



Group-based Differences in Perceptions of Racism: What Counts, to Whom, and Why?

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Abstract

Belonging to a group fundamentally shapes the way we interpret and attribute the behavior of others. Similarly, perceptions of racism can be influenced by group membership. Experimental and survey research reveal disagreement between Whites and Blacks about the prevalence of racism in America. Several social cognitive factors contribute to this disagreement: discrepancies in Whites' and Blacks' lay intuitions about the attitudes and behaviors that count as racism, comparison standards when determining racial progress, and the salience of and meaning drawn from successful Black individuals in society. These perceptual discrepancies have consequences for policy attitudes, decisions about how best to combat racial inequality, and beliefs about whether inequality persists. Successful interventions that increase Whites' knowledge of structural racism and that attenuate self-image threat suggest that it is possible to converge Blacks' and Whites' perceptions of racism by expanding Whites' definition of racism.

Consider the following situation: a White person boards a bus where a Black person is sitting next to the only remaining empty seat. Instead of sitting, the White person opts to stand. The reason for this behavior is ambiguous. Perhaps the White person was having a bad day and did not feel like sitting near anyone; perhaps they were only riding for a few stops and preferred to stand, or perhaps they were uncomfortable sitting next to a Black person. When, and for whom, does this person's behavior count as evidence of racism?

Experimental and survey research reveal disagreements between White and Black individuals about the prevalence of racism in America. For example, 53% of Blacks report that discrimination against minority groups is a critical issue in America today, yet only 17% of Whites agree (Public Religion Research Institute, 2012). Social psychological research corroborates these findings. In one study, White and Black participants were asked to report how much Whites and Blacks were discriminated against in the 1950s, 1960s, and so on, spanning every decade through the 2000s (Norton & Sommers, 2011). Though both Black and White participants identified a decrease in the amount of anti-Black bias over time, Blacks reported that anti-Black bias was still relatively prevalent today and Whites reported that it was at historically low, and negligible, levels. In contrast, Whites reported that anti-White bias had increased over time, so much so that by the 2000s, the prevalence of anti-White bias was greater than the prevalence of anti-Black bias in American society. Compare this to the ratings of Black participants, who reported that the prevalence of anti-White bias has remained fairly small and stable over time.

These group-based differences in perception can cause misunderstanding and rifts among groups, particularly when it comes to interpretations of volatile issues of the day. For example, recent protests in Ferguson, MO after Darren Wilson, a White police officer, shot unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, have illuminated discrepancies between Black and White Americans' perceptions (Eligon, 2014). Supporting the idea that Blacks are more likely than

Whites to believe the shooting was motivated by racism, Black survey respondents were more than twice as likely as White respondents to agree that “this case raises important issues about race” (Pew Research Center, 2014b). Importantly, these beliefs relate to institutional trust in law enforcement as well as attitudes about the appropriate course of action to prevent similar events in the future. For example, only 18% of Black respondents reported a “great deal/fair amount” of confidence in shooting investigations. This stands in stark contrast to the 52% of White respondents who did. In sum, discrepancies in perceptions of racism can emerge for both more consequential and less consequential (like the bus example) behaviors – causing tension between groups, limiting contact, and foreclosing intergroup dialogue. Therefore, it is important to understand what factors shape these group-based differences in how Whites and Blacks perceive racism.

Group-based Motivated Perceptions of Racism

Belonging to a group fundamentally shapes the way we interpret and attribute the behavior of others (Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985), and we argue that perceptions of racism are similarly influenced by group membership. Social categorization theory suggests that people tend to identify others as members of one’s ingroup (i.e., “like me”) or outgroup (i.e., “not like me”; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This categorization influences our behavior, as we are often motivated to support and protect fellow ingroup members (Brewer, 1999; DiTomaso, 2013; Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic, Matoka, Johnson, & Frazier, 1997; Smith & Henry, 1996).

Social categorization theory provides insight into why Whites and Blacks may have different perceptions of racism: their different group-based motivations cause them to attend to different information. Blacks are motivated to detect early warning signs that they or another ingroup member will become a target of racism, adopting lower thresholds for cues that suggest racism (Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005). However, Whites are motivated to avoid confirming the stereotype that Whites are racist (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). To satisfy this goal, Whites may use higher thresholds when detecting racism, applying the “racist” label only to ingroup members who behave in blatantly racist ways. As we will see, Whites’ and Blacks’ perceptions of racism diverge in part because they have different definitions of which attitudes and behaviors signal racism.

