bias against the guilty Black defendants: Regardless of the other jurors, they gave generally stronger recommendations for the death penalty for Black defendants than for White defendants. Low prejudice-scoring white participants, in contrast, demonstrated a more complicated pattern of responses. Their strongest recommendations for the death penalty occurred when the defendant was Black and a Black juror advocated the death penalty. Under these conditions in which their response could not necessarily be interpreted as racial

bias, lower prejudice-scoring Whites were as discriminating as higher prejudice-scoring Whites. However, when all of the jurors were White and they opposed the death penalty, low prejudice-scoring Whites were sensitive to this immediate norm and exhibited the strongest recommendations *against* the death penalty when the defendant was Black. Again, higher and lower prejudice Whites showed different patterns of discrimination, but when there was sufficient rationale both showed discrimination against Blacks – discrimination that had lethal consequences for Black defendants.

Subtle bias: A summary

Taken together, the work we have described thus far in the present chapter reveals that contemporary racial bias is a pervasive influence in U.S. society, influencing the perceptions and actions of Whites who, in an absolute sense, do not see themselves as racially biased. The vast majority of the participants in our samples, 90%, report that they are not racially prejudiced, and when their responses are compared to national representative samples, they appear to be nonprejudiced. At a conscious and overt level, they *are* well intentioned. Nevertheless, they express racial bias in subtle but systematic ways.

Moreover, although we have found aversive racism to be a pervasive form of bias among people who report that they are not prejudiced in an absolute sense, as we have illustrated in our research there is some evidence that Whites who score relatively higher in traditional prejudice (but are still relatively nonprejudiced by national standards) may embrace nonracial justifications more readily and therefore show patterns of discrimination more strongly and overtly. These seeds of racism may be a critical factor that can facilitate the transformation of subtle bias into overtly harmful action. We examine more directly the mechanisms involved in the next section of the chapter.

From Discomfort to Hate

Whereas the first part of this chapter was devoted to describing the nature of contemporary racism and identifying when and how this prejudice is manifested in discrimination, this part of the chapter explores the processes that may produce these effects. We pursue the question of why neighbors kill by considering the function of prejudice and the ways in which it shapes Whites' affective and cognitive reactions toward Blacks in the United States.

Functions of prejudice

Racial biases are a fundamental form of social control that support the economic, political, and personal goals of the majority group (Liska, 1997). Because of their functionality, racial biases are deeply embedded in cultural values, such as in widely accepted ideologies that justify inequality and exploitation, as well as institutional policies and practices (Jones, 1997). They are not typically expressed in terms of extreme negative emotions or overt negative behaviors, rather, more ostensibly positive forms of behavior, such as paternalism (Jackman, 1994), often operate instead to promote disparities and inequities.

Like its traditional form, however, contemporary prejudice lays a foundation for more overt forms of discrimination, often involving direct harm. The transformation of prejudice – which represents a readiness for antisocial action – to negative behavior can be triggered by perceptions of material threat (threat to one's resources) or symbolic threat (threat to cherished values; see chapter 10, this volume). Such threats provide justification for the expression of prejudice in the form of discriminatory actions. Under threat, latent bias can become active bias.

Although the effect of economic threat has traditionally received the primary empirical attention as a cause of hate and violence against Blacks (Hovland & Sears, 1940), other forms of threat, such as symbolic threats to a group's sense of identity or to a group's cultural values and ideals (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), can arouse intense affective reactions and facilitate open discrimination. Glaser, Dixit, and Green (2002) theorize that "hate crimes against African Americans typically result not so much from economic concerns or frustrations, or competition for material resources, but more often from the perceived threat to the integrity, separateness, and hegemony of the ingroup" (p. 180). They found that White racists were more threatened by, and advocated violence more strongly in response to, interracial marriage and Blacks moving into the neighborhood than job competition. Thus, the roots of the many violent actions against Blacks may reside in collective identity and the forces of ingroup favoritism – the fundamental elements of aversive racism (Gaertner et al., 1997).

Prejudice and emotion

One mechanism that is critical to this transformation from latent prejudice to bias is the nature of the emotions that people experience in

the situation. The experience and intensity of the negative affect related to intergroup relations can vary as a function of the specific group and moderating situational conditions. Intergroup emotional reactions typically range from mild discomfort, disgust, and fear, to anger, and, at the extreme, open hatred, with the specific emotions involved corresponding to different patterns of behavioral responses to the other group (Devos, Silver, Mackie, & Smith, 2002).

Within the United States, anxiety is the emotion that typically characterizes interracial interaction. Besides the anxiety aroused within Whites when interacting with a person from a group with which they may have had limited contact (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), fears of acting in a way that reveals one's racial biases can heighten the anxiety and discomfort that aversive racists experience in interracial interaction.

