Aversive Racism: Foundations, Impact, and Future Directions 🔓

Audrey Murrell

Summary and Keywords

The concept of aversive racism has had a significant impact on theory, research, and practice devoted to better understanding bias, discrimination, and persistent disparities based on social identity group such as race, gender, social class, and so on. Originally developed to better explain subtle forms of bias toward racial and minoritized groups, this concept has been extended to understand the impact of disparities in a range of diverse settings, such as intergroup relations, health outcomes, fairness in employment setting, intergroup conflict, educational outcomes, racial bias in policing, experiences of stress and mental health issues, and persistent economic disparities. A core facet of the aversive framework paradigm is that because of human biases that are deeply rooted within a historical context and reinforced by ongoing societal ideologies, unintentional and subtle forms of discrimination emerge and persist. Given that these subtle forms of bias and discrimination exist within otherwise well-intentioned individuals, strategies to eliminate them require understanding the complexity of the aversive racism phenomenon in order to develop effective social interventions.

This article reviews the foundation, research, and impact of this important body of work. In addition, the concept of aversive racism is discussed in connection to emerging research on microaggressions and unconscious (implicit) bias in order to create a more integrated framework that can shape future research and applications. Lastly, practical implications for organizations and future directions are explored, such as using social identity as a theoretical lens, including global perspectives on intergroup bias and leveraging emerging work on intersectionality, as useful perspectives to extend the aversive racism framework. Setting a future agenda for research and practice related to aversive racism is key to greater understanding of how to reduce intergroup bias and discrimination through interventions that cut across traditional academic and discipline boundaries as one approach to create meaningful and long-lasting social impact.

Keywords: aversive racism, bias, discrimination, microaggressions, social identity

The concept of aversive racism was developed to better explain subtle forms of bias toward racial and minoritized groups in order to address intergroup relations and reduce persistent disparities (e.g., socioeconomic, health) experienced by these social groups

(Dovidio, Gaertner, & Pearson, 2017). Dovidio and Gaertner (1981) developed the notion of aversive racism based on their understanding that these biases are deeply rooted in U.S. history and reinforced by ongoing societal ideologies. These deeply rooted biases, though powerful, are often expressed without conscious intention or rational awareness by the socially dominant group. Although unconscious, the result of these subtle forms of discrimination have a profound impact on the health and well-being of disadvantaged groups while also serving to reinforce social hierarchy and ongoing disparities (Dovidio et al., 2017). This article reviews the foundation and impact of this body of work. In addition, the concept of aversive racism is discussed in connection to recent work on microaggressions and unconscious (implicit) bias. Lastly, practical implications for the workforce are discussed along with future directions such as social identity theory and the emerging work on intersectionality as useful lens to outline for the ongoing work based on the aversive racism.

Aversive Racism—Foundations and Impact

The origin of aversive racism began with attempts to explain the discrepancy between the endorsement of egalitarian values by white Americans and what was labeled as "subtle" acts of racial bias (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). This work was prompted by the need to draw attention to racial bias and discriminatory acts that were being committed by otherwise "good intentioned" racial majority group members. This initial question was both powerful and controversial, drawing attention to the difference between expressed egalitarian attitudes versus racially biased actions as well as identifying ways in which discrimination is not erased by formal legislation alone (e.g., 13th Amendment, Title IX, affirmative action). Not only is aversive racism defined as a subtle, indirect, and unconscious form of bias, but it is also conceptualized as the rationalization of discriminatory actions by majority individuals who see themselves as fair and egalitarian (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Dovidio et al., 2017). In fact, according to the aversive racism framework, individuals who commit discriminatory acts may sympathize with victims of past injustice; genuinely support principles of social equality; and regard themselves as unbiased, fair, and non-prejudiced individuals. Furthermore, because of this subtle bias, efforts to detect and eliminate aversive racism must be different from efforts to address more direct or overt forms of racial bias and discrimination (Pearson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2009).