Subtle and Blatant Racism

Racism is defined as “a system in which individuals or institutions intentionally or unintentionally exercise power against a racial group defined as inferior” (Jones, 1972). Over the last 20 years, social psychologists have distinguished between the subtle and blatant ways that racism manifests in society (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997). Blatant racism is characterized by beliefs in the inherent inferiority of Blacks, along with laws and social norms that support these attitudes (Dovidio, 2001; Duckitt, 1992), while subtle racism is characterized by the pairing of positive explicitly-stated beliefs and norms that support egalitarianism with lingering negative feelings toward Blacks that are rooted in American history and societal stereotypes (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Because of pervasive norms against the explicit expression of racial prejudice (Crandall, Eshleman, & O’Brien, 2002), the prevalence of blatant racism has decreased, while the prevalence of subtle bias has increased (Dovidio, 2001).

Importantly, these two types of racism result in different behaviors. Whereas blatant racism is expressed by explicitly negative attitudes and behaviors (like using racial slurs), subtle racism is

more ambiguous. People who express subtle racism often make explicitly positive statements about racial minorities, but they also exhibit relatively negative nonverbal behaviors that communicate awkwardness and discomfort (like increased physical distance; Dovidio, 2001; McConnell & Leibold, 2001; Richeson & Shelton, 2003). Thus, although blatant racism is easily identified by its overt nature, cues to subtle racism are more difficult to interpret (Crocker & Major, 1989). This ambiguity is likely to have implications for perception, including whether subtle cues are even perceived and labeled as racism by observers.

Extant research has explored how Whites and Blacks detect these forms of racism (Dovidio et al., 1997; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Whereas Blacks are vigilant for the ambiguous cues that have come to characterize subtle racism (Amodio & Devine, 2006; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; McConnell & Leibold, 2001), Whites are less vigilant for these subtler behaviors (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). Instead, Whites tend to focus only on blatant cues to racism (Dovidio et al., 1997). One reason for this may be that Whites have higher thresholds for attributing cues to racism because they have less practice than Blacks do at recognizing racism (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). However, another reason that Whites and Blacks detect racism differently could be that their basic definitions of racism differ.

Why Are There Group-based Differences in Perceptions of Racism?

Lay theories of racism

The differences in how Whites and Blacks perceive the prevalence of racism suggest that these groups may have different construals of the same behaviors. That is, when presented with the same behavioral cues, Whites and Blacks may disagree about whether those behaviors “count” as racist. To explore this question, researchers investigated which traits and behaviors were judged to constitute evidence of racism (Sommers & Norton, 2006). In this work, White and racial minority participants were asked to consider a list of traits and behaviors that could describe a “White racist”. Some traits were more consistent with the explicitly negative nature of blatant racism (e.g., White racists are violent, hateful), and others were consistent with the subtler nature of contemporary racism (e.g., White racists are unfriendly and untrustworthy). Also, the behaviors included overtly racist actions (e.g., discouraging children from playing with Blacks), as well as more ambiguous behaviors (e.g., feeling uncomfortable or anxious around Blacks). The results of these studies revealed that Whites’ and minorities’ beliefs about what racism looks like are quite different. Although White and minority participants agreed that blatant traits and behaviors constituted racism, minority participants were much more likely than Whites to consider ambiguous traits and behaviors – characteristic of subtle racism – as indicative of racism.

One reason for this discrepancy may be that participants were differentially motivated to perceive racism because of their racial group membership and the degree to which their own group was implicated by the task. Because people strive to protect and defend their ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), considering the category of “White racist” may threaten White individuals’ egalitarian selves, implicating their group as the perpetrators of racism against racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, Whites may be motivated to adopt a higher threshold for behavior (i.e., only blatant cues), as a way to afford their ingroup the benefit of the doubt in ambiguous situations. However, considering the category of “White racist” would not pose the same threat to racial and ethnic minorities whose group would ostensibly be the targets of racism in this scenario. Instead, their past experiences as targets may cause minorities to be more vigilant for indicators of discrimination against minorities

compared to majority group members (Crocker & Major, 1989; Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006; Pinel, 1999). Thus, racial and ethnic minorities may be motivated to protect and defend their group by using a lower threshold when determining what counts as racism (i.e., blatant *and* subtle cues).