Whites' interracial anxiety can be an element of intergroup relations that, under certain conditions, can contribute to more violent reactions to members of other groups. As Stephan and Stephan (1985) propose, because arousal created by one source (e.g., interracial anxiety) can be transferred and attributed to another source (e.g., perceived threat), interracial anxiety can amplify Whites' affective reactions and consequently produce more extreme behavioral responses to Blacks than to Whites. Thus, the more diffuse emotions of interracial anxiety and discomfort that are experienced by aversive racists, and typically lead to avoidance, can represent seeds for hate: They can readily be transformed into more intense negative emotions that motivate violent and aggressive actions toward Blacks.

Although intergroup anxiety may represent one important element of contemporary prejudice contributing to intergroup harm, Sternberg (2003) identifies other elements that can contribute to extreme intergroup reactions. In particular, he extends conceptions of hate in a way that applies to both individuals and groups. Sternberg writes, "Typically, hate is thought of as a single emotion. But there is reason to believe that it has multiple components that can manifest themselves in different ways on different occasions" (p. 306). One of these components is the "negation of intimacy," which involves aversive reactions to members of others or other groups (e.g., anxiety, disgust). This component is closely related to the anxiety and avoidant reactions that have been considered within the aversive racism framework.

Sternberg's (2003) second element that is pivotal in producing extreme negative reactions is "passion." This component also relates to the conditions that have been identified to facilitate the expression of racial discrimination. Sternberg defines passion as intense anger or

fear during periods of threat. The third element in Sternberg's model involves devaluation of the other person or group. To the extent that racism, both traditional and contemporary, involves Whites' more favorable valuation of their own group relative to Blacks, Sternberg's model further links aversive racism to the potential for the elicitation of direct harmful acts. In the next section, guided by Sternberg's model, we examine more directly the processes that underlie these biases.

From bias to hate

In this section, we briefly describe the results of recent studies in which we examined the contribution of each of the three elements that Sternberg (2003) identified in his model of hate: (a) negation, (b) passion, and (c) devaluation. Following from our work on aversive racism, two of these studies involve a legal context in which White participants were asked to recommend sentencing for a defendant who was found guilty of a violent crime. In both of these studies, we investigated the role of the three components of Sternberg's model to harsher treatment of Black defendants. A third study explored participants' endorsement of armed intervention to combat terrorism against the United States.

In an initial study applying Sternberg's model to expressions of racial bias, Dovidio (2004) examined the extent to which people would support the death penalty for a Black defendant who had shot and killed a White police officer attempting to apprehend him for a robbery. The central question examined in this study concerned how each of the components of hate identified by Sternberg relates to the strength of Whites' recommendations for the death penalty. Devaluation involved perceptions of how inherently immoral and bad the defendant was; negation of intimacy was assessed by how much anxiety and discomfort was experienced when thinking about the defendant; and passion was measured by feelings of fear and anger evoked by the defendant.

Supportive of Sternberg's model, all three components individually and collectively predicted support for the death penalty for the Black defendant. Stronger recommendations for a death sentence for the Black defendant were associated with reactions reflecting greater negation (i.e., stronger feelings of anxiety and discomfort; $r = .27$), greater passion (i.e., feelings of anger and outrage; $r = .36$), and greater devaluation (i.e., attributions that the defendant was immoral and evil; $r = .32$). When considered simultaneously, the overall combination significantly predicted support for the death penalty (multiple $r = .44$),

and this effect was essentially additive, with each contributing some, but not a significant amount, of unique variance. That is, as proposed by Sternberg, the combination of these three factors was a better predictor of responses than when the unique contribution of each was considered separately.

In another study investigating support for military intervention against another nation to combat terrorism, similar results were obtained (Dovidio, 2004). Participants read a newspaper article about the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and their reactions were assessed. In this different context, negation of intimacy ($r = .25$), passion ($r = .35$), and devaluation ($r = .43$) individually and in combination predicted support for massive military intervention by U.S. armed forces.

We have proposed in this chapter that prejudice provides the foundation for destructive actions to emerge. That is, Whites generally experience anxiety and discomfort (feelings of negation) with Blacks and tend to value Blacks less than Whites (devaluation; Gaertner et al., 1997). When the actions of a Black person are perceived to justify it, they will respond more negatively toward Blacks, often with amplified negative emotions (Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986), reflecting more intense passion. Thus, drawing on Sternberg's (2003) model, we hypothesized that even within a generally non-overtly-prejudiced population of White college students, those higher in prejudice would tend to sentence a Black defendant who committed a violent crime against a White person more harshly than a White defendant who committed the same crime, and that this effect would occur, in large part, through the elements of intergroup hate identified by Sternberg.