Since the development of the aversive racism framework, there has been substantial research and applications over the past several decades (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Beach, 2001). For example, the aversive racism framework has been applied to decisions concerning qualifications of job applicants who are recommended for hiring (Jones, Peddie, Glirane, King, & Gray, 2016), applicant recommendations for college admission (Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002), the impact of inadmissible DNA evidence on judgments of guilt or severity of sentencing of black versus white defendants (Hodson, Hooper, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2005), employment decisions (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), and medical interactions between black patients and white physicians (Penner, Blair, Albrecht, & Do-

vidio, 2014; Penner et al., 2016). Within this research are robust findings showing that across time, context, population, and outcomes, the aversive racism framework is a powerful explanatory tool for understanding bias among people who may be well intentioned but nonetheless engage in discriminatory actions and decisions. Although unintentional, aversive racism has been consistently shown to produce disparate outcomes that can be as negative and debilitating for the target minority groups as intentional, overt forms of bias (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002).

The aversive racism framework also calls into question methods for addressing bias and discrimination especially when more subtle forms of bias are ignored. For example, Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Drout (1994) studied attitudes toward affirmative action as a function of targeted group, framing of the policy, and institutional context. Resistance to affirmative action was aroused more by policies specifying blacks as the targeted group and by policies presented without justification. Supportive of the aversive racism framework, the level of resistance to the policies presented without justification for blacks as the target group was higher than for all other targeted groups with or without justification. Similarly, Nail, Harton, and Decker (2003) found that liberals showed bias in favor of a twice-prosecuted African American relative to a European American defendant in their judgment of double jeopardy, whereas conservatives did the reverse. In a meta-analysis of 31 studies with more than 5,000 participants, U.S. African American targets received worse treatment than whites regardless of efforts toward equality (Aberson & Ettlin, 2004). Other efforts toward antibias education programs (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006; Yeager & Walton, 2011) often prove to be ineffective in producing intended outcomes as predicted by the aversive racism paradigm. As Dovidio and Gaertner state, "Like a virus that has mutated, racism has also evolved into different forms that are more difficult not only to recognize but also to combat" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000, p. 25).

Clearly, aversive racism has been demonstrated to be a rigorous construct across a variety of empirical and applied research. However, as work on bias and discrimination has evolved, several concepts have emerged that can be linked to and share similarities to the aversive racism construct. One must then ask the question as to whether these new constructs add new and different insight versus the existing aversive racism framework or if there is a need for integration across these different perspectives. Two that are most relevant to the current review are the concepts of microaggressions and implicit (unconscious) bias.

Aversive Racism and Microaggressions

The concept of microaggressions has received a great deal of attention in research and practice. Often defined as subtle behavioral forms of bias and discrimination such as slights, snubs, or insults directed toward disadvantaged groups, microaggressions share a significant deal of commonalities with the concept of aversive racism (Lilienfeld, 2017). For example, research defines racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional,

that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, p. 273). Sue and his colleagues (Sue, 2010; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008) discuss microaggressions aimed at a wide variety of marginalized groups while others focus on actions targeting specific demographics such as ethnicity (Clark, Spanierman, Isaac, & Poolokasingham, 2014; Nadal, 2011), gender (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014; Gartner & Sterzing, 2016), religion (Husain & Howard, 2017), or sexual orientation (Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011; Woodford, Howell, Kulick, & Silverschanz, 2013). Within this work, two different forms of microaggressions are frequently discussed that include microassaults and Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2007). Microinvalidations would refer to things that invalidate a person's unique identity. An example of this would be the use of heterosexist language, such as when a male pronoun is used when addressing a mixed gender group. Microinsults can take forms such as when someone acts surprised to find an African American doing well in math or engineering (Sue, 2010). Microinsults tend to convey rudeness and insensitivity such as a put-down or derogatory comment. While these represent two different types of behaviors, they each reflect acts of bias or discrimination that can be committed by otherwise well-intentioned, liberal individuals, and range from subtle to overt behaviors.