Importantly, these group-based discrepancies in perceptions of racism can lead to divergent attitudes about the prevalence of racism in America as well as different attributions for specific behaviors, such as the Ferguson shooting (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2014a; Public Religion Research Institute, 2012). Recall the opening scenario about the two individuals on a bus. Consistent with their lay theories of racism, although a White observer may think the choice to bypass the empty seat is unproblematic, a Black observer may attribute the White person's choice to racism. Furthermore, an interracial conversation about this situation would likely be rife with tension and misunderstanding due to these discrepant perspectives as White and Black individuals are likely to draw on different evidence to determine whether people are racist.

Contextual influences on what counts as racism

Different comparison standards. Contextual influences can also shape people's perceptions of racism. Just as Whites and Blacks marshal difference evidence to determine what counts as prejudice, they may also compare the current state of race relations to different standards (Eibach & Purdie-Vaughns, 2011).

In a series of studies, White and racial minority participants were asked to describe how much progress had been made toward racial equality in the United States since the 1960s (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006). Correlational evidence revealed that participants whose comparisons focused on the past were also likely to judge that there had been more progress toward racial equality (Study 1). Subsequent studies primed participants with different comparison standards by asking them to write an essay about (a) conditions for minorities before the Civil Rights Movement (i.e., asking them to make explicit comparison to the *past*) or (b) a society that would fulfill the goals of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech (i.e., comparison to an ideal *future*). Control condition participants wrote no essay. Then, all participants answered questions about America's progress toward racial equality. White participants primed with the *past* comparison standard made similar judgments regarding racial progress as White participants in the control condition, suggesting that Whites typically think about racial progress with comparisons to the past – considering how much worse things have been historically. Thus, they conclude that race relations have satisfactorily improved. However, minority participants in the control condition more closely resembled minorities who wrote about an ideal *future* state of race relations, suggesting that minorities typically think about how much better things could be when determining their beliefs about racial progress; thus, these individuals report room for improvement.

Indeed, when comparing the progress of today (e.g., America electing a Black president) with the past (e.g., Jim Crow laws), it is undeniable that race relations in America have improved. However, when comparing race relations today (e.g., a Black president who is often subjected to racist caricatures; Burkeman, 2009; Muhammad, 2012) to a more ideal standard of true racial equality and respect, beliefs about racial progress are tempered. Although Whites tend to think of the past and consider how much worse things could be, Blacks tend to think of an ideal future and consider how much better things could be. This research shows that discrepancy between Whites' and Blacks' perceptions can be due, in part, to these comparison standards.

Salient exemplars. The judgments that Whites and Blacks make when determining progress toward racial equality may also be linked to the salience of certain information at the time of judgment. The availability heuristic notes that people make judgments based upon the ease with which relevant examples come to mind (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Thus, the salience of successful Black individuals (i.e., exemplars) may shape people's attitudes toward Blacks (e.g., Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001). Consistent with this theorizing, studies have explored changes in Whites' beliefs about the prevalence of racism and attitudes toward Blacks before and after President Obama was elected (e.g., Columb & Plant, 2011; Lybarger & Monteith, 2011). These studies typically suggest that Whites' attitudes toward Blacks improved after the election (Plant et al., 2009, but see Schmidt & Nosek, 2010). However, the election also appears to have had an interesting effect on Whites' perceptions about the prevalence of racism – decreasing their reports about the prevalence of racism against Blacks (Valentino & Brader, 2011). Perhaps because individuals could more quickly call to mind an example of a successful Black individual following the election (President Obama), their perceptions about the pervasiveness of racism were tempered (Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009).

In a series of studies to experimentally test this hypothesis, researchers recruited racial majority participants to complete a “Celebrity Recognition Task” in which they were asked to correctly match pictures with celebrity names (Critcher & Risen, 2014). Some celebrities were Black exemplars like Oprah; others were White exemplars like Barbara Walters. Thus, participants were either primed with examples of successful, well-liked Black or White targets. Results revealed that participants were significantly more likely to deny that race was an inhibitory factor to success in modern society after they were exposed to Black (versus White) exemplars (Studies 1–3). That is, when successful Blacks were made more cognitively available, participants were less likely to believe that racism was a legitimate reason for minority disadvantage, in part because the exemplars signaled what was *possible* for members of that group. Indeed, there are many successful Black exemplars in society today, and these individuals often mentioned when Whites describe evidence of racial progress (DiTomaso, 2013).