In a study testing these predictions (Pearson, Dovidio, & Smith-McLallen, 2005), White college students were asked to read a newspaper article in which a White or Black assailant was described as having brutally attacked a White man with seemingly little provocation. Participants were asked to provide their reactions to the incident, which included feelings toward the assailant related to negation of intimacy (e.g., anxiety, discomfort), passion (e.g., anger, fear), and responses related to devaluation (e.g., attributions of evil and inhumanity). In this study, self-reported expression of hate was also measured. Finally, outcome measures related to recommendations of severity of punishment – length of recommended sentencing and support for the death penalty, had the victim died – were also examined.

The pattern of results was generally supportive of the predictions. First, higher prejudice-scoring White participants recommended

harsher punishment for Black than for White assailants. Second, higher prejudice-scoring White participants showed greater levels of dehumanization and passion in response to the Black assailant's crime than to the White assailant's crime. Both high and low prejudice-scoring participants showed comparably higher levels of negation with the Black than with the White assailant. Third, consistent with Sternberg's (2003) model, greater expression of hate was predicted by greater dehumanization ($r = .49$), negation of intimacy ($r = .49$), and passion ($r = .39$). The multiple correlation, .60, was substantially higher than the unique contribution of any single component (betas = .12 to .33). Finally, hate significantly predicted harsher sentences ($r = .32$) and mediated, at least in part, the effect of prejudice on sentencing. When the level of hate was statistically controlled, the effect of prejudice on racial discrimination in sentencing was substantially reduced and no longer significant.

Although the expression of bias is generally subtle, these studies reveal how contemporary forms of bias, which generally involve feelings of discomfort rather than antipathy (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), can be transformed by specific incidents and normative conditions into actions designed to cause harm. Fueled by feelings of passion and supported by devaluation of members of the group, latent prejudice becomes active discrimination. While contemporary bias in many situations involves more favorable treatment of Whites than Blacks, with provocation and justification it can also lead to greater harm.

Implications and Conclusion

In this chapter, we have used racial prejudice of Whites against Blacks in the United States as a case study illustrating how psychological processes critically contribute to and shape the dynamics of intergroup relations. We have explored the nature of contemporary racism in the United States and its implications for a range of race-related responses. We have argued that although blatant bigotry motivated by racial hatred is now relatively rare, contemporary forms of racism, such as aversive racism, still have a significant negative impact on Blacks.

Although the expression of bias from aversive racism is typically subtle, its effects can be as pernicious as the impact of traditional, overt racism. Moreover, aversive racism contains the seeds of more blatant racism, rooted in the three main components of Sternberg's (2003) duplex model of hate: the negation of intimacy, intense anger or fear during periods of threat, and devaluation of the other group

through contempt. In particular, aversive racism represents latent racism that can be transformed into open hatred, discrimination, and violence by threat, provocation, negative stereotypes, cultural ideologies that justify disadvantage, or local norms supporting discrimination that supersede normally prevailing norms against bias and violence. Thus, the capacity for racial hatred and aggression resides "just below the surface" among well-intentioned and well-educated White Americans.

We have proposed a variety of techniques for limiting the effects of aversive racism and combating aversive racism at its roots (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Because aversive racists' conscious beliefs are already genuinely nonprejudiced, these strategies have focused on increasing people's sensitivity to their emotional experiences with Blacks (Esses & Dovidio, 2000) and making them aware of their generally unconscious feelings and beliefs (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2000). Changing how Whites think about Blacks by emphasizing common group memberships (e.g., institutional or national identity) can also effectively combat contemporary bias at the individual level (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), and can be supported by appropriately structured intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

At the societal level, the adverse impact of aversive racism on Blacks may be limited and controlled by policies and laws. Current laws in the United States, however, are not designed to address subtle forms of discrimination. As Krieger (1995, 1998) has observed, for successful prosecution, current antidiscrimination laws require that racial bias be identified as *the* cause for disparate treatment, that intention to discriminate be demonstrated, and that the action directly harmed the complainant. Research on aversive racism has shown that disparate treatment is most likely to occur in combination with other factors that provide nonracial rationales for negative treatment, that racial bias is typically unconscious and often unintentional, and that disparate treatment, because of ingroup biases, often represents ingroup favoritism (pro-White responses) rather than outright rejection of outgroup members (anti-Black responses).

In conclusion, we contend that a better understanding of the psychology of racial prejudice can help illuminate why neighbors kill, and how macro-level social and political events relate to micro-level processes. A comprehensive understanding of both societal-level and psychological factors can also guide interventions that effectively address the potential for hate, hostility, and group-based violence at the foundations of prejudice, which often lies just below the surface.

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