Microaggressions are not always visible and as such have been directly linked to subtle forms of discrimination consistent with the aversive racism paradigm (Nadal, Mazzula, Rivera, & Fujii-Doe, 2014). Sue (2010) argues that microaggressions can be much more detrimental to those with minority identities such as women, people of color, or those with nonconforming sexual orientations, than overt exclusion or discrimination expressing itself as explicit racism, sexism, or homophobic behavior. Since microaggressions are often seen as invisible and subtle, these actions often pass under the radar screen of active consciousness, even for those expressing the microaggression. From this perspective, the perpetrator of the aggression can be unaware of it, or other times the slight may not even be intended and committed by otherwise unbiased individuals. Regardless of the intent, both types of microaggressions can still be damaging because they operate beneath the surface and may express biased attitudes that would otherwise be consciously disavowed (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007). Based on this work, one can clearly see both conceptual and empirical overlap between aversive racism and microaggressions.

Ironically, a good deal of research on microaggressions discusses this concept and its consequences separate from the framework of aversive racism. One exception is Sue (2010) who observed, "Racial microaggressions are most similar to aversive racism in that they generally occur below the level of awareness of well-intentioned people" (p. 9). Others argue that research investigating aversive racism is also done at the macro-level of analysis versus research on microaggressions which typically focuses at the micro-level of analysis (Sue, 2010). For example, Murrell et al. (1994) applied aversive racism to resistance to affirmative actions as a matter of organizational and social policy. Rodenborg and Boisen (2013) connected the aversive racism framework and intergroup contact theory to make a case for lack of cultural competence and persistent racial segregation. Also, a meta-analysis of subtle (including microaggressions) and overt (i.e., blatant) forms of racial and gen-

der discrimination on psychological and physical health and workplace performance found these attitudinal and behavioral levels are similar in magnitude (Jones et al., 2016). Clearly examining both micro- and macro-levels are necessary to better understand the processes and impact of aversive racism and discrimination.

This suggests a more significant overlap in the concepts of aversive racism and microaggressions than some previous research would suggest. For example, Holmes (2010) called for redefining how scholars look at and study diversity by paying attention to the more complex forms of discrimination and exclusion suggesting an interplay between microaggressions and aversive racism. Others include microaggressions within the broad category of subtle or implicit biases that have behavioral manifestations. However, to complete the picture, recent research on the concept of unconscious (implicit) bias must be considered as it is also relevant to work on both microaggressions and aversive racism.

Aversive Racism and Unconscious (Implicit) Bias

Implicit biases are automatically activated responses that can occur without conscious awareness and are commonly measured using response-latency tasks such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). Implicit bias results from repeated exposure to positive and/or negative information about a demographic group that becomes resistant to change in response to new information. This impact of bias that operates below the individual's conscious awareness is consistent with notions of microaggressions. Although implicit biases may operate below the level of an individual's awareness, they nonetheless predict a wide range of discriminatory behaviors (Greenwald et al., 2009).

The irony is that explicit and implicit attitudes also shape the ways identity groups interact in different but consequential ways. For example, aversive racists profess egalitarian attitudes and thus inhibit blatant forms of discriminatory behaviors in order to avoid overt displays of bias in intergroup exchanges. However, because many aversive racists are unaware of their own implicit biases, these biases can still produce subtle behaviors (microaggressions) that they are less aware of, are unable to control, or that they do not recognize as discriminatory. These behaviors can include nonverbal signals (e.g., physical distancing) as well as verbal comments that may not be recognized as biased by well-intentioned individuals but may be experienced as demeaning by others (Sue, 2010).