Diversity policies. Another contextual factor that influences how Whites perceive racism is the presence of explicit language supporting diversity. Research by Cheryl Kaiser and colleagues tested whether the presence of a diversity statement influenced how high-status groups perceived organizations (Kaiser, Major, Jurcevic, Dover, Brady, & Shapiro, 2013). In one study, White participants received materials about an ostensible investment company and information about the racial demographics of recently promoted employees. Included in the company materials was either a generic mission statement or a statement in which the company emphasized the importance and value of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the recent promotions were either racially balanced (25% of White and 25% of minority employees received promotions) or racially unbalanced (28% of White employees and 10% of minorities received promotions). Thus, whereas some participants read about a company that endorsed diversity in word (i.e., diversity statement) *and* in deed (i.e., promotions), others read about a company that endorsed diversity in name only.

The results revealed an ironic consequence of diversity statement: when participants learned about the presence (versus absence) of a diversity statement, they were more likely to perceive the organization as fair for low-status individuals – even when it engaged in racially unequal promotion practices. The presence of a diversity statement seemed to have an inoculation effect for perceptions of racism, as participants gave the company the benefit of the doubt, despite the fact that it engaged in racist practices.

Consequences of different perceptions of racism

Taken together, this research suggests that detecting racism is largely in the eye of the beholder and is influenced by several factors. Furthermore, these perceptions often fall along group lines, such that Whites' and Blacks' perceptions of racism may often differ. These intergroup differences in bias detection can have important downstream consequences. Indeed, perceptions of racism can influence attitudes about policies aimed at reducing racial inequality (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010), as well as behaviors like choosing to confront racist acts (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). Converging Whites' and Blacks' perceptions of racism is particularly important given research indicating the role that high-status individuals can play in confronting racism on behalf of low-status groups. In one study, White participants watched a video of either a White or Black individual confronting a White person who made a racially insensitive comment (Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Compared to the Black confronter, participants perceived White confronters more favorably, suggesting that majority group members who confront racism may be derogated less and have more influence. Thus, it is important to converge Whites' and Blacks' perceptions of racism so that Whites may recognize, and confront, racism.

Group-based discrepancies in perceptions of racism may also affect legal outcomes. In a set of studies on judicial policy, Quintanilla (2011) compared Black and White judges' decisions when considering whether to allow race-based claims of workplace discrimination brought by Black plaintiffs to move forward. Under a new judging standard that encouraged judges to use their "common sense" to determine whether discrimination was a "plausible cause" for the plaintiff's alleged treatment, White judges were significantly more likely to dismiss discrimination claims than Black judges and particularly so when the claims concerned ambiguous discrimination contexts (Quintanilla, 2011). Drawing on what we know about Whites' and Blacks' lay theories of racism (Sommers & Norton, 2006), it may be that the difference in dismissal rates is due to the way White and Black judges conceive of prejudice. Namely, White judges may consider only blatantly or overtly prejudiced behaviors as discriminatory and thus may consider only cases that involve these kinds of scenarios as plausible acts of discrimination; whereas Black judges may consider blatant *and* subtle behaviors as discriminatory and thus may include these kinds of scenarios as meeting the criteria for discrimination. If this were the case, White judges would be less likely to perceive ambiguous discrimination claims as plausibly discriminatory (and thus dismiss them more often) than Black judges – the pattern found in Quintanilla (2011). This research illustrates that the implications of divergent perceptions of racism may be quite important – a matter of getting one's "day in court" or not. These discrepancies affect day-to-day interactions between lay people who might disagree about the presence of racism, but they also may affect one's access to legal recourse in cases of potential discrimination.

How can we converge group-based perceptions of racism?

We argue that it is important to understand where these Black–White discrepancies in perceptions of racism originate and to find ways to converge these perspectives. Thus far, the research reviewed demonstrates that Whites and Blacks tend to detect racism differently – although Blacks have a lower threshold that includes many forms of racism, Whites have a higher threshold. This suggests that there are two ways to align how members of these groups detect racism: either by expanding Whites' perceptions of racism or by narrowing Blacks' perceptions of racism. Although Blacks who claim discrimination is often derogated as oversensitive complainers (Kaiser & Miller, 2001), one study found that Blacks were more accurate than Whites in their perceptions of racism due to their deeper historical knowledge regarding racism in America (Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2012).

In that study, Black and White participants completed a 16-item “Black history” quiz about past racism in America. Although 11 statements were true, five were false. Black participants were more likely than White participants to correctly and confidently identify the true items, suggesting better knowledge about historically documented racism (Nelson et al., 2012). Furthermore, historical knowledge predicted participants’ perceptions of racism, such that those with more knowledge were more likely to view racism as both an individual and structural problem. Thus, this paper suggests that one reason that Whites and Blacks detect racism differently is because Whites are less knowledgeable about racism throughout history and are less likely to consider structural manifestations of racism. Taken together, this research suggests a potential avenue for intervention: increasing Whites’ historical knowledge – emphasizing the role of structural racism – may align their perceptions of racism with those of Blacks.