For example, research on aversive racism and intergroup communication has found that both explicit and implicit racial biases predict different types of behaviors toward blacks. Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, and Howard (1997) found that whereas whites' explicit prejudice predicts more overt forms of bias shown in their self-reported evaluations of blacks, whites' implicit bias predicted negative nonverbal behaviors reflecting discomfort (rate of blinking) and dislike (gaze aversion). Similarly, McConnell and Leibold (2001) reported that white Americans' implicit racial bias, but not their explicit racial attitudes,

predicted how much whites talked and the frequency with which they made speech errors and speech hesitations in interactions with black Americans. These socially distant and potentially dismissive behaviors, which may be perceived by blacks as slights or invalidations in social exchanges, are similar to definitions and measures of microaggressions (Sue, 2010).

This means that aversive racism manifests as different effects of explicit versus implicit biases that shape divergent perspectives and experiences based on racial and other social group membership. For example, Dovidio et al. (2002) showed that self-reported (explicit) racial attitudes predicted relatively controllable verbal expressions in their interactions with different racial group members, but implicit attitudes predicted negative nonverbal behaviors within interracial interactions. These interactions were significantly impacted by the differential status of the groups engaged in the interaction. For example, black interaction partners weighed whites' nonverbal behavior more heavily than verbal behavior in their impressions of their partner and the interaction. For white interaction partners, the reverse occurred, with explicit attitudes being the more powerful predictor of experiences and perceptions. Clearly, whites and blacks have differing assessments of the same interaction and level of awareness of conflicting positive verbal versus negative nonverbal interracial group behaviors. These differential experiences based on race impact not only perceptions within the immediate interactions but also ongoing reports of trust between different racial group members. Thus, research on microaggressions and aversive racism may converge by examining how biases are expressed, but unconscious bias may produce differential experiences and perceptions within intergroup (e.g., interracial) social exchanges. In other words, the experience or interpretation of behaviors has differential impacts on the economic, physical, and mental well-being of individuals based on the historic and social context of intergroup status that is unconsciously linked to factors such as race, gender, culture, economic status, sexuality, and so on.

This can more clearly be seen within the emerging research on aversive racism and the differential experiences of whites versus blacks and the impact on health outcomes. Prior data shows that blacks experience poorer health than whites in the United States (Dovidio, Penner, Calabrese, & Pearl, 2018). Although a number of factors play an important role in health outcomes, there is clear evidence that racial bias among healthcare providers is also a significant factor. Black patients are less likely to be prescribed pain medications, even for life-threatening or terminal conditions (Hoffman, Trawalter, Axt, & Oliver, 2016). Black children are significantly less likely than white children to receive antibiotics for legitimate illnesses (Gerber et al., 2013). In one sample of approximately 2500 U.S. physicians, evidence of negative implicit racial biases against blacks among white, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian physicians was found (Sabin, Nosek, Greenwald, & Rivara, 2009). However, in that same sample, black physicians displayed low or no implicit racial bias.

Both explicit and implicit (unconscious) bias in patient–physician interactions can significantly impact the quality of care and the experience of black patients. The aversive racism framework suggests that when black patients' experiences of microaggressions

are driven by the implicit biases held by white physicians (implicit bias), the biases can disproportionately impact the quality of care that blacks receive, even from well-intentioned and patient-centered white physicians. Thus, the range and impact of subtle factors that are predicted by the aversive racism framework can best be explained by integrating both microaggression and implicit bias constructs. For example, Penner, Phelan, Earnshaw, Albrecht, and Dovidio (2017) show that relative to medical interactions between a doctor and patient of the same race, racially different medical interactions are shorter in length and involve less positive affect and are less patient-centered. Although explicit procedures may be followed, subtle differences remain. White physicians spend significantly less time answering questions, providing health education, planning treatment, and building a relationship with black relative to white patients, and make less effort to involve black patients in medical decision-making. These behaviors are consistent with research on microaggressions, as physicians' implicit racial bias typically affects their behavior and experience of black patients in subtle yet discriminatory ways. However, the concept of microaggression alone is merely a descriptive tool of *what* has taken place but does not provide insight into *how* or *why* this took place. The "*how*" behind these differential experiences and behaviors can be explained by the concept of implicit (unconscious bias). Research has shown that white physicians' explicit racial bias is a weak predictor of the quality of patient care (Penner & Dovidio, 2016), but implicit racial bias systematically predicts lower-quality medical interactions with black patients (Hall et al., 2015; Maina, Belton, Ginzberg, Singh, & Johnson, 2017). Hagiwara, Slatcher, Eggly, and Penner (2017) showed that physicians higher in implicit bias talked more and used more anxiety-related words when interacting with black patients. Similar effects are shown in medical interactions with black patients such that healthcare providers higher in implicit racial bias speak faster, are less patient-centered, and spend less time with the patients (Cooper et al., 2012). However, without the integrated lenses of microaggressions, unconscious bias, and the aversive racism framework, we are left with little understanding of the "how" and the "why" behind the "what" of these well-documented effects.