Individual Versus Structural Racism

Historically, racism was likened to a “disease” found in morally corrupt individuals (Allport, 1954; Duckitt, 1992). Thus, much research has focused on identifying racist individuals through their responses to implicit or explicit prejudice measures and taking steps to help them reduce their prejudiced attitudes and behavior (Monteith, 1993; Olson & Fazio, 2004; Paluck & Green, 2009; Todd, Bodenhausen, Richeson, & Galinsky, 2011). However, by identifying “who” is prejudiced, we engender defensiveness and block productive conversation (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). Furthermore, the traditional conception of racism as the behavior of White perpetrators acting against Black targets promotes group-based motivated perception as Whites and Blacks are motivated to avoid the “racist” label and to identify instances of racism, respectively. Whites may be motivated to *not* see racism (because their ingroup is the perpetrator) in the same situations where Blacks *are* motivated to see racism (because their ingroup is the target). Conceptualizing racism as a deficiency within people may provoke reliance on lay theories of racism or motivated comparison standards – factors where we know there are group-based differences. However, a broader conceptualization of racism may illuminate the overarching structural factors that create and sustain inequality between groups while reducing defensiveness. Shifting the lens outward to structural barriers that impede equality may create common ground between Whites’ and minorities’ perceptions of racism, which may, in turn, allow for further conversations.

What is structural racism?

In contrast to the individual notion of racism, structural racism encourages perceivers to consider widespread factors, such as those within an environment or societal context, that perpetuate racial inequality (Murphy & Walton, 2013). For example, studies of policies such as stop and frisk (New York Civil Liberties Union, 2014) or incarceration policies for drug-related offenses (Lowney, 1994) reveal that these policies disproportionately affect racial/ethnic minorities compared to Whites. These policies that have a disparate *impact* are more consistent with a structural notion of racism, yet conversations about racism tend to focus on disparate *treatment* (i.e., the ways that Whites and minorities are treated differently; individual racism). Research suggests that teaching about racism as a combination of disparate treatment *and* impact might help narrow the gap between how Whites and Blacks perceive racism.

Increasing Whites’ knowledge about structural racism

Two studies by Glenn Adams and colleagues (Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008) illustrate how teaching about the structural (versus individual) nature of racism can shift how people perceive racism. In the first study, White students completed an online tutorial about

stereotyping and prejudice. All participants received the same initial tutorial about racism, which defined key terms (i.e., stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination) and described similarities and differences between blatant and subtle racism. Then, participants were assigned to a *standard* or *sociocultural* tutorial condition. Students in the standard tutorial condition learned about the individual difference factors associated with prejudice (e.g., authoritarianism, religiosity, and conformity) as well as the automatic and controlled components of individual prejudice. That is, consistent with individual racism, this tutorial focused on ways to identify prejudiced people. Conversely, participants in the sociocultural tutorial condition learned about prejudice as a systemic phenomenon that affords privilege to some groups over others and were provided with examples of structural racism (e.g., stereotypes and prejudice as systemic associations). Thus, this tutorial emphasized prejudiced structures and policies more than prejudiced people.

After the tutorial, participants' perceptions of racism were assessed. The participants in the sociocultural racism tutorial were significantly more likely to perceive new examples of structural racism (e.g., "A Mexican-American man goes to a real estate company to look for a house. The agent takes him to look only at homes in low income neighborhoods") as indicative of racism compared to participants in the standard tutorial. There were no differences between groups on judgments of individual acts of racism (e.g., "Jack, a Black American man, walks past a group of young White American men, and hears them use a racial epithet") – both tutorial groups believed those acts "counted" as prejudice. These effects persisted one week after the tutorial. Thus, this first study demonstrated that, compared to teaching about the racism of individuals, teaching about structural racism shifted Whites' perceptions of racism toward a more inclusive definition that mirrors the way that Blacks often perceive prejudice. Furthermore, a second study showed that the sociocultural (versus standard) lecture was more likely to engender support for policies aimed to combat racial inequality on a structural level.