The Need for an Integrated Approach

The aversive racism concept helps to explain why microaggressions and implicit bias are particularly pronounced when individuals (e.g., doctors) are low in explicit prejudice. Take, for example, work by Penner et al. (2010), who find that black patients who interacted with physicians that matched the aversive racism profile were less satisfied with the interaction and felt less close to their physicians than black patients who interacted with other physicians, including physicians who were high in implicit and low in explicit bias measures. Clearly the aversive racism paradigm explains more of the underlying reasons for why these differential experiences and interactions persist above and beyond either explicit microaggressions or implicit (unconscious) bias alone. Hagiwara, Dovidio, Eggly, and Penner (2016) directly compared how non-black physicians who fit the specific profile outlined by the aversive racism paradigm (low in explicit racial bias and high in implicit bias) responded to different types of patients. On average, these non-black physicians did not differ from the other physicians in the affect they displayed toward black pa-

tients., However, when non-black physicians who fit the aversive racism profile interacted with black patients who reported personal experiences with discrimination, these non-black physicians exhibited lower levels of positive affect and higher levels of negative affect during the interactions with black patients, relative to their interactions with black patients who reported low levels of past discrimination. Hagiwara et al. (2016) explain that if the cause was simply that the high-discrimination black patients were more difficult, these effects should have been observed across all physicians' reactions. However, only the aversive racist non-black physicians responded in this manner. This suggests that aversive racism among white physicians can impact the quality of patient care that blacks receive differentially, especially for those with a history of experiencing discrimination (Hagiwara et al., 2013).

This means that we need to look at microaggressions, implicit biases, and aversive racism from an integrated framework that together can answer the what, how, and why of these differential experiences, interactions, and outcomes. Microaggressions that are expressed in slights, insults and differential treatment represent the behavioral manifestations (what) of unconscious or implicit bias (how) that leads to differential responses, perspectives, and, ultimately, outcomes (e.g., medical interactions). However, aversive racism helps us to understand why aversive racists may not only fail to recognize subtle ways they discriminate against blacks, but when confronted by the possibility that their behavior is racially motivated, they may actively seek nonracial explanations for their behavior in order to preserve a non-prejudiced self-image (see Dovidio et al., 2017). The aversive racism paradigm also helps to explain why many programmatic efforts to end the frequency and impact of microaggressions and implicit bias are not successful (Noon, 2018).

Thus, examining microaggressions alone provides an incomplete picture. Insults, slights, and other forms of microaggressions are both expressed and experienced differentially, depending on the social groups involved and for those who do versus those who do not match the aversive racism profile. Microaggressions expressed by aversive racists may also include forms of overcorrecting (e.g., positive facial expressions, frequent nodding or laughing, repeatedly expressing positive statements or making apologetic statements) for their implicit or unconscious bias in order to maintain a non-biased image (Mendes & Koslov, 2013). Although this may preserve the non-biased image for whites, it can nonetheless be experienced by blacks as insulting, condescending, or biased. Thus, microaggressions and unconscious bias can benefit from the lens of the aversive racism paradigm to help explain the underlying processes that contribute to and drive subtle discriminatory behaviors that adversely impact different racial and social group members. Some argue that what the aversive racism paradigm accomplishes is to help document and explain the causal relationship between implicit bias and microaggressions that can ultimately lead to the development of meaningful interventions (Forscher & Devine, 2017). This includes a focus beyond individual-level factors as part of the intervention and including social and structural factors that shape the environment around intergroup relations (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012; Penner et al., 2014). Including structural and contextual factors are important given that individuals matching the aversive racism

profile will resist (both consciously and unconsciously) any actions that would suggest they are biased or discriminatory in order to protect their equalitarian self-image. Some argue that programs that work at the individual level and include interactions elicit defensiveness or even produce backlash that may increase rather than reduce explicit and implicit bias (Legault, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011) and increase accusations that these efforts are actually subtle forms of anti-white bias (Norton & Sommers, 2011).

Practical Implications for Organizations

A number of key areas for future research can focus attention on strategies to address the negative impact of aversive racism. The need to examine the practical implications for aversive racism is important given that many people who believe they support egalitarian principles and perceive themselves to be non-prejudiced individuals still harbor negative and prejudiced attitudes toward historically disadvantaged and minoritized groups. Without practical measures or interventions to address this specific type of racism and bias, the continuation of historical forms of discrimination and disparities will persist. However, any practical measures must consider that individuals will resist them given that they believe themselves to be unbiased, fair, and non-prejudiced. In other words, what are the practical implications of creating meaningful change when the necessary targets of any intervention do not recognize or support the reality that they need this change?

One practical issue for organizations is to address how the process by which selections and evaluative assessments are conducted. Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) examined the impact of aversive racism on selection decisions, which is more likely for black relative to white candidates when decision criteria are ambiguous. The use of blind evaluations in both selection and assessment has received attention as one practical implication of this work. For example, research by Goldin and Rouse (1997) was prompted by the assumption that it is extremely difficult to demonstrate gender bias in hiring. Their analysis showed that a switch to blind auditions helped to significantly explain and reduce gender bias in the proposal of new female hires and orchestra leaders appointed over time. Although the use of blind interviews or evaluations is not widespread throughout organizational decision-making, the results of this research, together with the aversive racism framework, suggest that this type of approach may be essential in reducing bias, especially when evaluation criteria are ambiguous or complex in nature.

Another practical implication of the aversive racism framework is the need to challenge current definitions and concepts of key constructs that are used in judgements and decision-making. For example, Ely and Meyerson (2010) directly challenge traditional notions of leadership in their examination of organizational safety and effectiveness for offshore oil drilling organizations. This work put in place changes in the definition and concepts of leadership that directly challenge traditional notions that were biased by race and gender. Their findings show a significant reduction of accidents and increase in productivity by changing the values of the organizations toward more inclusive leadership as the norm, and away from gender or racially biased notions of leadership effectiveness. This

means a shift toward a higher value being placed on developing inclusive leadership as essential for organizational effectiveness (Murrell, Jones, & Petrie, 2020).

A third practical implication is to address the need to eliminate bias in how we educate and train the next general of leaders, professionals, policy makers, and global citizens. Nothing is more critical within all levels of education than advancing the knowledge, theory, and practices focused on diversity and social change. Developing practical methods, effective tools, and rigorous assessments focused on issues of diversity and inclusion is necessary to address the negative impact of aversive racism across people, systems, and communities. Recent work by Murrell, Petrie, and Soudi (2020) argues for challenging our understanding in a way that evokes how different ideas and perspectives cut across traditional academic and discipline boundaries as one approach to create meaningful and long-lasting social impact.