These studies demonstrate that teaching about structural factors that perpetuate racism may help converge Whites' and Blacks' perceptions of racism so that both groups attend to individual and structural racism. Carefully designed tutorials can be effective ways to change not only the ways people think about racism but also to align Whites' egalitarian goals with support for policies designed to reduce racial inequality without provoking group-based defensiveness.

Teaching explicitly about structural racism is not the only way to increase Whites' acknowledgement of its role in impeding racial equality. One reason Whites may be reluctant to acknowledge structural racism stems from self-image threat (Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007). Acknowledging structural racism can be uncomfortable for Whites because it requires acknowledging the (unearned) privileges associated with being an advantaged group member. Structural racism can inspire collective guilt at the privileges that advantaged group members receive (Blodorn & O'Brien, 2011; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). Thus, interventions aimed to increase Whites' acknowledgment of structural racism may do well to also alleviate the self-image threat that could accompany this process.

Two studies explored how affirming one's self-image increases Whites' acknowledgement of structural racism (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). In Study 1, White participants who were given the opportunity to describe the best parts of themselves (i.e., self-affirmation) were significantly more likely to endorse a structural notion of racism than non-affirmed participants. Furthermore, participants who had self-affirmed acknowledged that Whites received benefits and advantages in society (i.e., White privilege) more than non-affirmed participants. A second study manipulated self-image threat by giving White participants threatening or affirming feedback on an intelligence task. Again, participants who were affirmed endorsed a structural notion of racism more than participants in the threatening condition. In neither study were there differences in people's acknowledgment of individual racism—all White participants endorsed this notion of racism to the same extent. In sum, these results indicate that Whites may be reluctant

to think of racism as a structural problem because it is more threatening to their self-image than individual racism. However, tasks such as self-affirmation can reduce the threat associated with acknowledging structural racism, increasing Whites' motivation to endorse racism as a structural and individual problem (see also Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006).

Conclusion

The research reviewed describes several factors that contribute to group-based discrepancies in perceptions of racism. Future research should continue to illuminate the antecedents of group-based discrepancies in perceptions of racism and identify ways to broaden Whites' perceptions of racism so that they may better understand Blacks' perceptions and experiences. It is also important to consider when perceptions of racism in American society are similar or different among members of other minority groups (e.g., Latinos and Asians). For example, recent research revealed that status differences between Blacks and Asian Americans were partially responsible for whether members of those groups perceived an organization as racially diverse or not (Bauman, Trawalter, & Unzueta, 2014). Although some research on perceptions of racism has compared Whites' perceptions to those of members of multiple racial/ethnic groups, this paper emphasizes the importance of exploring the, potentially unique, perceptions of members of different racial minority groups.

Additionally, previous research demonstrates that the extent to which a person perceives racism is somewhat variable, even within racial groups. For example, minorities who endorse status-legitimizing beliefs, and thus justify the current status hierarchy, are less likely to perceive prejudice against members of their ingroup (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Major & Schmader, 2001). Furthermore, Whites who are low on social dominance orientation (SDO), and less likely to support group-based social hierarchies, perceive that minority discrimination claims are more legitimate than Whites high on SDO (Unzueta, Everly, & Gutiérrez 2014). This within-group variance suggests that researchers should continue to illuminate and understand key nuances that underlie Whites' and Blacks' perceptions of racism.

Research suggests that conversations about racism might benefit from a discussion of not just prejudiced individuals but also the structural factors that maintain racial inequality in America. In addition to acknowledging the pervasiveness of subtle racism, we need to incorporate structural racism into lay people's conceptions of racism. An emphasis on "racism without racists" and teaching about racism as a more structural phenomenon may help align Blacks' and Whites' perceptions of racism and support united efforts to mitigate inequality.

Short Biographies

Evelyn R. Carter's research interests lie in the stereotyping and prejudice domain, with a specific focus on contextual factors that influence the detection of racial bias. Her work aims to help align divergent perspectives about what counts as racial bias to encourage intergroup understanding and foster productive conversation about racial issues. Carter earned a BA in Psychology from Northwestern University and an MA in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Mary C. Murphy's research focuses on prejudice, stereotyping, and the situational cues in academic, organizational, and group settings that trigger social identity threat. Her work focuses on identifying and shifting situational cues to make environments and intergroup interactions more comfortable and safe for stigmatized social groups. She has published in various scholarly journals including *Psychological Science*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, and *Social and Personality*

Psychological Science. Murphy has been awarded grants and fellowships from the National Science Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. Prior to her current position as Assistant Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington, Murphy earned a BA in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and a PhD in Psychology from Stanford University. Murphy previously taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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