Looking Toward the Future

What is clear from the commonalities between the aversive racism paradigm and the concepts of unconscious (implicit bias) and microaggressions is the notion of the incongruence between self-perceptions and individual actions toward those from another demographic or social group. This notion can also be rooted in the substantial literature on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This early groundbreaking work clearly demonstrated that because of the effect of social categories, an implicit and unconscious "bias," or what was labeled "ingroup favoritism," would automatically result. Put simply, people will favor their own group at the expense of other groups in terms of their evaluations, judgments, and behavior in intergroup situations. This ingroup favoritism can result in outgroup bias, discrimination, and derogation, but this is not the primary motivating factor. Rather than being primarily motivated to harm individuals who are from different social groups, social identity theory argues that individuals protect their own self-esteem when they strongly identity with their ingroup, and that produces the motivation for them to enhance the positive distinctiveness and perceived value or status of their own group (Brewer & Brown, 1998).

This would suggest that aversive racism and other related constructs are perhaps more of an intergroup phenomenon than an individual or intrapsychic one that is driven primarily by own group elevation and unintentional (but nonetheless harmful) outgroup discrimination (Abrams & Hogg, 1988, 1990; Oakes & Turner, 1980; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). In looking toward the future and the development of a more integrated approach, two things become necessary. First, there must be an explicit inclusion of social group identity as one of the explanatory factors for aversive racism and its manifestations as microaggressions and unconscious bias. Second, it must be acknowledged that situations when multiple identities are present (e.g., race and gender or social class and race, etc.) have not been addressed, nor have how matters of intersectionality change how these forms of bias are defined, understood, and addressed.

Aversive Racism From a Social Identity Lens

A robust literature documents the processes and consequences of the tendency as individuals to automatically (unconsciously) associate positive characteristics with one's own group or "ingroup favoritism" and associate negative characteristics with other groups to which one does not belong or identify as "outgroup derogation." This well-documented process is part of our cognitive automatic processing that one can say produces automatic prejudice and discrimination. Although research on aversive racism to date has been a predominately U.S.-centric endeavor, the process and effects of social identity biases are well documented to extend to other national contexts (Locke, MacLeod, & Walker, 1994). This lens has also been applied to intergroup biases toward sexual minorities (Banse, Seise, & Zerbes, 2001; Dasgupta, 2002; Dasgupta & Rivera, 2004; Lemm, 2001). This would suggest that future research should move beyond defining forms of bias and discrimination solely as an individual perception (unconscious bias) or individual discriminatory act (microaggression), and place these notions within the intergroup context and social identity effects that are already embedded in the aversive racism paradigm.

Thus, as Dasgupta (2004) argues, attention must be focused on the notion of "implicit ingroup favoritism" and the behavioral manifestations, consequences, and strategies for change at both the individual level and focused on the intergroup levels. As Dasgupta writes:

> In other words, in the case of individuals who belong to advantaged or dominant groups, their tendency to implicitly favor their ingroup relative to competing outgroups may be as much a function of the desire to preserve current social hierarchies (system justifying motive) as it is the desire to protect their self-esteem (ego-justifying motive). In the case of individuals who belong to disadvantaged or subordinate groups, the two motivations work in opposition—the desire to protect self-esteem should lead to ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, but the desire to maintain current social arrangements leads to predictions of outgroup favoritism. Put differently, there may be two independent sources of implicit attitudes.

> (Dasgupta, 2004, p. 148)

This means examining unconscious bias, microaggressions, and the processes outlined by aversive racism from both an individual and intergroup perspective in order to fully capture the processes and their consequences. The concept of aversive racism has been situated within the U.S. historical and research content to date, but the connection between aversive racism and overall cultural competence globally has begun to be discussed (Rodenborg & Boisen, 2013). Interestingly, racial microaggressions have an impact on research and theory (Fleras, 2016; Rollock, 2012; Smith-Oka, 2015). Nonetheless, social categorization must be examined together *with* individual attitudes and *within* the relevant social, cultural, and historical contexts to gain a full understanding of the global dynamics of bias and discrimination. To date, notions of group identity have been left out of our theories and research on microaggressions and unconscious bias. However, the aver-

sive racism paradigm was framed as a function of intergroup dynamics from its origins. This is evident in the research that employs a "common identity" approach to reduce the presence and impact of aversive racism (Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, & Pearson, 2016). This research attempts to show that changing the way people think about group membership from separate groups to a "common" or shared social identity can redefine the nature, content, and consequences of intergroup interactions that define aversive racism. This "common identity model" (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) seeks to change or re-categorize individuals from different social groups into a single and more inclusive social group, thus reducing cognitive, motivational, and behavior biases. The creation of a superordinate or common identity redirects those forces that maintained the barriers between different social groups and channels them toward a shared identity that redefines who is a member of one's "ingroup" versus one's "outgroup."

Early laboratory studies provide some evidence that the use of a superordinate or common identity helped to significantly reduce intergroup bias and ingroup favoritism (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). These effects were stronger than efforts to merely "recategorize" the groups by de-emphasizing the meaning and significance of group membership. This is akin to efforts that have been shown to be ineffective as attempting to institute a "color-blind" workplace or society (Noon, 2018). This effect has also been replicated outside of the laboratory setting and used in research on racial interactions among black and white children (Gaertner et al., 2016; Guerra, Rebelo, & Monteiro, 2004). Thus, the common identity model has been effective in validating the need for using a social identity lens to understand racism and bias as well as the power of the common identity model to address and begin the process of redefining the meaning of "social identity" in new and exciting ways (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990). The effect of the common identity model continues to be replicated both inside and outside of the laboratory and across a variety of social groups (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2012, for a review). The common group identity paradigm has been shown to apply to intergroup bias and conflict within a global context (Peltokorpi, 2020; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2017; Rosenmann, Reese, & Cameron, 2016).

Aversive Racism and the Need for an Intersectionality Lens

The aversive racism paradigm has produced a wide variety of research, practice. and efforts toward social change; however, a key limitation has been its singular focus on one social category—namely, race. Individuals have multiple identities, but this is often not taken into account in previous concepts including microaggressions and unconscious (implicit) bias. Intersectionality, a term coined by the legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) highlights the "multidimensionality of marginalized subjects" as relevant lived experiences that must be taken into account within these various models of bias and discrimination. For example, Nair, Good, and Murrell (2019) recently argued that although most of the microaggression research has focused on one kind of minority identity, such

as racial- or gender-related microaggressions, there is a critical need to look at the intersection of multiple minority identities, such as microaggressions directed at women of color (Collins, 2015).

Some scholars have coined the term "gendered racial microaggressions" as one attempt to broaden the lens through which this phenomenon is examined (Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Browne, 2016). This includes recent work looking at Asian American women (Endo, 2015) and lesbian/queer Latinas (Caraves, 2018). Nair and her colleagues call for more attention to be paid to the unique ways in which microaggressions play out at the intersection of multiple identities. To date, research using the aversive racism framework has not incorporated intersectionality and the notion of multiple identities into the existing framework. This is especially important to address complex issues such as intersectionality and global gender inequities (Bose, 2012).

Although research on aversive racism has produced a robust and powerful impact on how people think about, understand and attempt to change the nature of interactions between different social groups, there is still much work to be done. Developing an integrated framework that includes behavioral manifestations (microaggressions), cognitive processes (unconscious bias), and intergroup dynamics (social identity) is essential work for the future. Developing robust intervention models that are able to demonstration how to redirect or redefine negative relationships into more positive ones has been shown to be the focus of research on the common identity model. Extending the aversive racism framework into a global context is essential work that remains to be done. Although this approach has shown some critical success, there is still a need to demonstrate that the common identity model can alter the nature of intergroup interactions within dynamic and complex structures that are embedded into global economic, political, and social systems. Integrating across the distinct concepts reviewed herein will be key to better understanding the dynamics of contemporary bias and producing the necessary effective solutions as a key agenda for future research.

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Audrey Murrell

Business Administration, Psychology, Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh