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Horizontal and Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

Attributions and Impact

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For Amoses, my partner and support throughout life.
And for my daughter, Zazie, who I hope can inherit a liberated future.
– Christin A. Mujica
To my students, who are the best part of my job.
To Tom, Nico, Lucas, and Nadia, who remind me to pause and enjoy the present.
To my parents, who sacrificed so much.
– Ana J. Bridges

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Contents

About the Authors

Christin A. Mujica is a Clinical Psychology Ph.D. student at the University of Arkansas, USA. She is a Queer white Venezuelan Latina who was born and raised in Miami, Florida, USA. Christin's overall research focus is how all forms of racism (i.e., internalized, interpersonal, and systemic) impact the mental health of people of color. Growing up in a predominantly Latinx community and in a privileged body, she often assumed her community was beyond racism. It was not until she left her hometown for college that she began to understand the complexities of multiple intersecting identities, how one is racialized in a predominantly white setting, and how skin color can impact one's experiences. She found that the 2016 election further highlighted the divide there was within Latinx (and other people of color) communities, even in her own family. She approached this research with a growing understanding of how people of color can harm other people from their same racial group. It is through these experiences that the questions for this qualitative study were formed and later reinforced by theoretical concepts in the psychological literature.

Ana J. Bridges is a licensed clinical psychologist and Professor in the Department of Psychological Science at the University of Arkansas, USA. She was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and immigrated to the United States with her parents and brother when she was a child. Dr. Bridges conducts research on mental health disparities. She is especially interested in understanding and addressing the factors that facilitate or impede vulnerable, underserved, and marginalized populations from seeking mental health care or benefitting from treatment once it is sought. She is also interested in addressing and reducing violence victimization in vulnerable groups, including sexual violence and race-based victimization.

Chapter 1
Introduction and the Need for Nuanced Research on Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

Christin A. Mujica, Ana J. Bridges, and Emily L. Allen

Racist ideas make people of color think less of themselves, which makes them more vulnerable to racist ideas. Racist ideas make White people think more of themselves, which further attracts them to racist ideas.

—Ibram X. Kendi, How to Be an Antiracist

1.1 Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Racism

Racial/ethnic discrimination[1] refers to the unequal treatment of people because they are of a certain racial or ethnic background. It includes both overt and subtle behaviors reflecting negative attitudes someone holds about a particular racial/ethnic group (National Association of School Psychologists, 2019). While racial/ethnic discrimination is the *individual* act of treating a racial/ethnic minority member in an inequitable manner, it is the result of the larger *structure* of racism. Racism in general refers to a system that structures opportunity and assigns value to individuals based on perceived or declared "race," ethnicity, national origin, and physical properties (e.g., skin color and hair texture). Race as a social (not biological) construct gained prominence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the sole purpose of establishing a social hierarchy based on skin color, physical features, and genetic heredity. These qualities have been and continue to be used to justify poor treatment of minoritized individuals. This unfairly places racial groups who have relatively little power in the United States (e.g., Blacks, Latinxs, Native Americans, and Asians) at a disadvantage compared to those who have relatively high power (Whites) (Wijeyesinghe et al., 1997). This power imbalance is often referred to as white supremacy.

[1] Underlined text appears in the "Key Terms" section of this book.

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The system of white supremacy is defined as a multidimensional system of white domination that maintains laws promoting white authority. The system includes capitalism, wealth, and racial exploitation to maintain wealth (Mills, 2003). The system of white supremacy also includes and maintains Eurocentrism (i.e., the practice of viewing non-Western cultures from a European perspective) and media dominance that promotes racist ideology and white normativity (Mills, 2003). White normativity refers to the norms and practices that highlight whiteness as what is normal, acceptable, and the standard of beauty (Ferguson, 2004; Mills, 2003; Munoz, 1999; Pokhrel, 2011). The various components of this system interact with one another and contribute to the perpetuation of white people in power and white ideology as normative.

Within the larger context of white supremacy, stereotypes, prejudice, and race-based discrimination occur. While these terms are often used interchangeably in social dialogue, it is important to highlight their differences. Stereotypes are generalizations or beliefs about a group of people. Prejudice is the affective component that often accompanies a stereotype. Racial/ethnic discrimination is the behavior that excludes a group of people based on a negative prejudice (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.).

1.2 Levels of Racism

When most people describe racism, it is often in terms of individual actions. However, there are several types of racism that can be thought of as layered upon each other (Fig. 1.1). Structural racism makes up the outer layer. According to the American Psychological Association, this occurs as a result of laws, policies, and practices that produce long-term, stable, race-based inequalities. It includes the refusal to eradicate previous laws and practices that serve to uphold racism (Yearby et al., 2020). Closely related, institutional racism comes from the policies and procedures *practiced by institutions* (e.g., educational, legal, and medical) that marginalize diverse racial groups (APA Multicultural Guidelines, 2019; Kovera, 2019; Yearby et al., 2020). This is often evident in practices, such as "stop-and-frisk" that allowed police officers to stop, question, and search citizens solely on the basis of having "reasonable suspicion." These policies were used primarily to racially profile and harass citizens of color (Gelman et al., 2007). Interpersonal racism occurs when individuals from dominating groups in society inflict harm on other racial

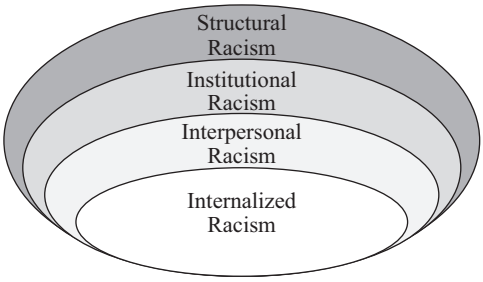

Fig. 1.1 Levels of racism

groups (APA Multicultural Guidelines, 2019; Yearby et al., 2020). It is important to note that this behavior is different from bigotry and prejudice, where bigotry focuses on negative attitudes about others not necessarily tied to race and prejudice is a preconceived opinion not based on reason or experience. As individuals experience structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism, some may begin to internalize those beliefs. Internalized racism occurs when someone from an oppressed or marginalized racial group accepts the negative beliefs and stereotypes about their group that reinforce white supremacy and cause them to feel devalued or powerless (Jones, 2001). This may present as a person of color privileging white standards of beauty or agreeing with the stereotypes and beliefs that the majority has regarding people of color (Bivens, 1995). All forms of racism can have damaging effects on those who experience them. While this book will focus on interpersonal and internalized racism, it is important to acknowledge that the outer layers, structural and institutional racism, provide the basis on which the inner layers exist.

1.3 Overt vs. Subtle Discrimination

Racism is perpetuated, at least in part, through racial/ethnic discrimination by individuals when they share beliefs and attitudes or commit actions that perpetuate the superiority of Whites and the subordination of minority racial/ethnic groups. People often use racial/ethnic discrimination and racism interchangeably. Historically, racism has been practiced through overt forms of discrimination and racial terrorism. Overt discrimination is behavior that is clearly inequitable and leaves no question that it was racist (e.g., using racial slurs, engaging in lynchings, burning crosses). It is done with clear intentions of harming the target who may later experience anger, depression, or stress (Jones et al., 2016). However, scholars believe we have moved to an era where racism is practiced more frequently through subtle or covert methods that are often ambiguous in form (Table 1.1). The ambiguity leaves it unclear if the behavior occurred because of the target's race/ethnicity. It may even be portrayed as helpful to the target, who may later experience confusion, isolation, lowered self-confidence, and awkwardness as a result. This "new racism" has been

Table 1.1 Overt versus subtle discrimination

	Overt discrimination	Subtle discrimination
Perpetrator behavior	Behavior is relatively clearly attributed to race/ethnicity of target Communicates a sentiment of white supremacy Appears intent on causing harm to target	Unclear if behavior is related to race/ethnicity of target Communicates a sentiment of white supremacy May appear benign or even meant to help target
Target effect	Anger Depression Stress	Confusion Lower self-confidence Awkwardness/isolation

called color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Neville et al., 2016), modern racism (McConahay, 1986), and aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). These more subtle acts are also often referred to as microaggressions. The term microaggression refers to the common, everyday insults that express negative racial messages, whether intentional or unintentional. There are three different types of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Traditionally, microassaults are labeled as intentional. Microinsults occur because of the target's identity as a person of color, whereas microinvalidations occur to invalidate the experiences, thoughts, or feelings of a person of color (Sue et al., 2007). By invalidating the target's feelings (i.e., may be similar to "gaslighting"[2] the target of the behavior), the effects of discrimination may be rendered invisible.

The ambiguous nature of microaggressions makes it more difficult to determine the intentions of the perpetrator. Neblett Jr and Roberts (2013) highlighted this in their research where they used a vignette in which a security guard was following a Black individual around a bookstore. This is a good example of microaggressive behavior because it is a security guard's job to monitor patrons for theft. Therefore, it could be argued that this is routine behavior. However, choosing to follow the Black customer without reasonable suspicion rather than closely observing all customers reflects a negative bias. The target could interpret this behavior for what it was (i.e., subtle discrimination) or second guess their experience by thinking of alternative explanations (e.g., thinking that the security guard follows everyone). This ability to make several interpretations reflects the ambiguity of microaggressions that can make them especially confusing and harmful.

Within racial and ethnic discrimination literature, there has been growing research devoted to understanding the *intent* of a racist act versus its *impact*. Intent focuses on what an individual meant to do when behaving in a discriminatory way, whereas impact focuses on how the behavior was received by the other party. Often, after committing a microaggression, perpetrators emphasize to others that they did not have ill intentions. Some researchers (Lilienfeld, 2017) have argued that malicious intentions are required for an act to be labeled a microaggression. However, Williams (2020) asserts that it is not possible for microaggressions to be *unintentional*. She posits that all microaggressive acts either reflect individual bias (conscious or unconscious) or dominant group bias that has been acquired socially. Claiming that one had benign intentions does not neutralize the negative impacts of one's behavior (Wolf & Le Guin, 2007).

The negative consequences of discrimination are evident both when it is overt and when it is subtle (Jones et al., 2016; Magallares et al., 2014; Noh et al., 2007). Experiences of overt discrimination have been consistently associated with negative effects, including poor cardiovascular and overall health (Chen & Mallory, 2021; Dolezsar et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2014; Paradies et al., 2015); chronic health conditions, cigarette smoking, alcohol and drug use, unhealthy eating habits

[2] gaslighting: the effort of one person to undermine another person's confidence and stability by causing the victim to doubt [their] own senses and beliefs (Kline, 2006).

(Williams et al., 2003); heightened exposure to environmental toxins (Williams, 1999); lower quality of medical care (Hoffman et al., 2016); depression, anxiety, psychosis, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation (Chen & Mallory, 2021; Paradies et al., 2015; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Williams et al., 2003); fewer job opportunities (Williams, 1999); lower wealth holdings, household income, and homeownership rates (Sullivan et al., 2016); and lower quality of education and return on 4-year college degrees (Sullivan et al., 2016; Williams, 1999). It has also been shown that instances of racism are twice as likely to affect mental health as physical health (Paradies et al., 2015). Subtle discrimination has been linked to various negative mental and physical health outcomes, including increased incidence of depressive symptoms (Auguste et al., 2021), trauma symptoms (Abdullah et al., 2021; Bird et al., 2021; Kirkinis et al., 2021), and poor physical health (Nadal et al., 2017). Some even argue that, because subtle discrimination occurs so frequently, it can be considered a form of chronic stress that may lead to hypertension and weakened immune response (Williams, 2020).

1.4 Vertical vs. Horizontal Discrimination

Vertical or outgroup racial/ethnic discrimination occurs when the perpetrator of the discriminatory behavior is a person with power and the target is a person from another racial/ethnic group, one that is devalued in white supremacy (e.g., a person of color). This is the form most people think about when discussing racism. With this, the idea of intent seems easier for people to parse out due to the power dynamic. With vertical discrimination, the perpetrator holds a privileged racial/ethnic status in society while the target holds a marginalized status. This act can be subtle or overt. Between 50% and 75% of people of color (e.g., Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American/Indigenous) have reported experiencing some form of racial/ethnic discrimination from an outgroup member in their lifetime compared to approximately 34% of White people (Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018; Pérez et al., 2008). In a study by Lee et al. (2018) that sought to replicate findings from Boutwell and colleagues (2017), participants who reported experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination were asked how often those incidents occur. The majority of minoritized group members stated that racial/ethnic discrimination occurred from time to time or more often (Lee et al., 2018).

Horizontal or ingroup discrimination occurs when minoritized group members display bias or violence toward fellow in group members (Table 1.2). These acts express a sentiment of white supremacy and can be subtle or overt. It is also referred to as lateral oppression (David & Derthick, 2017), internalized colonialism (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Braybrook, 2015), violence turned inwards, intracultural violence (Dudgeon, 2000), intraracial racism (Paradies et al., 2008), intraracial bullying (Coffin et al., 2010; Merrell-James, 2006), and intraracial violence (Whaley, 1992). All terms imply that the perpetrator and target are of similar power (Tran et al., 2022). Horizontal discrimination can include physical

Table 1.2 Vertical versus horizontal discrimination

	Vertical Discrimination	Horizontal Discrimination
Perpetrator characteristics and behavior	Perpetrator has some privileged racial/ethnic status in society, while target has marginalized racial/ethnic status Communicates a sentiment of white supremacy Can be overt or subtle	Perpetrator is of equal/marginalized racial/ethnic status as the target Communicates a sentiment of white supremacy Can be overt or subtle
Target effects	Anger Depression Stress Isolation	Confusion Hurt/pain Sense of betrayal

violence but also non-physical violence, such as gossiping, bullying, and social isolation (Whyman et al., 2021). These acts may leave the target feeling hurt, confused, or betrayed.

Some researchers have explored the concept of horizontal discrimination by assessing both the psychosocial and stress-related response to these behaviors. Chavez-Dueñas and colleagues (2014) defined colorism as "a form of [racial] discrimination imposed upon Latino/as by members of their own ethnic group" (p. 4). Their work showed that colorism has been associated with negative impacts on mental health, education attainment, and income for darker Latinx individuals. Additionally, Neblett Jr and Roberts (2013) recruited Black college students to examine how racial identity may interact with the race of the perpetrator and the type of racism (i.e., subtle vs. overt) to influence the physiological response to racism. The researchers found an interaction between perpetrator race and racism condition. Participants in the Black perpetrator racism conditions experienced a higher stress response than did participants in the White perpetrator racism conditions (Neblett Jr & Roberts, 2013). Meanwhile, Mata-Greve (2016) collected survey responses from a community sample of Latinx adults. These surveys measured self-reported experiences of ingroup and outgroup discrimination and self-reported symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcohol use. Results suggested that ingroup discrimination predicted depression and anxiety symptoms above and beyond outgroup discrimination (Mata-Greve, 2016). Furthermore, Whyman et al. (2021) found links between horizontal discrimination and physical effects such as irritable bowel syndrome, weight gain or loss, and hypertension among Indigenous people in Australia. These physiological responses and psychosocial outcomes seem to be consistent with cultural betrayal trauma theory, which posits that these acts of horizontal discrimination may be seen as an act of betrayal (Gómez, 2019a, b). Because the perpetrator is an ingroup member, it may be that the effects of horizontal discrimination do not necessarily parallel the effects of discrimination committed by an outgroup member, which suggests more research is needed to understand the former.

Although not as prevalent as vertical discrimination, horizontal discrimination is rather common. In a study using data collected by Pew Research in March 2021,

approximately a quarter of Latinx adults reported having experienced discrimination or some other form of unfair treatment from other Latinx individuals. Nearly half of those individuals stated that they had heard racist or racially insensitive comments from their family or friends about other members of the Latinx community. The chances of being the victim of such behavior were higher for individuals born outside of the United States or who had a darker skin tone (Neo-Bustamante, 2022). While there is a need for further research to understand how prevalent horizontal discrimination may be in other racial/ethnic groups, it is clear through previous research that horizontal discrimination is real and occurs somewhat frequently.

1.5 Gaps in Our Understanding of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

Unfortunately, it is clear that race/ethnic discrimination is prevalent. Years of research have revealed its harmful effects on targets of color. However, most of the current research tends to focus on *overt* acts of vertical discrimination (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Frantz et al., 2004; Krueger, 1996; Lee et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2014; Lopez et al., 2018; Pérez et al., 2008; Vorauer et al., 1998) with a slowly growing body of research on *subtle* acts of vertical discrimination (Sue et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2014). While this focus on cross-racial discrimination is important in the context of white supremacy, there remains little work done to examine the effects of subtle or overt ingroup discrimination despite growing data suggesting that it is prevalent. This gap in the literature overlooks some realities of discriminatory behavior and also leaves us without a clear understanding of its nuances (i.e., are the effects of discrimination any different depending on the identity of the perpetrator? How do people interpret discriminatory events when perpetrated by a racial/ethnic ingroup member?), including the effects of previously discussed horizontal violence. These questions are left largely unanswered by the literature. There is evidence that the effects of horizontal discrimination may not necessarily parallel vertical discrimination; therefore, it is important that work is done to explore this conceptual gap and better understand the complexity of race/ethnic discrimination.

1.6 Focus of the Book

The focus of this book is to address the gaps in the literature mentioned above regarding the nuances of racial/ethnic discrimination and particularly to address horizontal discrimination. In Chap. 2, we will explore why people of color might commit acts of horizontal violence. We will provide a particular focus on theories of racial/ethnic identity development and critical consciousness development that may provide insight into how and why people of color can become perpetrators of racial/

ethnic discrimination. Chapter 3 focuses on psychological theories (i.e., attribution theories and cultural betrayal trauma theory) that provide insight into how people of color might interpret and react to horizontal discrimination. Chapter 3 also introduces the hypotheses that guided the qualitative study we conduct. In Chap. 4, we introduce the methods and approach of the qualitative study we conducted to further understand how people react to and interpret horizontal discrimination. Chapter 5 describes the first set of themes we extracted from interviews that address the question: what do people of color believe about racism and discrimination based on an ingroup/outgroup distinction of the perpetrator? Chapter 6 discusses the second set of themes we found that focus on the question: How do people of color attribute racial/ethnic discrimination based on context? Then in Chap. 7, we introduce the final set of themes that focus on answering the question: what are the affective consequences of experiencing horizontal versus vertical discrimination? Chapter 8 ties all the themes and psychological theories together to propose a cubic model of three factors we learned contribute to the attributions and affective consequences of horizontal and vertical discrimination.

1.7 Summary

- Racism is varied in form, from structural and institutional to interpersonal and internalized.
- Racial/ethnic discrimination, a behavioral manifestation of racism and white supremacy, is prevalent and harmful.
- Racial/ethnic discrimination's effects can vary, depending on whether the behavior is subtle or overt, and perpetrated by an ingroup or an outgroup member.
- Most research has focused on overt and subtle racial/ethnic discrimination perpetrated by a powerful outgroup member (i.e., vertical discrimination); less is known about the effects of horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination.

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Chapter 2
Why Might People Commit Acts of Horizontal Discrimination?

2.1 Introduction

As reviewed in Chap. 1, racial/ethnic discrimination is detrimental and leads to poor mental health and wellness. While most work has clearly documented the problems related to racial/ethnic discrimination perpetrated by dominant outgroup members toward people of color (i.e., vertical discrimination), recent qualitative and theoretical work has begun to highlight the issue of horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination. Given that experiencing racial/ethnic discrimination is harmful to targets overall, in this chapter, we explore what might drive a person of color to perpetrate racial/ethnic discrimination toward someone of the same racial/ethnic background.

People of color (whether Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American, another group, or biracial/multiracial) are not a monolith. The experiences of Black Americans cannot be directly compared to those of Asian Americans. Native Americans and indigenous people long settled in territories before being colonized by white Europeans. Even within racial groups, there is significant variation in thoughts, experiences, and behaviors across individuals. A recent immigrant from India trying to adapt to life in the United States may have more in common with a recent immigrant from Nigeria than with a third-generation Indian American.

Differences among people within a broad racial/ethnic community include differences in awareness of one's own race/ethnicity and its meaning relative to dominant narratives from a white supremacist culture. Race, especially, has a particular and somewhat unique meaning in the United States that is not necessarily consistent with race in other cultures or even consistent across time. Because of the history of chattel slavery in America and the desire to quickly identify and justify this inhumane institution, race became an important social category (although some scholars have also argued that racism preceded chattel slavery; Thompson, 1976). In the United States, courts have often decided who is "white" because of the legal rights

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and privileges associated with whiteness (López, 2006). These definitions could flip over time. For instance, in 1942 Arabs were defined as "not white" (*In re Ahmed Hassan*, 1942); 2 years later, courts ruled Arabs were "white" (*ex Parte Mohriez*, 1944). People from India have been categorized by the US Census Bureau as "Hindu" (1920s–1940s), "other race" (1950s–1960s), and "white" (1970s) (Gibson & Jung, 2005).

2.2 Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

Racial/ethnic identity has been conceptualized by researchers as a multidimensional part of one's self-concept. In other words, racial/ethnic identity is how one comes to understand oneself as a racialized person—a person with a race/ethnicity—and all the additional components of life that come with it in a particular culture, time, and place. Racial/ethnic identification is developed through increasing knowledge and awareness of one's membership in an ethnic or racial group (Phinney, 1992). This construct is also connected to the emotions, behaviors, and values that are attached to belonging to a racial or ethnic group. It is clearly situated in a particular historical time and place. What it means to be a person of Japanese ancestry, for instance, is different today than it was in the 1940s, when the United States placed people of Japanese ancestry in internment camps following President Roosevelt's executive order (National Archives, 2016). Significant events, including wars, or key figures such as cultural icons can also shift how people understand themselves as a racial being. For instance, a study of more than 300 Black college students found the election of Barack Obama led to increased reflection of issues of race and ethnicity (i.e., exploration) and this, in turn, led to lasting changes in racial identity, including increases in racial pride (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2011).

Developing a strong identification with one's race has both good and bad components for people of color. On one hand, it gives one a sense of identification, purpose, belonging, and pride, which can protect against stereotype, prejudice, and racial/ethnic discrimination (Lee, 2005; Romero & Roberts, 2003; Torres & Ong, 2010; Tynes et al., 2012). Indeed, scholars have long documented the benefits of a strong racial/ethnic identity for mental health and wellness (Mossakowski, 2003). On the other hand, it means people are more aware of racial/ethnic discrimination and its many forms, potentially leading to a sense of discouragement, anger, frustration, and hurt (Gonzales-Backen et al., 2018; Yip, 2018). The constant awareness and an accompanying desire to combat racism when it appears have been described as *racial battle fatigue* (Gorski, 2019).

Scholars have proposed many different stages of Black (Cross Jr, 1971) or ethnic (Atkinson et al., 1983; Hoffman & Hoffman, 2006; Phinney, 1989; Sue & Sue, 1999) identity development. Theories use different labels for each stage of racial/ethnic identity development, but in general, these theories reflect a common process. That process typically starts with a lack of awareness of race and a buy-in to the dominant culture (at the earliest stages) to an increased awareness and

Table 2.1 Common themes in racial/ethnic identity development models

Stage number	Stages of racial/ethnic identity development	Common themes
Stage 1	Conformity (Sue & Sue, 1999) Pre-encounter (Cross Jr, 1971) Assimilation (Berry, 1997) Diffusion/Foreclosure (Phinney, 1989)	Minimal emphasis on one's own racial/ethnic membership Overemphasis and focus on whiteness Belief in white supremacy
Stage 2	Dissonance (Sue & Sue, 1999) Encounter (Cross Jr, 1971)	Growing awareness of racism Starting to question the views of White people toward their own racial/ethnic group Beginning to question white stereotypes of their racial/ethnic group
Stage 3	Resistance and Immersion (Sue & Sue, 1999) Immersion/Emersion (Cross Jr, 1971) Separation (Berry, 1997) Moratorium (Phinney, 1989)	Begins to reject white values Endorses views of their racial/ethnic group Actively seeks out opportunities to learn about one's own history and culture
Stage 4	Introspection (Sue & Sue, 1999) Internalization (Cross Jr, 1971) Moratorium (Phinney, 1989)	Willing to establish meaningful relationships with White people Starting to learn that there are views from White people and from their own culture that they may agree and/or disagree with
Stage 5	Integrative Awareness (Sue & Sue, 1999) Internalization—Commitment (Cross Jr, 1971) Integration (Berry, 1997) Ethnic identity achieved (Phinney, 1989)	Valuing and integrating one's culture as well as the majority culture Inner sense of security with their racial/ethnic identity

recognition of race from a historical and critical lens. These stages are summarized in Table 2.1.

To outline this common path of identity development, we will use the general stage numbers indicated in Table 2.1. Most people of color begin their ethnic identity development in Stage 1. In this first stage, people of color raised in a society with systemic racism and white supremacy show a preference for dominant (white) cultural values over those of their own culture and may experience internalized racism (described further below). In Stage 2, the person of color starts to reflect on experiences or situations that are inconsistent with previously held beliefs (Cross Jr, 1971; Sue et al., 2019). They may begin to recognize that racism does exist and that there are both negative and positive aspects of the majority (white) culture. Additionally, negative views about their own culture begin to be questioned.

In Stage 3, the person of color may reject the values of the dominant (white) society and culture while fully embracing and immersing themselves in their own racial/ethnic culture (Berry, 1997; Cross Jr, 1971; Sue et al., 2019). A person in this stage might feel guilt and shame for having contributed to the oppression of their own group. They are angry at racism and oppression and working toward self-discovery. Importantly, there is both an embracing of one's own culture and a strong rejection of the majority culture, which is seen as oppressive and problematic. Stage 4 occurs when the person discovers that anger toward white society is draining and they look for a way to be more balanced in their views and values (Cross Jr, 1971; Sue & Sue, 1999; Sue et al., 2019). In the final stage (Stage 5), the person of color develops an inner sense of security regarding their own racial identity and can appreciate aspects of their own culture and some aspects of the dominant culture (Cross Jr, 1971; Sue & Sue, 1999; Sue et al., 2019). This is often accompanied by having a strong commitment to eliminating all forms of oppression (Sue et al., 2019).

When reviewing these models and the common path of racial/ethnic identity development outlined by Stages 1–5, one can understand how individuals in different stages of racial/ethnic identity development may also have different attitudes and beliefs about their own racial/ethnic group. The heterogeneity in racial/ethnic identity development makes it possible for people of color to engage in horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination. Specifically, individuals who are in Stage 1 may be more likely to perpetrate horizontal discrimination than people in the later stages of racial/ethnic identity development. A person of color in Stage 1 is likely to have a belief in white supremacy, and they may place an overemphasis on the value and benefits of whiteness. When someone believes in white supremacy and attempts to uphold the dominant culture of whiteness, they may be more likely than others to engage in discriminatory behavior against people of color. Importantly, this can occur outside of awareness. The famous Clark and Clark (1947) study demonstrated this: Black girls preferred to play with White (vs Black) dolls and selected White dolls when asked which ones were nicer and prettier. Importantly, the authors demonstrated this preference in children who could clearly and consistently identify which dolls were White or Black and which ones looked like them, meaning these children had already developed a sense of the social construct "race." This discriminatory behavior can potentially serve as a protective mechanism for individuals in Stage 1 as it works, even if superficially, to help the person maintain the belief that they are closer to whiteness (i.e., the dominant and ideal culture) and maintain their distance from the racial/ethnic groups that are deemed to be more inferior in a white supremacist society.

2.3 Critical Consciousness Development

Theories of racial and ethnic identity development have provided a framework for understanding the differences and nuances within racial and ethnic groups. Many researchers and clinicians continue to use these theories in their work with people of color. However, these theories can also be misused by individuals. For instance,

Shin (2015) noted instances in which White individuals might use racial identity development models to pathologize individuals of color if they are critical of the dominant society. Using the guise of that person being less "advanced" in their stage of racial identity development, Shin (2015) suggests models of racial identity development can be essentially weaponized—such as if a White individual stated that they believed a Black individual experiencing racism should be less angry toward white society and was concerned because they expected the Black individual to be further along in their racial identity development (Shin, 2015). This example shows pathologizing and blame placed on the Black individual using racial/ethnic identity development theories that were not created for this purpose. Given the possibility for misuse, Shin (2015) suggested the use of critical consciousness theory in conjunction with racial/ethnic identity development theories.

Critical consciousness, originally coined by Freire (1970) as *concientización*, is an ability to analyze, recognize, and act against social forces that shape society and oppress marginalized groups. Critical consciousness is often divided into three components: critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action. Critical reflection is generally described as the ability to analyze and name the structures and systems that contribute to inequities and oppression in society (Seider et al., 2020). Critical agency (also known as critical motivation or political efficacy) is the belief or sense that one could enact change on the structures and systems identified during critical reflection (Seider et al., 2020; Watts et al., 2011). Finally, critical action is when individuals actively engage in activities that are intended to create change and fight against oppressive structures and systems (Seider et al., 2020). Research suggests that all three components can develop reciprocally; there is no purported order in which they develop (Watts et al., 2011).

Pillen et al. (2020), in their efforts to understand how critical conscience emerges, identified a framework of development that mirrors racial/ethnic identity development models. Pillen et al. (2020) conducted a thematic analysis of critical consciousness articles and found that there are six processes that lead to critical consciousness development. The six processes were labeled: (1) priming of critical reflection, (2) information creating disequilibrium, (3) introspection, (4) revising frames of reference, (5) developing agency for change, and (6) acting against oppression. These processes are reviewed briefly below.

In the first process, *priming of critical reflection*, Pillen et al. (2020) indicated that there seem to be situations that serve to prime (or initiate) and foster an openness to critical reflection and deeper consideration. As individuals are exposed to these situations, they become more open to deeper reflection and consideration of unjust systems and then they may enter the second process where new *information creates disequilibrium*. In this second process, individuals are exposed to information that might generate uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or emotions, particularly regarding systems of oppression. With this discomfort, individuals need to figure out how to integrate information that is currently incompatible with their existing belief systems through a process of perspective change or transformation. The next process of *introspection* is where individuals engage in self-examination as a response to the disequilibrium and try to make sense of the disorienting information

they have been exposed to. With an introspective process, the individual may learn that their existing frames of reference (or their ideas of social relationships) do not fit their new understanding of their world. Therefore, they work on *revising their frames* of reference. In this fourth process, individuals develop a frame of reference that is informed by socio-structural understandings and how one's individual experiences are related to social structures. In this process, they seem to further understand the dualism of the oppressed and the oppressors and they attempt to locate where they land in this system. After revising their frames of reference, an individual may then focus on *developing agency for change* and, particularly, developing a motivation to assume responsibility for changing systems and structures. This then leads to the last process, which is *acting against oppression*. Acting against oppression typically includes two types of actions: individual action where an individual may act against oppressive social relationships through interpersonal encounters, and group action where the focus is on organizing groups in a way that increases their influence in acting against oppressive social relationships.

We can juxtapose the three components of critical consciousness and the process of critical consciousness development outlined by Pillen et al. (2020) with the stages of racial/ethnic identity development articulated above. These comparisons are made in Table 2.2. For instance, someone who is in the first stage of racial/ethnic identity development may not be critically conscious at all. However, when an individual begins to learn and analyze the different forces of oppression and systems of white supremacy (critical reflection), they may begin to progress through various

Table 2.2 Theoretical relationships between racial/ethnic identity development models, critical consciousness development, and critical consciousness components

Stages of racial/ethnic identity development (Table 2.1)	Critical consciousness development (Pillen et al., 2020)	Critical consciousness components
Stage 1	–	Critical reflection—minimal to none
Stage 2	Priming of critical reflection Information creates disequilibrium	Growing critical reflection
Stage 3	Information creates disequilibrium	Good critical reflection present Developing critical agency
Stage 4	Introspection Revising frames of reference Developing agency for change	Higher levels of critical reflection Critical agency may be present Motivation for critical action beginning
Stage 5	Developing agency for change Acting against oppression	Highest levels of critical reflection Critical action more likely to be present

stages of racial/ethnic identity development (Stage 2; resistance and immersion). Then, as individuals also develop critical agency and start to act, they may continue to move further along the racial/ethnic identity development model and possibly also find other explanations and understanding of experiences with discrimination (structural attributions rather than internal or dispositional attributions). Overall, understanding the models of racial/ethnic identity development along with critical consciousness may provide a more nuanced approach to the various stages that individuals may be at with how they respond to discrimination perpetrated by individuals.

People may be at any given stage of racial/ethnic identity development at any given point in their life; the models are developmental but not yoked to particular age groups. Furthermore, not everyone will go through all stages. The same is true with the development of critical consciousness. People in the first stages (e.g., conformity) of racial/ethnic identity development or those who have little to no critical consciousness are typically conforming to the majority culture and ideals, including ideals about white dominance and beauty standards. Additionally, these individuals may not have begun to think about systems of oppression (i.e., the lack of critical reflection), and thus are likely to be experiencing internalized racism. We may see people of color who are low in critical consciousness and in earlier stages of racial/ethnic identity development adopting prejudiced opinions of their own groups (e.g., thinking that people of color are lazy or more violent than White people) (Sue et al., 2019). These individuals have conformed to white supremacy culture. The internalized racism that may define these initial stages of identity development with low critical consciousness may also lead some people to behave in a discriminatory manner toward people of their own racial/ethnic group. People of color who have internalized racism and who hold some degree of power (e.g., police officers, congresspeople, or university deans) may also support or create structural and institutional policies that systemically affect people from their own racial/ethnic group (Kendi, 2019). An interesting example of this can be found in the recent presidential candidate Herman Cain (Prisock, 2015). In his autobiography, Cain argued that he was able to overcome the disadvantages he faced as a poor Black boy growing up in the segregated southern United States by developing a "positive mindset" (p. 178). In so doing, he makes himself the hero of his circumstances (reifying American exceptionalism) and implies that racism is an excuse used by people who do not apply themselves or take ownership of their fortunes. Prisock (2015) argues that Cain's story minimizes the role of structural racism and upholds white supremacy.

While some people of color may remain in the first stage of racial/ethnic identity development for a long period of time, many (perhaps most) people progress to later stages and develop a strong identification with their racial or ethnic group as well as higher levels of critical consciousness. Individuals who are typically considered high in racial/ethnic identification have a strong sense of belonging to their group and spend time learning about their race/ethnicity's history and customs. Meanwhile, someone low in racial/ethnic identification might not engage in the same type of learning and may not feel they belong to or take pride in their racial/ethnic group. We can think of critical consciousness in the same way. For instance, individuals

who dedicate time and are engaged in critical reflection and critical action and develop critical agency can be regarded as individuals who may be highest in critical consciousness. However, someone who is not engaged in critical reflection or action and feels no sense of critical agency may be the lowest in critical consciousness. Thinking of these constructs dimensionally can give us an understanding of how individuals in the same racial/ethnic group may vary in their beliefs and their behaviors regarding systems of oppression (such as racism) and white supremacy.

Bonilla-Silva (2017) has asserted that most people must at least partially accommodate to the views of the dominant racist ideology, even if they are a "subordinate" member of that society, in order to gain esteem and be considered successful. Prisock (2015) argues that people of color who assimilate to white racist ideologies are often upheld by dominant group members almost as talismans who can ward off critiques of societal racism—*See? We are not racist. We nominate Black candidates to government positions, or promote Latinos to chief officer positions, or admit Native American students to our colleges.* But in fact, these exceptional cases only serve to uphold the dominant racist ideology and allow it to continue unchallenged, even by members of the racial/ethnic minoritized group. Considering society advantages Whites over other racial/ethnic groups, theories of racial/ethnic identity development, and the development of critical consciousness, it is reasonable to suggest that some people of color (earlier in racial/ethnic identity development and low in critical consciousness) may engage in race-based discrimination against members of their own racial/ethnic group.

In summary, there are various examples in research and everyday life that show people of color can and do perpetrate racial/ethnic discrimination against members of their own race or ethnicity. Theories of racial/ethnic identity development and critical consciousness development that are presented in this chapter also help us understand why some people of color might engage in racial discrimination (i.e., being in an earlier stage of their identity or critical consciousness development; internalized racism). In a society that upholds a belief in American exceptionalism and an ideology of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps, it is perhaps no surprise that horizontal discrimination occurs.

2.4 Summary

- People vary in where they are with respect to understanding themselves as a racialized person within a white supremacist society.
- Critical consciousness is the ability to analyze, recognize, and act against social forces that shape society and oppress marginalized groups.
- As people become more critically conscious, they come to see discrimination's sources in a more nuanced way and to identify resolutions both inside and outside of the individual.

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Chapter 3
What Is Known About How People of Color Interpret and React to Horizontal Racial/Ethnic Discrimination?

3.1 Introduction

On October 3, 2022, Kanye West, a Black American rapper, posted a photo with Candance Owens, a Black conservative political commentator, wearing shirts that stated, "White Lives Matter." The image was posted on social media and quickly became viral. Black people on Twitter and other social media outlets reacted in an overwhelmingly negative fashion to Kanye West's behavior. Some Black artists such as Jaden Smith responded with messages such as "Black Lives Matter" to counteract Kanye West's message. Boosie BadAZZ, another Black American rapper, took to Twitter indicating his anger and disbelief at the messages that Kanye West was promoting. A prominent Black radio host, Charlamagne Tha God, suggested Kanye West's behavior was an attempt for white validation and attention. This one example illustrates the spectrum of reactions and interpretations people of color had when they bore witness to horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination. In this chapter, we review different theories and prior research that provide additional insight into how people of color may interpret and respond to racial/ethnic discrimination, with an emphasis on horizontal discrimination.

3.2 Attributions of Behavior

Attribution refers to the process a person uses to infer the causes or intentions of someone else's behavior (Pennington, 2012). There are two main types of attributions: dispositional and situational. Dispositional attributions occur when one attributes a person's behavior to internal characteristics or traits—that is, behavior is thought to reflect what kind of person someone is (Pennington, 2012). Meanwhile, situational attributions are when one attributes a person's behavior to things

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occurring in that person's environment or context—that is, behavior is thought to reflect what kind of circumstance that person might be in. For instance, imagine you are driving and someone, abruptly and without warning, merges in front of you, nearly causing an accident. A dispositional attribution would lead you to conclude that this person nearly caused an accident because they are rude and inconsiderate (or a very poor driver). A situational attribution might lead you to conclude that the person either did not see you or merged to avoid another obstacle in the road. When you make a dispositional attribution, you are making assumptions about the kind of person someone is. In contrast, a situational attribution focuses less on who the person is and more on the context that may lead someone to behave in a certain way (Pennington, 2012).

One specific subset of situational attributions is that of structural attributions, or system-blame attributions. Structural attributions focus on systemic issues and institutional factors that may influence someone's behavior, and not just any contextual factor (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). While structural attributions are subsets of situational attributions, it is important to consider this nuanced interpretation of attributions separately when considering issues of race and racism. As described in Chap. 1, structural racism includes the laws, policies, and practices of society or organizations within societies that uphold white supremacy and perpetuate race-based inequities. Therefore, a structural attribution of discriminatory behavior would be one that recognizes the *context of white supremacy* in making a judgment about why someone would engage in horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination. It is situational, yes, but importantly, it names a specific structural factor outside of the individual that may account for the individual's behavior.

To further understand the nuances between types of attributions, take this example of Farah. Farah was on her way to work; however, her bus never arrived at her stop. Farah, therefore, had to walk to work, arriving about an hour late. Her boss could attribute her lateness to a variety of factors. For instance, the boss could think that Farah is lazy and did not wake up on time... perhaps she is even lying about the bus not coming to her stop (a dispositional attribution—*she is lazy and a liar*). The boss instead could think that Farah's bus was late because of heavy traffic... if she had waited longer, the bus eventually would have arrived (a situational attribution—*traffic was heavy*). Yet another possibility is that the boss thinks the city lacks funding for the appropriate infrastructure for public transportation leading to consistently late or missing busses, a factor that disproportionately affects working-class people (a structural attribution—*the city does not put proper funding into reliable public transportation for working class neighborhoods*). One could easily imagine that, depending on the attribution made, the consequences of Farah's lateness could vary widely. If a dispositional attribution is made, the boss may write Farah up for being unreliable. If a situational attribution that is not structural is made, the boss might propose Farah change her work hours to be less likely to get caught in heavy traffic. If a structural attribution is made, the boss may attend a city council meeting to advocate for more funds for reliable public transportation.

Structural attributions depend on a person's awareness of structural factors that can impact behavior and on a person's ability to engage in critical reflection. These

attributions also are cognitively effortful, because they require someone to think through history, laws, policies, and practices that may impact an individual's behavior rather than to jump quickly to an easy-to-reach conclusion. This means that structural attributions may not be readily or easily made when someone is trying to make sense of another person's behavior, given humans' tendencies to engage in rapid vs. effortful thinking (Strack & Deutsch, 2015). Researchers suggest that individuals with past experiences with discrimination and systemic unfairness are more likely to make structural attributions of behavior than people who have not directly experienced structural racism (Tran & Curtin, 2017).

3.3 Attribution Errors

Not only are people making attributions about each other's (and one's own) behavior, these attributions can be entirely right, entirely wrong, or a mix. A rich scholarly literature describes the ways in which attributions about behavior can be (predictably) biased. Some of those are relevant to understanding attributions of racial/ethnic discriminatory behavior and are described next. They include the fundamental attribution error and the ultimate attribution error.

Perhaps the most well-documented thinking error people make when trying to understand the motivations behind someone's behavior is the fundamental attribution error (Heider, 1958; Ross et al., 1977). According to the fundamental attribution error, people overestimate the importance of dispositional (personal) factors and underestimate situational influences when making judgments about another person's behavior. However, when making judgments about one's *own* behavior, the reverse occurs. For example, if I receive a negative evaluation from a customer, I might attribute that to the customer being unreasonable or cranky (a situational attribution), whereas I might attribute a negative evaluation that my co-worker received as being due to that co-worker being a poor employee (a dispositional attribution). Researchers suggest that making situational attributions for others' behavior may be more cognitively demanding than dispositional attribution because one would need to consider *all* the relevant factors of a person's situation rather than just making an assumption based on observed behavior (Newman & Uleman, 1989; Uleman et al., 2005). In contrast, we are well aware of the situational contexts of our own behavior and can more readily see that context as influencing us.

General social psychology principles related to group dynamics suggest that an ingroup bias exists which leads to ingroup favoritism (Castano et al., 2002; Lindeman, 1997; Messick & Mackie, 1989; Tajfel, 1982). In short, ingroup bias suggests that we tend to like people who are in our group (be that an identity group such as other people of our ethnic heritage, or a minimum group such as being assigned to work together on a project or fans of the same sports team) more than we like people outside of our group. Ingroup bias helps preserves a positive differentiation of one's ingroup compared to the outgroup (Turner, 1975, 2010). Ingroup bias focuses on how we favor our ingroup versus how we might undermine an

outgroup. We are generally kinder to and more forgiving of ingroup than outgroup members and constantly seek ways to help and promote people in the ingroup, rather than being actively hostile toward outgroup members or seeking to harm them. Ingroup bias may account for some race-based acts of discrimination. Studies show that White people are more likely to hire other White people over Black or Latinx people because of ingroup favoritism rather than because of outgroup hostility (Bendick, 2007; Bendick et al., 2010).

The ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979) expands the idea of the fundamental attribution error to include ingroup bias. The ultimate attribution error suggests that when an outgroup member does or says something that is undesirable or negative, it is often attributed to dispositional factors, whereas when an ingroup member does the same, the behavior is attributed to situational factors. In short, much like the fundamental attribution error suggests we give ourselves the benefit of the doubt for bad behavior (e.g., *I failed the exam because the professor wrote bad questions*) but do not extend that benefit of the doubt to others (e.g., *he failed the exam because he is not smart*), we give people in our ingroup but not our outgroup the benefit of the doubt. That is, we are more likely to make a situational attribution for an ingroup member's behavior rather than a dispositional attribution if the behavior is undesirable (e.g., *our team lost because the referees made bad calls*). In contrast, we are likely to make a dispositional attribution of outgroup members (e.g., *their team lost because they lack talent*). Given this, it is possible that when people from our same racial/ethnic group behave in a discriminatory way, we may attribute that behavior to situational factors (e.g., *they were having a bad day*) rather than make a dispositional attribution (e.g., *that person is racist*).

3.4 The Black Sheep Effect

While ingroup bias is seen in many intergroup interactions, other group dynamics may occur. For example, when a person considered part of the ingroup violates a group value (an act described as deviance), they may be rated more harshly or negatively than a member of the outgroup who engages in the same violation. This phenomenon has been called the black sheep effect (Jetten & Hornsey, 2014; Marques et al., 1988). On the surface, this seems to contract ingroup bias because that ingroup member is judged more harshly than an outgroup member. However, the *function* of this harsh judgment may in fact serve to preserve the positive esteem of the ingroup. When an ingroup member violates an ingroup norm or behaves in a way that is deviant from the typical behavior of the ingroup, the other ingroup members may respond quickly to either bring that person's behavior in line with the group or to excise that person from the group. Both of these actions ultimately serve to retain a positive view of the ingroup (Pinto et al., 2010).

Some real-world examples have illustrated this phenomenon. For example, consider individuals who have been part of a certain political party for years, such as former New Jersey governor Chris Christie in the Republican party. When Governor Christie praised President Obama, a Democrat, for his response to Hurricane Sandy, which devastated New Jersey, and physically embraced him, other Republicans reacted as if they had been betrayed by Governor Christie. On Fox News, a historically conservative news station, Governor Christie was ridiculed and even blamed for President Obama's winning his subsequent election.

An even more recent example of the black sheep effect occurred during the Trump administration. Republican politicians who were publicly critical of Trump were harshly criticized by other Republicans (even more harshly criticized than were Democrats who lobbed similar critiques; Jackson, 2019). The function of this harsh response was to warn both the violator and, importantly, other ingroup members to stay in line. These Republicans were cast as the "black sheep" of the party (or, in Trump's words, "human scum").

3.5 Cultural Betrayal Trauma Theory

In addition to the social psychological theories and processes discussed previously, cultural betrayal trauma theory can provide additional insight into how people of color may interpret horizontal discrimination. Gómez (2021) developed cultural betrayal trauma theory to explain the emotional effects people of color experience when they are harmed by other people of color. According to this theory, societal traumas like race-based discrimination create the need for (intra)cultural trust or attachment with and connection to other marginalized people. Indeed, Gómez notes that (intra)cultural trust between marginalized groups would not exist if it were not for the societal traumas of racism and discrimination faced by people of color. (Intra)cultural trust is like interpersonal trust and is marked by feelings of attachment, loyalty, and mutual responsibility between members of marginalized groups. These feelings, while largely protective and beneficial, leave people of color vulnerable to disappointment and hurt if that trust is violated. Accordingly, when a person of color experiences horizontal discrimination, that person is likely to feel a sense of violation of (intra)cultural trust or, as Gómez defines it, that person feels a sense of cultural betrayal. Gómez (2019, 2021) found that cultural betrayal is associated with posttraumatic stress symptoms, feelings of hurt, and emotional pain. Although cultural betrayal has been studied predominantly in the context of sexual assault, it is consistent with a larger body of work on psychosocial responses to horizontal discrimination.

3.6 Attribution Errors, Black Sheep, Cultural Betrayal, and Responses to Horizontal Discrimination

What do these theories predict about how people of color will respond to horizontal racism? These are summarized in Table 3.1. Taken together, the research on ingroup values violations suggests that ingroup members have a positive bias toward other ingroup members; however, they will judge ingroup members more harshly than outgroup members when those people are deviant (i.e., when the person violates a core value of the group) (Bettencourt et al., 1997; Glasford et al., 2009; Marques et al., 1988; Pinto et al., 2010).

Table 3.1 assumes that all violations, large and small, will result in similar outcomes. However, as we reviewed in Chap. 1, there are multiple types of racial/ethnic discriminatory behaviors. One critical dimension we reviewed was whether the behavior was overt or subtle. Overt discrimination was defined as discriminatory behavior where the intention of the actor was fairly clear—it was because of the target's race or ethnicity and was intended to cause harm. In contrast, subtle discrimination was defined as discriminatory behavior where the intention of the actor was *not* clear—it was not clear that the behavior was because of the target's race or ethnicity, and the intention of the actor could have been benign.

How might attribution theory, the black sheep effect, and cultural betrayal trauma theory predict reactions to racial/ethnic discrimination that is subtle rather than overt? The subtle nature of some forms of discrimination may lessen the need to respond harshly to a black sheep, allowing that person's behavior to be more readily attributed to situational factors and, therefore, not to require a strong response to either get in line or be excommunicated from the group. Making a situational attribution when an ingroup member commits an act of subtle discrimination also protects the target from feelings of cultural betrayal. In short, subtle racial/ethnic discriminatory behaviors may still allow ingroup bias to be upheld as the violation may not be perceived as egregious. The ultimate attribution error would predict that *subtle* racial/ethnic discrimination by an ingroup member would be attributed to situational rather than dispositional factors (i.e., they would be given the benefit of the doubt), and thus, the negative impact of the behavior would be lessened. However, the black sheep effect would predict that if the discrimination was severe

Table 3.1 Predicted responses to horizontal discrimination

Theory	Prediction
Attribution	Ingroup members who commit an act of racial/ethnic discrimination will be judged less harshly (i.e., their behavior will be attributed to situation factors) than outgroup members (whose behavior will be attributed to dispositional factors)
Black sheep	Ingroup members who commit an act of racial/ethnic discrimination will be judged more harshly than outgroup members (to bring the member back in line with group values and to preserve the positive image of the group)
Cultural betrayal	The impact of an ingroup member's racial/ethnic discrimination will be more negative than the same act by an outgroup member

in magnitude (i.e., overt), then the target would make a harsh dispositional attribution about the perpetrator. Cultural betrayal trauma theory suggests that in the case of overt horizontal discrimination, the target would feel especially betrayed and would experience negative psychological effects.

Almost no studies have examined how people of color make attributions about horizontal discrimination, and no prior studies look at this in the context of subtle and overt subtypes of discrimination. Smith and Wout (2019) created a series of studies to understand how Black people's perception of a biracial person's ingroup membership affected how they perceived social rejection and whether they would attribute rejection to discrimination. In their first study, Smith and Wout (2019) recruited Black American adults to understand attributions of discrimination when participants were rejected by a Black, White, or biracial interaction partner. They also examined if attributions to discrimination would vary based on the degree to which participants perceived their interaction partner to be a racial ingroup member. Participants completed the following tasks: write a short response, evaluate the ingroup membership of the partner, and receive negative/rejection feedback. The study was designed so all participants received negative feedback and were rejected by their interaction partner regardless of the partner's racial identity. Results indicated that participants considered Black and biracial partners as more of an ingroup member than a White partner. Additionally, participants were more likely to attribute negative feedback to discrimination when the person providing the feedback was White versus Black or biracial. Their results were consistent with the ultimate attribution error as attributions for rejection by an outgroup member were harsher (e.g., attributed the behavior to discrimination) than attributions for rejection by an ingroup member.

In their second study, Smith and Wout (2019) further examined if the way a biracial person self-identified (Black, White, or biracial) would impact the extent to which participants viewed them as an ingroup member and, in turn, affect attributions of discrimination to their rejection behavior. Following a similar procedure as Study 1, participants were shown one of three profiles that provided information on how an individual self-identified racially. They then completed the same tasks of writing a short response, evaluating the ingroup membership of the partner, and receiving negative/rejection feedback. Smith and Wout (2019) found that Black participants were more likely to rate profiles of biracial people who identified as Black or biracial as part of their ingroup than profiles of biracial people who identified as White. They also found that participants were more likely to attribute negative feedback about their short response to discrimination when the biracial person providing the feedback self-identified as White compared to the biracial-identified and Black-identified person. Again, findings support the ultimate attribution error because attributions about the behavior were harsher for an outgroup than an ingroup member.

O'Brien et al. (2012) created a series of studies that focused on White and Latinx participants and how they would attribute ingroup rejection in a fictional job interview setting based on the race of the interaction partner. In their results, they found that Latinx participants were more likely to report feeling betrayed and attributed the behavior to discrimination when they were rejected by an ingroup member in

favor of a White fictional applicant. These findings were consistent with the black sheep effect and cultural betrayal trauma theory.

Research on ingroup discrimination experiences is nascent but important to understanding the experiences of people of color. Taken together these studies highlight that people of color attribute behavior and respond differently to experiences of discrimination depending on whether the discrimination is horizontal or vertical. However, the extant literature is limited in a few ways. Much of the research focused on attributions of ingroup discrimination (e.g., O'Brien et al., 2012; Smith & Wout, 2019) has not addressed situations that are explicitly race-related. The scenarios and situations that participants were exposed to in these studies were often ambiguous and not racially charged. However, it is important to understand how people may attribute behaviors in situations that are explicitly race-related. Additionally, the research to date has used standardized scenarios (e.g., job decisions and friendship rejection) that may not be salient to the participant. Allowing participants to describe in their own words situations of discrimination would elicit information about when people actually attribute negative behavior to dispositional versus situational factors in real-world settings and to explore their psychological impacts.

Furthermore, there is a lack of exploration into the phenomenological experience of horizontal vs. vertical race-based discrimination. Most research focuses on the perpetration of discrimination from White people toward people of color, but theories of ethnic identity development and the lived experiences of people of color emphasize that discrimination is also possible by ingroup members. Research on the psychological impacts of horizontal discrimination is also lacking.

3.7 Current Study

In the current study, we explored a previously understudied experience of horizontal discrimination using a qualitative approach. This method allowed for the collection of rich information about people's real-world experiences with discrimination. It also allowed for further articulation of the contexts and situations in which people of color may attribute behavior to dispositional versus to situational factors. By recounting these events in an interview, participants could describe their emotional states and thought processes as they reflected on these past events, helping articulate what may be common themes or contexts that elicit certain types of attributions and their emotional impacts.

Based on the background research, our study aimed to: (1) understand what people of color believe about racism and discrimination broadly; (2) describe how contextual factors (e.g., horizontal vs vertical discrimination; subtle vs overt discrimination) are linked to attributions; and (3) understand the affective consequences of these diverse forms of discrimination. The study hypotheses are informed by social psychological theories (ultimate attribution error, the black sheep effect,

Table 3.2 Study hypotheses

Type of discrimination	Horizontal	Vertical
Overt	*Attribution*: Dispositional *Emotional impact*: Very negative and unexpected	*Attribution*: Dispositional *Emotional impact*: Very negative but expected
Subtle	*Attribution*: Situational *Emotional impact*: Little/none	*Attribution*: Dispositional *Emotional impact*: Slightly negative and expected

and cultural betrayal trauma theory). Our hypotheses are presented in Table 3.2. We expected participants would attribute race-based behavior as reflecting dispositional factors on the part of the perpetrator when the behavior was either (a) vertical or (b) overt. In contrast, we expected that participants would attribute race-based behavior as reflecting situational factors when the behavior was both (a) perpetrated by an ingroup member and (b) subtle in nature. We further expected ingroup discrimination that was overt to result in the highest degree of emotional hurt, consistent with cultural betrayal trauma theory.

3.8 Summary

- People can respond in varying ways to racial/ethnic discrimination experiences.
- Numerous social psychological theories explain this variability.
- Social psychological theories provide a theoretical foundation for the present study.
- There are few studies that address attributions people make about why others engage in horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination and their emotional impact.
- We, therefore, conducted a qualitative study designed to bridge this gap in the literature.

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Chapter 4
A Qualitative Study of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

Social psychological theories, particularly the ultimate attribution error, ingroup bias, and black sheep effects described in Chap. 3, are combined with our understanding of cultural betrayal trauma theory to inform our study hypotheses (Table 3.2). Our hypotheses regarding how people of color attribute and react to racist discrimination are informed by theories suggesting responses will depend on the race/ethnicity of the perpetrator and the subtlety of the act. To assess our hypotheses, we conducted a qualitative study focused on the experiences of people of color who had experienced or witnessed race-based discrimination. The methods and analytical approach are outlined throughout this chapter.

4.1 Participants

Participants in the study (N = 39) self-identified as a person of color. In order to participate in the study, participants needed to score at or above the mean (3.41) of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure—Revised (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007). This inclusion criterion was added because (1) research suggests that people of color with strong ethnic identification are more likely to report higher levels of perceived discrimination (Gonzales-Backen et al., 2018), and (2) those who report higher ethnic identification are likely to be further along in the developmental trajectory of the ethnic identity and critical consciousness development models discussed previously, suggesting they can recognize the presence of white supremacy and internalized racism among their peers. The average ethnic identity score of participants in the current study was 4.31 (SD = 0.31). Participants resided in a variety of states spanning the continental United States including New York, California, and Georgia. The age range for participants was 18–51 years (M = 25.72,

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Table 4.1 Description of participants

Demographics	Total *n* (%)
Race/ethnicity	
Black	12 (31%)
Latinx	11 (28%)
Asian	13 (33%)
Biracial/multiracial	2 (5%)
Native American	1 (3%)
Gender identity	
Woman	21 (54%)
Man	18 (46%)
Sexual orientation	
Bisexual	2 (4%)
Heterosexual	27 (69%)
Gay	3 (8%)
Lesbian	1 (3%)
Queer	5 (13%)
Prefer not to disclose	1 (3%)
Marital status	
Married	5 (12%)
Single	33 (85%)
Domestic partnership	1 (3%)
Employment status	
Unemployed	1 (3%)
Full-time	11 (28%)
Part-time	2 (4%)
Student	24 (62%)
Self-employed	1 (3%)
Educational achievement	
High school or equivalent	7 (18%)
Associates (2-year) degree	1 (3%)
Bachelor's (4-year) degree	18 (46%)
Master's degree	10 (26%)
Doctoral (e.g., PhD, ED) degree	2 (4%)
Professional (e.g., JD, MD) degree	1 (3%)
Average yearly income	
Below $10 K	4 (10%)
$10 K–$50 K	19 (49%)
$51 K–$100 K	8 (21%)
$101 K–$150 K	4 (10%)
Over $150 K	4 (10%)

SD = 5.57). See Table 4.1 for a more complete breakdown of participant demographics.

4.2 Recruitment

The study was advertised using a flyer distributed online through various groups that reach across the United States. The flyer was posted on email listservs, Facebook groups, Twitter, and shared with contacts at other universities (especially historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions). The researchers also contacted members of their social network (friends and colleagues) who identified as people of color. Participants who were interested were directed to an online survey screener, which included demographics information and a measure of ethnic identity.

4.3 Procedure

Participants (i.e., adult participants of color whose MEIM-R score was at or above the normative mean) were contacted via email and sent a link to a different online survey. The online survey included a consent form, a measure of experiences with ethnic/racial discrimination, and a measure of the acceptability of microaggressions. Participants were also asked to provide their availability for scheduling a video conferencing or phone interview.

During the scheduled interview, the first author (CM) reviewed the consent form before beginning the interview and recorded the session. The interview was semi-structured with a set of stem questions all participants received (Appendix) and some suggested (but flexible) follow-up questions that were asked in a more individual way, allowing the participant to discuss issues they found relevant. The interview on average took about 1 hour to complete. Participants were awarded a $30 e-gift card for the completion of the online questionnaires and the interview.

4.3.1 Debriefing

At the end of the interview, the experimenter provided the participants with a debriefing form that discussed the purpose of the study and listed information about resources available related to experiencing race-related trauma and discrimination. Additionally, participants had the option to provide an email address that would be kept separate from their study data if they wanted to receive de-identified results from the study.

4.4 Time Period of Data Collection

Interviews were conducted from August 2020 to December 2020. During this time period, the United States was undergoing a racial reckoning after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hand of the state and Ahmaud Arbery murdered by White people. There was also the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic that highlighted racial disparities in health even further and led to increased racial discrimination toward people who identified as Asian and Asian American. These national and global tragedies led to widespread protest and media coverage and were therefore at the forefront of many participants' minds when discussing issues of racism and discrimination.

4.5 Measures

4.5.1 Demographic Information

Participants completed a demographic form with information about their gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, marital status, language use, socioeconomic status, employment status, educational attainment, and year in school (for students only) during the screener. They included an email address used to contact them if they were eligible for participation.

4.5.2 Interview

The interview for this study was semi-structured. Open-ended questions were designed to elicit a variety of responses from participants (Appendix). The development of this interview began after a thorough review of the literature surrounding racism and race-based discrimination. After the review, we generated a list of questions related to experiences with racism and discrimination that we believed would allow participants to share their experiences openly and would yield themes that would answer the main study questions and aims. Once the redundant questions were removed and additional questions were added for clarity, the first author (CM) piloted the interview with three individuals of color (a Black man, an Indian man, and a Latina woman). Following the pilot, some questions were edited for clarity and an additional question was added. On the whole, these pilot interviews suggested the study aims would be met with the interview questions and format. The interview was reviewed a final time with a doctoral student who has content expertise in the area of race, racism, and discrimination.

The interview began with questions about participants' definitions of racism, racial/ethnic discrimination, and differences between subtle and overt racism. These

warm-up questions allowed space for establishing rapport, generating participants' definitions of these constructs, and permitting the experimenter to clarify the content of the interview if there were questions or doubts about the meaning of these words.

The main portion of the interview focused on racism and discrimination (both subtle and overt) participants had experienced in the past (or someone close to them had experienced), how the participant thought, felt, and reacted to these experiences, and whether these responses would have differed had the perpetrator been different (i.e., same race if describing a White perpetrator, or different race if describing an in-group perpetrator).

Following the main portion of the interview, if there were still questions about how the participant might feel about ingroup versus White perpetrators of racist discrimination, the experimenter discussed the participant's responses to the microaggressions acceptability scale from the pre-interview questionnaire. The experimenter specifically probed responses that varied in acceptability based on the race of the perpetrator in order to further understand the participant's thought process. The concluding question explicitly stated, "What are some differences in how you perceive racism depending on the race (for example White vs someone of your racial background) of the person who does it?"

4.6 Qualitative Analyses

To analyze the rich qualitative data provided by the interviews, we used thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). There are six steps or phases to conducting a thematic analysis. Steps 1 through 5 were conducted by the first author (CM); the last step was conducted jointly by both authors. First, the first author familiarized herself with the data by transcribing all recorded interviews and reading through the data. Second, she started to generate initial codes by coding any interesting features that emerged in the data across the entire data set. Each data extract or quote was tagged with the relevant code. Third, she collated codes into themes, ensuring that all data or quotes relevant to that theme were under the correct theme. Fourth, she reviewed the themes and checked if the themes worked in relation to the coded quotes and the data set as a whole. Fifth, she refined, defined, and named themes so that the analyses told a cohesive story. Sixth, both authors wrote the report and selected relevant and compelling data extracts that helped to highlight the themes. Importantly, thematic analysis is not typically concerned with interrater reliability; instead, it is common for one person to develop themes and organize qualitative data based on their personal interpretations. However, after thematic interpretations, both authors collaborated in writing the results.

The following chapters (Chaps. 5, 6 and 7) discuss the themes extracted from the data relevant to each aim of the study. The aims of this study were: (1) to understand what people of color believe about racism and discrimination broadly and based on the identity of the perpetrator, (2) to describe what kinds of attributions (situational

vs. dispositional) people may make about race-related negative behavior under different situations (e.g., identity of perpetrator or overtness of the event), and (3) to understand how emotions would be affected by ingroup vs. outgroup discrimination and the subsequent attributions of those behaviors.

4.7 Summary

- Qualitative methods are useful to explore novel questions and understudied scholarly areas.
- Guided by theory and our hypotheses, we interviewed 39 people of color about their experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination.
- Interviews were transcribed and reviewed to identify several themes related to how participants made sense of diverse discrimination experiences.

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Chapter 5
What Do People of Color Believe About Racism and Discrimination Based on an Ingroup/Outgroup Distinction of the Perpetrator?

5.1 Overview of Themes

This chapter focuses on the overall question of what people of color believe or think about racism and discrimination. Table 5.1 reviews the titles of each theme and provides a brief description. With the first two themes, participants highlighted how the definitions one ascribes to words can influence our experience of the behaviors tied to them. The following two themes add to the literature and incorporate how the nuances of history, multiple identities, and identity of the perpetrator can have an impact on our understanding of what racism or racial/ethnic discrimination is. We describe each theme and provide quotes from participants below.

5.2 Theme 1: Racism—Power as Systemic or Interpersonal

Definitions of racism varied across participants. Participants had definitions of racism that included ideas of power and systemic issues, but also definitions that focused solely on interpersonal interactions based on skin color or other phenotypical features.

5.2.1 Power as Systemic

Participants who used a power or systemic definition viewed racism as something that is perpetuated by those in power (generally White people) and affects all of society (i.e., is systemic). This type of definition is described by an 18-year-old Black woman in this quote:

C. A. Mujica, A. J. Bridges, *Horizontal and Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination*, SpringerBriefs in Psychology,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33058-2_5

Table 5.1 Themes and brief descriptions for aim 1

Theme	Brief description
(1) Racism: Power as systemic or interpersonal	Participants had definitions of racism that included ideas of power and systemic issues but also definitions that focused solely on interpersonal interactions based on skin color or other phenotypical features
(2) dDiscrimination: Bias and negative action	Definitions for discrimination were similar across participants. There is an understanding that discrimination is based on any identity and includes an action such as unfair treatment of a specific group
(3) Historical origins and intersectionality	Participants called on historical origins such as sociopolitical issues to discuss why people of color may engage in racist discrimination. Additionally, they addressed intersecting identities as another reason for racist discrimination within communities of color
(4) "All my skinfolk ain't kinfolk"	While not all participants agreed that people of color can be racist due to differences of opinion on the definition of racism, there was unanimous agreement that people of color can endorse racist ideas and often enact racism through discrimination and prejudice

> Um, I would say racism is perpetuated by someone who has power and usually it's like systemic power. So, it's like power that's rooted in the system and they use that as leverage against someone who does not have that equal amount of power in the system. And they can use it to like belittle the person or use it against the person in any manner. Yeah, so that's what I say, that's what my definition of racism is.

A 29-year-old South Asian woman also defined racism in a more comprehensive power and systemic way by highlighting how policies and larger ideologies like white supremacy are involved in maintaining it:

> Racism is any behavior, any policy, any act that disproportionality affects another group and oftentimes it comes from this perspective that one group [so for example a racial group] is inferior to another racial group and it's been kind of thought of within the context of white supremacy and kind of white supremacy against all other racial groups.

A 25-year-old South Asian man further added that racism can affect multiple parts of functioning in society, such as accessing healthcare resources:

> So like, it's basically a specific- like it's a type or form of manifestation of power imbalance in society- obviously, you know, changes across context and time- that places certain people at an advantage and others at a disadvantage to pretty much anything. Accessing resources, experiences, physically and mental health, health in general, just pretty much anything out there. And it can manifest in both systemic- I mean, at all levels basically- systemic, community, societal, individual. Yeah, that's how I see it. And obviously intersects with a lot of other identities, which can shape the experience of racism itself.

5.2.2 Interpersonal

Compared to the previous power- and systemic-focused definitions of racism, some participants focused on interpersonal interactions where people may engage in stereotypes or treat people negatively because of their racial or ethnic background. An example of this comes from a 26-year-old Latino man who defined racism as:

> …When a specific group of people targets another group and- stereotypes…Or basically assumes in a negative way some of the actions, some of the beliefs, some of the culture aspect of them and treats them wrong because of it. Um, yeah, it could be from small to very harmful ways.

Another participant, a 26-year-old Black man, simply stated: "Well, racism is judging someone solely based on how they how they look, whether it's positive or negative." These participants' definitions of racism focused more on interactions between people and less on the pervasive effects of racism in other areas of society.

5.3 Theme 2: Discrimination—Bias and Negative Action

While there was slight variation in the understanding of racism, definitions for discrimination were overall similar across participants. There seemed to be an understanding that discrimination is based on any identity and includes an action such as unfair treatment of a specific group which disadvantages the target group. As an 18-year-old Indian woman stated:

> Discrimination is an act that disadvantages someone unfairly based on any identity that they might hold. And specifically unequal treatment, so that someone in the same position, just with a different identity, would be treated better.

A 24-year-old woman who identifies as a multiracial Arab defined discrimination similarly:

> Yeah, I guess to me, I think of racism more of like a kind of idea or a concept, and it can manifest in an act of discrimination, so that would be like an individual action against someone else or group of people or again, like a systemic thing that blocks or like inequitably treats people based on their identity.

A 24-year-old Latina also described discrimination as an action:

> Discrimination would be a physical action that actively prevents someone from fulfilling whatever it is they were doing, whether it is applying for a job or reporting some sort of crime. If someone is actively prevented from doing something or passively from doing an action, then that is discrimination.

These quotes highlight the idea of discrimination being a negative action that prevents someone from doing something (i.e., getting a job, securing a loan, or buying a house) and shows bias toward that person with a minoritized identity. These definitions provided by participants also laid a foundation for conversations regarding racial discrimination experiences throughout the interview.

5.4 Theme 3: Historical Origins and Intersectionality

As participants began to recall incidents of racial discrimination from both White perpetrators and perpetrators of the same race, differences in their understandings of why racial/ethnic discrimination occurred began to appear. Participants generally called on historical origins when discussing why perpetrators of the same racial/ethnic background might engage in racial discrimination or racism, but not when discussing incidents from White perpetrators. These historical origins mostly related to sociopolitical issues such as regional conflicts or colonialism/imperialism. Additionally, participants viewed issues such as colorism or classism within their racial/ethnic group as racism or racial discrimination, highlighting that the intersection of other identities may lead to a more nuanced understanding of how discrimination within a group may occur.

5.4.1 Sociopolitical History

Regional conflicts, colonialism, and imperialism were all aspects of sociopolitical history that were mentioned by participants to explain why some people of color may engage in racist behavior. For example, a 19-year-old Indian man went into detail about the history of colonialism in India and how lighter skin came to be cherished. Additionally, he used this to indicate that it's not the fault of older generations since they grew up with these ideas:

> I think it really again all just comes back to white supremacy because we were under British colonialism for hundreds of years. Again, who instilled that idea of if you're dark that's a bad thing and if you're light that's a good thing? It was them. Those sorts of colorist sentiments did not exist prior to British colonialism. So, because of colonialism like we have these sentiments ourselves that are internalized. It's not those aunties' faults, the adults that tell us not to play out in the sun for too long, it's not their fault. It's generational trauma and it's a result of colonialization that we think like this. We have all of this internalized you know colorism and now we continue to perpetuate it. So, again I can't even blame those aunties because that's how they were raised and that's how it's really a generational thing.

Similarly, a 35-year-old Black woman discussed how the history of slavery played a role in promoting colorist ideas, or the preferencing of lighter skin tones, within Black communities:

> Um, well just like historically like every older Black person you know, it's just literally been something that is just is passed down from generation to generation and it like literally is just something that's left over. It's like a remnant from slavery because you had lighter, you had the mulattos who were either children of the slave master or you know the overseer and so there was like a caste system within slavery and that's just something that I feel like African Americans have internalized and that's not something that we've been able to shake. It's like so deeply ingrained and so like we're all just like internalizing all of this stuff that like has been unintentionally passed down to us. Like it's like no matter what like in my family when a baby is born people ask, what's their complexion and it's just like what does it matter? Like we're all from the same family, like we're all obviously Black, does the

> shade matter? So yeah I think it's just when you look at the larger historical context it's just, we're just having a hard time shaking that.

A 27-year-old Taiwanese man recalled sociopolitical struggles in Taiwan with Japan and China. He suggested that history may be one reason why people can be racist to each other:

> Japan is another good example for us. They colonized Taiwan for a little bit during World War II, and there's obviously a lot of um, a lot of pain there. So same thing of a lot of Chinese too… Chinese and the Taiwanese people. Yeah. They say a lot of negative things about Japan because of that.

A 25-year-old Indian man also reflected on how even regional conflicts can lead to stereotypes and ingroup discrimination:

> Like certain places, certain regions, states, and cultures, and stuff like that have certain stereotypes associated with them. Oh, these people are Marathi, that's why they're really shrewd in their business mindset and stuff like that. So automatically, there's a judgment associated with that, I think. Not all the time, but most of the time there is. Especially when you are kind of reproducing stereotypes.

Taking these experiences together, it seems that many participants believe that history and sociopolitical issues can lead individuals from their same racial/ethnic background to internalize some racist ideologies. Understanding the history seems to allow the participants to give potential ingroup perpetrators of racial discrimination the benefit of the doubt using more situational attributions.

5.4.2 Intersectionality

Participants often viewed themselves as a person with multiple layers and identities. While they all identified as people of color, participants had varying levels of power and privilege in other aspects of their lives such as skin tone, socioeconomic status, and gender. Participants identified that ingroup discrimination can often happen toward people of color who may experience less power and privilege in a certain identity sphere. An 18-year-old Black woman discussed how colorism affects multiple communities of color:

> I know this is a really prominent problem in the Black community as well as like the Indian or South Asian community, but like colorism specifically when people like prefer the lighter shades than darker shades and that's like also comes like heavily, heavily from the media and just like growing up and seeing images of like lighter is better. And also in Africa, I know it's definitely not approved, but they sell a lot of lightening cream to like lighten your skin tone so that's like another instance.

Additionally, an 18-year-old Indian woman reflected on how colorism has been present in her life since she was a kid. She recalls comments on skin color from both students of color and White students:

> I remember in 6th grade that is when I went to a particularly White, wealthy school. And it was a private school and I was on financial aid, so there was just a lot of differences, like I

> felt different. But I remember some people making fun of me, saying that my skin looked like the color of poop and like yeah, all those, so yeah. I remember a lot of overt colorism towards me when I was younger.

This idea of lighter skin tone being better was also present in the Latinx community as noted by a 24-year-old Latina who stated: "In many Latinx countries, there is a real form of supremacism if the color of your skin is White and the darker it gets the less respect you get."

An additional topic that came up when participants were asked about ingroup discrimination or racism was that of class differences. Class differences were especially pronounced and used as examples of ingroup discrimination in communities of color that had a caste system (e.g., South Asia). For example, a 29-year-old Indian woman recalled how she overheard people in her family get upset over someone marrying a person from a lower caste:

> I heard another one where this person married this other person and they were of a lower caste, and my family was upset. There's still very much identifying with this caste and even though I am Hindu, I don't have full identify with the caste system and I don't really believe in kind of all of the discriminatory things that that has perpetuated.

Finally, gender was often mentioned by participants as an important factor when thinking about racial discrimination from an ingroup member. One participant, age 51, noted how as a Native American woman she felt she was stereotyped and exoticized when a Black man sexually assaulted her in high school. Similarly, when a 25-year-old Latina woman recalled being cat-called, she noted:

> I had some friends be like, oh, maybe they just did it because you were a woman. And I'm like, yeah, that could be it. But it could also have been like, I'm a woman of color which then makes it a racist and a gendered act as well.

5.5 Theme 4: "All My Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk"

An additional theme that was identified with regard to racism and discrimination from ingroup members was "all my skinfolk ain't kinfolk." Zora Neale Hurston is credited for this first stating this perspective, a quote which continues to be used colloquially in the Black community. This quote highlights that while someone may be the same skin color or from the same racial group, they are not necessarily supportive of the values and needs of the group.

While not all participants agreed that people of color can be racist (some participants noted specifically that people of color lack systemic privilege, which they described as a necessary component of being racist), there was unanimous agreement that people of color can endorse racist ideas and often enact racism through discrimination and prejudice. This discrimination was most often labeled anti-Blackness when targeted toward Black people and internalized racism or hate when targeted toward their own racial or ethnic group.

When asked if people of color can be racist or discriminatory toward other people of color, a 22-year-old Chinese man highlighted that anti-Blackness is prevalent in the Asian communities that he is a part of. He also highlights how, in the racial hierarchy, Asian folks are closest to whiteness and seemed to suggest that discrimination toward Black people may be a way to assert this proximity to whiteness:

> Yes, absolutely [they can be racist] to other people of color, I think. Um, I see this a lot in the Chinese community. I think east- there's a really fucked up idea that Asians are kind of like next in line for whiteness, right. And there's a lot of anti-Blackness in the Asian American community and colorism in like all POC [people of color] cultures honestly, right. Yeah, I think you can absolutely be racist. But the thing is that a lot of that racism…that a lot of that racism still does more for the White man than it does for Asian Americans. Like when me, a Chinese American, is being racist towards a Black person say right, I'm upholding my own position of catering to White people while also subjugating Black people, for White people.

An 18-year-old South Asian woman, when asked the same question, responded that people of color cannot be racist toward everyone. In particular, she mentions that people of color cannot be racist toward White people but can be racist to other people of color. She mentions that she is uncomfortable with the term racism for this type of interaction and suggests that most of this ingroup discrimination is internalized. Her return to the definition of racism from the first part of the interview highlights that this is the frame she is using to interpret whether something can be racist or not:

> Yeah, I think they can. Just because I think again, that in different situations people do have different amounts of power and race is really about- racism is really about power. So, I mean there's- I do think that people of color can be racist towards other people of color, but I don't think people of color can be racist towards White people. That's just not how it works to me because race is about subjugating other groups that are lower than you or oppressing them in some way and people of color can't really oppress White people because they're the colonizers and they're always on top without fail. But yeah, I would say that there can be like- I wish there was a different, I don't know. I feel like it would be helpful to have a distinction in words. Because a lot of it is also internalized, but there absolutely is, I would say, in-between groups, racism within people of color.

5.6 Putting It All Together

Taken together, all four themes suggest that there are nuances in how people of color may understand racism and discrimination broadly and based on the ingroup or outgroup distinction of the perpetrator. Our participants' understanding of racism seemed to vary slightly from the definitions provided by the American Psychological Association (2019) highlighted first in Chap. 1. For instance, it seems that while participants tend to think of racism either in the realm of systemic racism or interpersonal racism, interpersonal racism was interpreted differently than defined by the APA (2019). The APA's (2019) definition of interpersonal racism suggests that racism occurs when individuals from dominant racial groups behave in negative ways

toward other racial groups. However, in this study, some participants did not reference power dynamics and only focused on negative interpersonal interactions based on skin tone or other phenotypical features. Meanwhile, other participants who viewed racism as systemic and structural specified how power dynamics regarding the dominant racial group can lead to deep-rooted and long-standing inequities that reduce access to resources and affect policies and laws. This understanding of racism seems to relate directly to the APA's (2019) definitions of structural and institutional racism.

Overall, participants generally seemed to provide dispositional attributions of being racist toward White people (outgroup members). However, based on their initial understanding of racism, participants were likely to view people of color as either capable or incapable of *being* racist (providing a dispositional attribution to their behavior). Specifically, it seemed that participants who were more systemic in their understanding of racism provided more situational attributions for the negative race-related behavior of people of color, whereas those who gave more interpersonal definitions of racism were more likely to provide dispositional attributions of the same negative race-related behavior.

Additionally, theme 3 highlights the impact of education and knowledge surrounding both systemic and historical issues contributing to a more nuanced understanding of what racism and discrimination might look like. For instance, it seems that understanding history and intersectional identities can lead to more situational attributions in terms of why discrimination might occur within their own racial group. Specifically, historical knowledge and education seem to lead to a further understanding of the insidious nature of white supremacy and how people of color can internalize racism, leading them to potentially perpetuate some of the same racist ideas that white supremacy endorses. Based on theme 4, we can see that it was agreed upon by participants that people of color, regardless of *why* they may engage the discriminatory behavior, can endorse racist ideas and even enact racism through discrimination and prejudice. When we refer back to our study hypotheses (Table 3.2), we originally noted that there would likely be a difference in attributions provided based on ingroup versus outgroup perpetrator status; however, this finding regarding the importance of education and knowledge surrounding systemic and historical issues was not considered. In the following chapter, there is an added focus of context regarding severity and identity of the perpetrator, which further creates a nuanced understanding of racial/ethnic discrimination.

5.7 Summary

- Definitions of racism and discrimination tended to focus on interpersonal interactions and/or systemic factors.
- Some participants also emphasized historical context and intersectionality to explain racial/ethnic discrimination.

- Racism was generally perceived as something a White person engages in due to power and privilege (dispositional attributions to explain the behavior).
- People of color were considered able to engage in racist behavior mostly due to historical and systemic factors that have led to internalization of negative beliefs regarding their own group (situational attributions to explain the behavior).

Chapter 6
How Does Context Impact Attributions of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination?

6.1 Overview of Themes

The themes from the previous section focused on how knowledge and history regarding racism and discrimination can impact one's understanding and experience of race-based discrimination. Here we review the themes (briefly detailed in Table 6.1) regarding how both severity of the act and identity of the perpetrator seem to affect how the target labels and attributes the behavior of the perpetrator. We describe each theme and provide quotes to further explore how the nuance of context can impact attributions of race-related negative behavior.

6.2 Theme 5: Overt Is Clearly Discriminatory

Overt discriminatory behaviors such as using racial slurs, engaging in harmful stereotypes, or violently targeting someone because of their racial/ethnic background were often labeled as discriminatory, regardless of the racial background of the perpetrator. Participants noted that with overt discrimination, there is no doubt that the behavior was racially motivated. Of note, most experiences described as overtly discriminatory by participants were instances of racism perpetrated by White people. Overt discrimination experiences perpetrated by people of color are discussed further in theme 8 (Chap. 7).

When asked to define overt discrimination, a 21-year-old Latina stated that the behavior is not being hidden and has clear intentions:

> I feel like overt is like you're not hiding it; you're not trying to make yourself look better I guess by like your racist actions. I feel like it's the kind of things where you see at Trump rallies where they're like yelling the *n* word or like doing crazy things like that.

C. A. Mujica, A. J. Bridges, *Horizontal and Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination*, SpringerBriefs in Psychology,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33058-2_6

Table 6.1 Themes and brief descriptions for aim 2

Theme	Brief description
(5) Overt is clearly discriminatory	Overt behaviors such as using slurs, engaging in harmful stereotypes, or violently targeting someone because of their racial and/or ethnic background are often labeled as discriminatory, regardless of the racial/ethnic background of the perpetrator. However, the content of dispositional attributions for why people are overtly discriminatory differs based on the perpetrator's identity
(6) Subtle: It's different from people of color	Subtle behaviors are more likely to be labeled as racial/ethnic discrimination when White people are perpetrators. When people of color do them, the intention is more ambiguous and targets are more likely to make situational, versus dispositional, attributions

A 26-year-old Black man echoed this sentiment but added a mention of dispositional traits, attributing overt discrimination behaviors to a person's natural tendency to subjugate others. The participant highlighted that people who engage in overt discriminatory acts are just racist and want to view themselves as superior:

> And overt, I would say, just kind of, I guess, blatant racism, like you have a, I guess a natural tendency to specifically target and point out the differences in people in more kind of subjugate in your mind that a specific grouping of people, no matter Black, Hispanic, Asian descent, are lower, and you use language specifically to basically make them feel down, make them look inferior, and overall, make yourself look more superior of a human being.

An 18-year-old South Asian woman stated that overt racism was a behavior that was violent and clear that the message being portrayed is that someone is inferior:

> I think overt racism is generally like violence or violence physically, emotionally, or verbally. So even using like racial slurs, outright saying like you are inferior because of your race, things like that.

Most participants echoed some form of the definition of overt racism using a description like those highlighted above. For instance, a Black 26-year-old man indicated that overt racism is "very clear-cut," and a 31-year-old Mexican woman also stated that overt racism is "apparent, anyone watching the event would know." These definitions highlighted that overall, with overt racism, there is no need to engage higher-order cognitive functions to understand the purpose of the behavior. Most people who witness it know that there was a racist intention behind the behavior. This suggests that overt racist behavior most commonly leads to dispositional attributions of the perpetrator as being a racist person or having malicious intentions.

The most commonly used example to highlight overt experiences of discrimination was the use of racial slurs. For example, a 26-year-old Black man described this situation:

> I guess I can pick ever since we started things in 2016. When you wear a Black Lives Matter shirt and I'm approached and '*nigger*, you don't know what you're talking about.' Whoa. Like, what do you…what am I expected to do in that situation?

A 21-year-old Japanese man also described hearing a racial slur as an overt experience of discrimination:

> I am finishing my senior year at [college] right now and I just remember jogging around the area and just like I've gotten yelled at like oh, *chink* and stuff like that by people just driving. I didn't even see their faces, but that sort of stuff is overt.

While slurs were the most common example, a 24-year-old South Asian man highlighted how interactions that question people's belonging in the country can be experienced as acts of overt racism:

> Yeah, so I was on the train, and I was on a date. This old woman just came up to me and said, 'they should keep you all out of this country and they should not let you in here.' It was me and it was Black man next to me and she went at the both of us and was like 'both of y'all should've never come here'.

Finally, a 28-year-old Latino man recalled a scary and dangerous expression of overt racism that combined physical violence (perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan) and the use of a slur:

> It was like a Saturday…We were fixing up the house because the house was old that they let us live in….So, it was my brother, me and my dad. We were literally just working in the kitchen… And next thing you know, it was just quick. All you heard was *imitating gun sound* like you just heard the gun bullets just *imitates gun sound* and the first thing my dad did… he grabbed me and my brother's head and just threw us down on the floor. And I stayed still because there were just bullets just going through and busting everything…And then, you would hear the bricks. They threw bricks at the house, and you would hear, it sounded like a truck, but it was like a like a heavy car. And the thing that you heard or like in a country twang sound was like 'go back to your damn country you wetbacks' like that was literally what we heard. And so it was scary.

As illustrated by the quotes above, overt behaviors were seen as clear examples of racial/ethnic discrimination because perpetrators seemed to have intended to showcase prejudice and negative beliefs related to a particular racial/ethnic group. There are also several ways that one can engage in overt racism, including using slurs or expressing prejudice through other behaviors. The last quote highlights how extreme overt racism can become through violent expressions of hate.

The clear intention to put down or harm someone based on their racial/ethnic group lead participants to make dispositional attributions, particularly for White or outgroup perpetrators, regarding the motivations of the person engaging in the racist behavior (e.g., "this person is racist"). However, while many participants noted ingroup members engaging in overt discrimination were racist, they tended to attribute the behavior to structural and internalized racism, not to the person themselves being racist. We discuss this nuance more in Chap. 7, theme 8.

6.3 Theme 6: Subtle—It's Different from People of Color

While participants agreed that overt experiences of discrimination were often clearly racist due to the intention and purpose behind the behavior, there was a different understanding of what subtle expressions of discrimination consist of and what their purpose is. Statements that are viewed as microaggressions when White

people were the perpetrators were likely to be labeled as motivated by curiosity, a form of building connection, or just joking around if they were said by people of the participant's own racial/ethnic group. Said differently, participants were more likely to make situational attributions in these instances where people of color were the perpetrators of subtle discrimination and not view these statements as discriminatory at all. In contrast, when White people engaged in microaggressions, those behaviors were more likely to be seen as ill-intentioned and backhanded, thereby leading to more dispositional attributions from the targets.

In general, when asked to define subtle discrimination, participants stated that it is harder to define or more hidden than overt discrimination. For instance, a 31-year-old Black woman stated that "Subtle, I mean just exactly what it is. Sometimes you don't even know it happened. It can be a comment, it can be a look, it could be an action." Similarly, a 24-year-old South Asian man stated:

> On a similar sense it's harder to define. I don't know how many things I have completely registered as maybe they were just curious or just a joke or something like that. I feel like they've been a few times that I can point to where someone has been that towards me or said something that I later thought that maybe that was not appropriate to say.

The previous quotes highlight that subtle experiences with racial discrimination can be difficult to pinpoint and understand as racism or racially discriminatory. This idea is further highlighted by a 25-year-old Black man who indicated that the target needs to actively think about whether they are experiencing discrimination:

> But then the subtle, you kind of have to be searching for intent of the person or system…to see if that is the actual case. So, I guess in general, like…people have difficulty determining whether or not subtle racism or discrimination is a thing, and that level of difficulty is why it is subtle.

Overall, participants indicated that subtle experiences of racial discrimination were harder to define and required context and more cognitive effort on the part of target to understand intent. Even with the higher cognitive demand on participants, participants indicated experiencing subtle forms of discrimination more often than more overt experiences. One participant, a 25-year-old Black man, highlighted an experience where his competency at his job was questioned as an example of a subtle form of discrimination. Another participant, a 31-year-old Mexican-American woman, stated that she experienced subtle discrimination many times throughout her life as she is constantly questioned about where she is from and she is assumed to be a foreigner.

General experiences with microaggressions and subtle racial discriminatory behavior were often highlighted as perpetrated by White people. However, when asked to think about discrimination perpetrated by people of color, participants noted there were differences in how they attributed the intent behind the behavior and differences in whether they would label it as discriminatory at all. A 19-year-old South Asian man spoke about his perception of statements that are typically labeled microaggressions (e.g., "your English is so good") when they are coming from

someone of the same racial or ethnic background vs. a White outgroup member. The participant used a very contextualized lens when trying to understand why a person from the same racial/ethnic group might say a statement, leading him to find it more genuine rather than backhanded:

> So, I think when they [ingroup members] ask, it comes from a genuine place of curiosity and wanting to find common ground with me and get to know me. Sometimes older Bengali adults will sometimes say 'wow, your English is so good' and it's a genuine compliment because they are also immigrants and they have had to go through the assimilation [process]. You know learning a whole new language and figuring out a new country so when they say it… it's a genuine like 'I am proud of you for like you know learning the language and like speaking it so well' and less of a 'oh, you don't have an accent?' 'Like that's surprising because people who look like you have accents.'… So, I feel like when other South Asian people make these comments it's not backhanded.

The same participant further clarified at another point in the interview that behaviors and statements deemed as microaggressions when said by White people are not microaggressions when they are said by people of the same racial/ethnic background or a person of color. He finds that White people say these statements to make you feel alienated and othered because they have preconceived notions (a dispositional attribution of the subtle behavior):

> So, I'm sure I made this pretty clear but a lot of those things that would be deemed microaggressions or something like that from someone who's also South Asian like me, I know it's not coming from a place of malintent. Pretty much 9 out of 10 I know it's not coming from a place of malintent and more so curiosity, genuine curiosity. Just looking for someone to connect with because it's so hard to find South Asian people, especially given the context of where you are in the United States…. When other people of color ask me questions that would be deemed as microaggressions or things like that, again I think it comes from a place of genuine curiosity and not you know I have these preconceived notions about you. But then obviously when a White person does it it's like you're actively making me feel othered and alienated. Yeah, just from personal experiences, that's how I feel.

A 20-year-old Latino man also described being annoyed when White people questioned the spelling and pronunciation of his name, but stated that if Latinos made similar comments, he found them to be more joking in nature. He said: "It's just like a sense in the Latino community to joke about something and not be offended." In other words, he was providing a more situational attribution to the behavior when a Latino person makes a comment about his name.

Another participant, an 18-year-old Black woman, reported on an experience where a White student indicated that they believed the only reason the participant got into college was because she is Black. When asked how she might have felt if this comment was made by another Black person, she reported that it would not be as hurtful, and she would be less shocked:

> I think I would be less shocked actually, if a Black person said it because then I guess where they would be coming from would be like, a lot of these top schools are majority White schools and there's like very few Black students at these schools. So, them accepting me is kind of like trying to hit their 4% mark.

Additionally, a 25-year-old Latina woman indicated further that she would be more likely to let comments typically thought of as microaggressions "slide" if they came from an ingroup member:

> I let, in general, people of color slide with a lot more than I would White people. It's just like, I view it as like, they're all my people, we're all people of color, its fine. I think for me if that would have happened, I would've taken it differently. I think I would have taken it more like, oh, they're just trying to be inclusive and already trying to establish some sort of friendship kind of thing.

6.4 Putting It All Together

Taken together, themes 5 and 6 indicate that there is consensus among most participants on what an overt racially discriminatory action is and what a subtle discriminatory action is. This consensus among participants seems to mirror the definitions typically discussed in the social psychology and social justice work. Additionally, with overt discriminatory behavior, participants were likely to attribute the behavior to dispositional factors, particularly when the perpetrator was White or an outgroup member, such as "this person is racist or being malicious." When ingroup members were perpetrators of overt discriminatory behavior, participants were likely to label the behavior as discriminatory but attribute it to internalized racism. However, theme 6 seems to highlight that, even though there is an understanding of what subtle discriminatory behavior looks like, the attribution of the behavior is context-dependent. Specifically, participants were more likely to make dispositional attributions of White perpetrators (outgroup members) and provide more situational explanations or give more benefit of the doubt to perpetrators of the same racial/ethnic group (ingroup members). Some potential reasons for these differences in attributions will be discussed in Chap. 7, based on additional themes that emerged throughout the interviews. These conclusions are in line with our hypotheses based on social psychological theories originally proposed in Chap. 3 (Table 3.2).

6.5 Summary

- Racial/ethnic discrimination is interpreted differently by targets depending on the context (i.e., severity and identity of the perpetrator).
- Overt forms of racist discrimination were considered to be discriminatory regardless of context and identity of perpetrator.
- Subtle forms of racist discrimination were open to interpretation through situational attributions when people of color were perpetrators but not when White people were perpetrators.

Chapter 7
What Are the Affective Consequences of Horizontal Versus Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination?

7.1 Overview of Themes

Previous research, such as the research described in Chap. 1, has solidified that discrimination is harmful to its targets. Additionally, cultural betrayal trauma theory, explored in Chap. 3, has highlighted that when one experiences negative behavior perpetrated by an ingroup member, there are likely affective consequences. In this chapter, we highlight three themes that indicate that the harms and emotional impacts of race-based discrimination can be further contextualized (Table 7.1). Specifically, based on these themes, we conclude that the identity of a perpetrator and the severity of the race-based discriminatory behavior can lead to very different affective consequences for targets.

7.2 Theme 7: "They Should Know Better"—Shocked, Betrayed, and Hurt

Participants often noted that more overt, compared to subtle, forms of discrimination perpetuated by people from within their racial/ethnic group were instances of racial or ethnic discrimination and led to feelings of betrayal. This seemed to be the case because they felt that people from marginalized groups "should know better" since they too are recipients of similar forms of discrimination. One participant, a 24-year-old South Asian man, indicated that if they were to experience discrimination from an ingroup member, they would be disappointed:

> I would be disappointed like you should know better than to think those things. I'd assume they know people, know the culture, and they've faced such things themselves to know better than to like propagate those things.

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Table 7.1 Themes and brief descriptions for aim 3

Theme	Brief description
(7) "They should know better": Shocked, betrayed, and hurt	Participants often noted that more overt forms of discrimination perpetuated by people from within their racial/ethnic group led to feelings of betrayal and hurt. This seemed to be the case because they felt that people from marginalized groups "should know better" since they are often the recipients of similar forms of discrimination
(8) More empathy for ingroup members	While participants reported feeling shocked, hurt, and betrayed when people of color were perpetrators of overt actions of discrimination, they also reported feeling bad for them. Participants often identified that they had more empathy toward people of color (vs. White people) engaging in discrimination toward other people of color
(9) Racism from White people: Expected but angering and problematic	Participants overwhelmingly agreed that racism that came from White people was expected. They reported getting angrier, ignoring the people who engaged in it, and finding it to be more problematic than if a person of color engaged in the same behavior

Similarly, a 35-year-old Black woman, when asked about emotions related to experiencing ingroup discrimination, stated:

> I can still be angry, but I'm usually angry for a different reason…like when it's Black people, it's like you should know better like we have enough outside discrimination like we don't need to be doing it in our group, we need to like stick together.

Because of (assumed) shared experiences of discrimination, many people of color develop a sense of solidarity with one another in the struggle to resist white supremacy. When ingroup solidarity is violated, there is a sense of shock or betrayal. Experiences with overt discrimination by ingroup members, while hurtful, oftentimes led participants to attribute the behaviors to historical or sociopolitical issues (theme 3), or to the perpetrator being a victim of white supremacy. While attributions may have been dispositional, a recognition of their historical origin allowed targets of the discriminatory behavior to feel more empathy toward ingroup perpetrators (theme 8).

An 18-year-old South Asian woman recalled a discriminatory experience from her elementary school years where an East Asian girl called her skin "dirty." The participant reflected that the "dirty" comment coming from another person of color violated an expectation she had that people of color should be in solidarity with one another, regardless of racial/ethnic background. She stated that White people have made comments about her skin before, but they did not stand out as much as a comment from another person of color:

> I mean I think that—especially looking back- it almost would have made more sense coming from a White person. But like having someone- that you would consider- that's what sucks in general about like people of color [engaging in] racism towards other people of color it is like you don't expect it and there's supposed to be solidarity and then there's still a hierarchy within, within people of color. So, it was really surprising for that reason. I think I've experienced like White girls before like making fun of my skin, but this definitely stood out to me because of that.

A 25-year-old Latina woman recalled a "frustrating and angering" experience where a White male coworker stated: "Oh thank god Columbus went and did all that stuff so we could have a day off." When asked to reflect how she would have felt if another Latinx person said the same thing, she reported that she would be still be angry but provided some additional reasoning for this anger:

> I think that would have still pissed me off. Especially if it came from a Latino for sure because I would have been like, how can you… knowing our history and knowing everything that has happened, like how can you still say that? So, I think that one would still…I would have still been pretty pissed off.

A 31-year-old Black woman highlighted how she may take things more personally and that it stings more when she hears negative discriminatory comments stated by someone from the same racial/ethnic group. In this excerpt, she crafts an example that uses Kanye West, a Black rapper known for saying questionable and racially insensitive comments against his own racial group:

> Okay yeah so perfect example. So, let's just say a politician says something about Harriet Tubman and she was a criminal and she wasn't trying to set slaves free. She was breaking the law or something like that. And then you have Kanye who said not exactly that same thing, but something about Harriet Tubman and it stings because it's within your group you know. Like for me, hearing Kanye say that it stings. It's like I take it personal because I'm like Kanye… like, you know what we've been through as people. A lot of the comments that Kanye West or other individuals said or have the same belief system as him or are of color, it hurts because it's like your experiences could be quite like mine with or without money. So, it kind of hurts a little more.

Overall, these quotes highlight that participants seem to hold an expectation of group solidarity and then experience a feeling of hurt or betrayal when that expectation is violated. These feelings of betrayal and hurt are consistent with cultural betrayal trauma theory and consistent with our hypotheses (Table 3.2) suggesting that overt racially discriminatory behavior perpetrated by an ingroup member would likely lead to a reported heightened emotional response.

7.3 Theme 8: More Empathy for Ingroup Members

While participants reported feeling shocked, hurt, and betrayed when people of color were perpetrators of overt actions of discrimination, they also reported feeling bad for them. Participants often identified that they had more empathy toward people of color engaging in discrimination toward other people of color. They reported feeling the need to question, educate, and give more grace. This goes back to participants noting an understanding of the roots of where the internalization of racism comes from, regarding media portrayals and representation of White people compared to people of color and the history of colonialism and imperialism (theme 3).

Participants from all racial backgrounds described having some understanding when people of color engaged in discriminatory behavior toward other people of

color. When asked whether discriminatory behavior is worse from White people versus Black people, a 26-year-old Black man said:

> So, it's worse for me if a Black person says that because that means, one, they've probably been hurt, too. They haven't dealt with it…. there's some scarring there and now they're outwardly lashing out to other people who don't deserve it.

This participant suggested that Black people saying discriminatory things toward other Black people is worse than a White person saying those same things because it suggests that they have gone through some difficult things in their lives. The participant expressed understanding and empathy toward the Black person who may have engaged in the discrimination but highlights that it still hurts other Black folks.

An 18-year-old South Asian woman highlighted that while it hurts to experience ingroup discrimination or discrimination perpetrated by other people of color, she often feels bad for them and is a bit more understanding toward them compared to White perpetrators:

> Just like don't you know what it feels like to be on the receiving end, like why would you do that? But also, this idea that like I know that it's because of their own stuff, you know like it's because of internalized racism, anti-Blackness, and colorism and stuff. And there's this sense of like I feel bad for you, like I'm sorry that you're in this place that you're still acting out and still in this system in the matrix, you know. And there's this shared understanding that like we're all trying to unlearn white supremacy in different ways and anti-Blackness in different ways

She is able to empathize with ingroup perpetrators of discrimination due to understanding the systems of oppression (making situational attributions) that impact them.

A 29-year-old Afro-Latinx man also stated: "I probably can find in my mind the ability to empathize a little bit more with people of color, like I can understand where you're coming from." In this quote, he is noting that he is more willing to contextualize overtly discriminatory behavior from people of color (situational attributions) than when a White person engages in that same behavior. He further elaborated that when a White person engages in discriminatory behavior, there is more "intentional or implicit sort of like purposeful subjugation or implicit putting down." In other words, he reported being more likely to engage in dispositional attributions for White perpetrators compared to perpetrators of color.

7.4 Theme 9: Racism from White People—Expected But Angering and Frustrating

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that racism that came from White people was expected. They reported less empathy toward White people who were racist compared to people of color who expressed racist ideas. They also mentioned getting angrier, ignoring the people who engaged in it, and finding it to be more problematic than if a person of color engaged in the same behavior. It seemed that the nature of

the power White people hold in society and their ability to maintain ignorance on issues of race and ethnicity were particularly infuriating.

Participants were asked to compare how discrimination feels when it comes from a White person versus a person of color. A 24-year-old woman who identifies as a multiracial Arab explained that she expects these racist comments from White people, but not from people of color:

> Because my expectation, on the whole, for a new White person is that they're going to be stupid or problematic. I feel like I almost have my guard up more and I'm ready for those kinds of comments and waiting for them and can better react to them. It's just sometimes it's like with a lot of fury, but whatever. But yeah, I think when it comes from family, or it comes from friends that are people of color…It's like…Yeah, it's kind of blinding. You're just like what, like where is this coming from?

A 51-year-old Native American woman also expressed a similar sense of expectations of discrimination from White people compared to discrimination from Native Americans:

> I'm more shocked when it's a Native person like being so overtly racist because it's just like you wouldn't expect that, like…but if it's like a White person doing something overt, is it more just like, oh, look, I kind of expect that from you.

Participant responses also seemed to highlight an assumption of negative intentions from White perpetrators of discrimination. A 23-year-old Black woman expressed this when talking about exoticization:

> Yeah, I just feel like… from a White person, it just it kind of goes back to intention. Like, I can't say what their intentions, but I feel like when White people say 'exotic' their intention with it, it's kind of like…more negative. But when people of the same race say 'exotic'…it's kind of like uplifting, like I feel like I would take it more of a compliment, but with a White person, that would be more of an insult.

The previous quote highlights how some statements can be problematic when they come from a White person compared to a person of color. It also shows that there is a sense of mistrust toward White people, where the intention behind an act of subtle discrimination is not always trusted as a positive thing. In other words, a statement about how "sexy" a Black woman is may be innocuous and welcome coming from a Black person, but racist and problematic when coming from a White person.

When recalling a racist experience that occurred while he was in a predominantly White fraternity, a 24-year-old Black man expresses that White people are behaving exactly as one would expect regarding racist behavior. The specific event he discussed was having a White man write the letters "N I G G E R" on his own forehead. The participant noted:

> The way that I really do talk about it now is like everything that they told me that I've heard about, the horror stories or whatever, not with hazing, nothing like that. But just like the way that White people behave when it's just them behind closed doors, that's exactly what they do.

This same participant highlighted that the experience was angering. He said: "I was really mad, and I was trying to like not fight him, but also just get him to like, rub this stuff off of him. Like, just wash it off." Another participant, a 26-year-old Black

man, recalled an experience working in a large retail store. At this store, he found that White customers would often walk past him when asked if they needed help and go straight to the other White person who worked with him. When asked about his emotions during that situation, he reported feeling "kind of sadness and frustration."

These feelings of frustration were echoed by multiple participants. It was especially prevalent in academic settings where participants were questioned on their abilities to succeed in their careers or academic field. A 31-year-old Black woman recalled an experience she called "frustrating but not shocking" where her advisor told her to consider Ph.D. programs other than clinical psychology.

> Even applying to this PhD program, 'I don't know… have you considered counseling or public health? They're not as competitive,' because my GRE scores weren't stellar. And I was like, do not discredit my potential, number one, and my capability.

7.5 Putting It All Together

Taken together, these final three themes indicate that the emotional consequences of experiencing discriminatory events seem to be dependent on the identity of the perpetrator and the severity of the discriminatory act. It suggests that overt horizontal discrimination may lead to more feelings of betrayal and hurt, while vertical discrimination may lead to feelings of frustration and anger. This is consistent with cultural betrayal trauma theory described in Chap. 3 and our hypothesized findings.

Considering these final themes, an additional finding emerged that was not accounted for in our original hypotheses. Situational attributions, particularly structural attributions, and an understanding of a variety of experiences with racism and oppression that people of color have may also affect how understanding the target may be toward a perpetrator of color. In other words, it is possible that varying levels of critical consciousness (discussed in Chap. 2) regarding racism can lead people of color to provide more dispositional *or* situational attributions when experiencing horizontal discrimination. Furthermore, it seems that the benefit of the doubt and an additional level of empathy may be afforded to perpetrators of horizontal race-based discrimination when the target has higher levels of critical consciousness, despite the target also feeling betrayed or hurt by the discriminatory act. This was not accounted for in our hypotheses which suggested that overt horizontal discrimination would lead to dispositional attributions due to the severity of the act.

These themes suggest that while this overt horizontal discrimination may lead to dispositional attribution in some cases, when participants had an additional level of understanding regarding systems of oppression and historical context (critical consciousness of racism), they were more likely to also provide situational attributions and empathy to ingroup perpetrators. This is presumably because of an understanding of how insidious white supremacy is and how it may lead to the internalization of racism and overall negative messages regarding one's racial/ethnic group. Our findings also suggest that this same benefit of the doubt is not afforded to White

perpetrators due to the power they hold in society and how they may benefit more directly by perpetuating these negative beliefs and behaving in a discriminatory fashion toward people of color. In fact, in most situations, vertical discrimination led to dispositional attributions and to additional frustration and anger toward the perpetrator.

7.6 Summary

- The emotional consequences for targets of racist discrimination differed depending on the identity of the perpetrator.
- When perpetrators were of the same race, participants often reported feeling shocked, hurt, and betrayed. However, participants also often extended empathy (or benefit of the doubt) to perpetrators of color.
- When perpetrators were White, participants indicated that it was an expected behavior. However, they also reported feeling angrier, ignoring the people who engaged in the behavior, and finding it more problematic than a perpetrator of the same race.

Chapter 8
Implications and Future Directions

8.1 Introduction

Racial/ethnic discrimination targeted toward people of color, whether perpetrated by Whites or other people of color and whether subtle or overt in nature, is a major public health problem with deleterious effects. Research shows that people who experience higher levels of racial/ethnic discrimination have worse physical and mental health compared to people who experience lower levels of or no discrimination (Dolezsar et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2014; Magallares et al., 2014; Noh et al., 2007; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Williams et al., 2019). Most research addressing racial/ethnic discrimination is focused on instances perpetrated by a White person. However, based on theories of racial/cultural identity development (Cross, 1971; Sue & Sue, 1999) and critical consciousness development (Pillen et al., 2020), people of color who are in early stages of racial identity and critical consciousness development may also perpetuate the ideas and values of the majority culture (i.e., they have internalized racism) and are therefore capable of perpetrating racial/ethnic discrimination within their group (referred to as horizontal discrimination).

Understanding fully the negative impact of white supremacy is both worthy of scholarly inquiry and necessary to combat it. However, Shin (2015) reminds us not to weaponize the study of racism and racial/ethnic discrimination. A deep scholarly study of horizontal discrimination should never be used as a way to minimize or justify vertical race/ethnic discrimination (for instance, by using "what about-isms" to draw attention away from the problem of White people, institutions, and power systems discriminating against communities of color). Instead, we want to note clearly our argument: *the tendrils of white supremacy are long and insidious*. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to examine the impact of horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination. This is a critical and understudied area of research that has important implications for the well-being of people of color.

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8.2 Review of Hypothesized Outcomes

As described by the study hypotheses outlined in Chap. 3 (Table 3.2), we expected there would be differences in how people of color interpreted and felt about different discrimination experiencing, depending on who was doing the discrimination (i.e., the perpetrator's ethnicity/race) and the intensity of the behavior (i.e., whether the intentions of the perpetrator could be clearly discerned, as in overt discrimination, or not, as in subtle discrimination). We expected participants would attribute some behaviors as clearly reflecting the beliefs and prejudices of the perpetrator (a dispositional attribution), such as when the behavior was perpetrated by an outgroup member or when it was overtly racist. In contrast, we expected that participants would attribute some behaviors as reflecting the unique context (a situational attribution), such as when the behavior was both perpetrated by an ingroup member and was subtle in nature. We further expected ingroup discrimination that was overt to result in the highest degree of emotional hurt, consistent with cultural betrayal trauma theory.

8.3 Results Summarized

We found three overarching themes with several sub-themes in our study. Taken as a whole, the themes suggest the following: (1) people of color believe that ingroup members can perpetuate racism and act in a discriminatory fashion toward other people of color (engaging in interpersonal racial/ethnic discrimination rather than systemic racism); (2) racial/ethnic discrimination through overt and subtle behaviors leads to more dispositional attributions of behavior for White perpetrators (*they are racist*) compared to more situational or structural attributions of behavior for ingroup perpetrators (*they are a victim of white supremacy, colonialism, or imperialism*); and (3) horizontal racial/ethnic discrimination can lead to more feelings of hurt and betrayal due to its shocking nature compared to the expected nature of White-perpetrated vertical racism. We summarize key findings from these themes next.

Participants in this study overwhelmingly agreed that, as Zora Neale Hurston noted so poetically, "all my skinfolk ain't kinfolk"—that is, they mostly agreed that people of color could engage in discriminatory acts. However, there was a great deal of nuance in response to horizontal discrimination. The nuance largely fell into two domains. First, participants often said people of color can be interpersonally racist or discriminatory, but cannot be engaged in the perpetuation of systemic racism. It is not that they were saying discriminatory behaviors didn't happen. In fact, participants highlighted situations where people of their same racial or ethnic group acted in a discriminatory fashion toward someone in the same group. It is that the way they made sense of what these behaviors *meant* was different for ingroup members than outgroup members. Especially participants who focused on racism as a *system* of privileging one group of people over another on the basis of physical features like

skin color, and who understood racism as not just one individual being unsavory toward another individual, discrimination perpetrated by people of color was not seen as *racist*. Going back to the different levels of racism described by the American Psychological Association (i.e., internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural; see Chap. 1), these participants were saying that the discrimination may have been internalized or interpersonal, but it was only there because of structural racism. Furthermore, they argued that people of color cannot enact structural racism because they lack power in a white supremacist society.

A second nuance participants highlighted in explaining horizontal discrimination concerned other areas of privilege. Participants understood that colorism (a preference for lighter skin tones), classism (a disdain of people who are poor), and sexism (a preference for men/masculinity over women/femininity) within their racial group were forms of biases that clearly could result in overt discrimination. Their responses to our questions point to the importance of intersecting identities. For instance, a Black manager might discriminate against a job applicant who is both Black and gay, but the basis of that discrimination is sexual orientation—homophobia remains common in the Black community (Demby, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2021). In Indian society, castes are social classifications that lead to a great deal of ingroup discrimination (Wilkerson, 2020). Latinx men can be quite *machista* and discriminate against women (Segrest et al., 2003). In this way, they were describing how other forms of discrimination might be perpetuated by racial ingroup members, but the basis of that discrimination was typically not race per se. One notable exception to this is colorism. There is ample research and anecdotal data suggesting ingroup members may discriminate against people with darker skin tones or value skin tones and other physical features that are more White-passing (e.g., nose shape, lip shape; Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2014; Fuentes et al., 2021; Hill, 2002).

Interestingly, horizontal discriminatory acts when considered "subtle" (statements usually labeled microaggressions when they were perpetrated by White people) were often attributed to situational factors such as the person was joking around, the person who was trying to connect or relate, or just genuine curiosity from the person. In fact, participants stated that most things considered subtle forms of discrimination when they came from White perpetrators were not discriminatory at all when they came from ingroup members. This shows a willingness to explain away behavior and make space for situational attributions with ingroup members that was not afforded to White perpetrators. These results are consistent with previous theories of ingroup bias (Castano et al., 2002; Lindeman, 1997; Messick & Mackie, 1989; Tajfel, 1982) and the ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979). This also suggests that typical "subtle" acts of discrimination cannot be considered microaggressions without fully considering context, including the identity of the perpetrator.

The research on microaggressions is relatively new and promising, but quite messy. There is sometimes a push to define microaggressions by specific behaviors—and, in fact, some (e.g., Lilienfeld, 2017) have criticized microaggression research because it has not settled on a set of behaviorally specific, reliable definitions. However, our study shows that this would be as challenging as trying to ask a researcher to define behaviors that are clearly examples of "love." Is it kissing?

(What about instances of non-consensual kissing?) Is it saying "I love you?" (What about instances where someone may say something as routine or rote, but not as a genuine expression of an internal emotional state?) Is it marrying someone? (What about if you are not legally allowed to marry the person you love, or if you would prefer not to get married, or if that person is already married to someone else, or you are underage?) We could go on and on, but the point is that many human behaviors that we believe exist and that shape our experiences cannot be reduced to a set of discrete, reliably observable behaviors. They require context, and individuals may experience the same behavior from someone but interpret it as meaning something very different. In other words, the context is not just external (such as who did it), but also internal (how do I think or feel about it).

Returning to the issue of microaggressions as a form of race-based discrimination, to label any specific behavior as *always* indicative of a racial microaggression, without nuance regarding identity of the perpetrator, context, history, and so forth, is simply impossible and wrong. Doing so can lead us to pathologize critical and genuine human connections, or leave us feeling that we cannot ask people where they are from or compliment their hair. Indeed, the best measures we have so far on microaggressions tend to specify both the behavior *and* the race (and gender) of the perpetrators and targets (Mekawi & Todd, 2018).

Contrary to our expectations, we found that our participants made situational attributions for horizontal racism in both subtle and overt discrimination instances. We had expected this to happen only when the discrimination was subtle. When participants reported experiencing more overt forms of discrimination from ingroup members, they still tended to make situational attributions for the behavior but the nature of these attributions changed. Participants largely noted that overt horizontal discrimination reflects historical struggles and/or internalized racism. In other words, they noted that the situations that gave rise to the discriminatory behaviors were the systems of white supremacy and domination. This stands in contrast to the types of situational attributions people made for subtle forms of discrimination, which tended to focus on the intentions of the perpetrator (they were trying to connect, or making a joke). The situational attributions made for overt forms of horizontal discrimination tended to focus on systemic racism, meaning these were a specific subtype of situational attributions (i.e., structural attributions). The use of situational attributions for overt ingroup discrimination upholds the ideas of the ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979), but stands in contrast to the black sheep effect (Marques et al., 1988), which would have predicted ingroup perpetrators of overt discrimination would be ostracized.

Despite making structural attributions, participants reported feeling more hurt and feeling higher levels of betrayal when overt discrimination was perpetrated by an ingroup compared to an outgroup member. They noted that when ingroup members were overtly discriminatory, it was shocking and unexpected. Participants also voiced the idea that ingroup members "should know better." Due to the shocking nature and violation of solidarity, it seemed that participants were more inclined to feel hurt and betrayed. These findings are supported by cultural betrayal trauma theory (see Chap. 3) which suggests that the violation of (intra)cultural trust leads

to harm and feelings of hurt and betrayal (Gomez, 2021). This seems to occur because, while people of color are generally prepared to experience discrimination and racism from White perpetrators through racial socialization processes, they generally expect solidarity and trust from other people of color. When they experience overt horizontal discrimination, there is an expectancy violation that occurs, and most people of color are not armored or prepared for it.

Experiencing cultural betrayal trauma can lead to posttraumatic stress symptoms. However, even though participants felt hurt when experiencing overt horizontal discrimination, they reported wanting to address the discriminatory behavior with the ingroup perpetrator. This would stand in contrast to a trauma frame, which would predict a desire to avoid the perpetrator or discussions of what happened in order to reduce distress and risk of re-traumatization. Rather than seeing horizontal overt racial/ethnic discrimination as a traumatic event, this study suggests it was an expectancy violation, and the remedy was to approach the offender to resolve the violation. It is possible that by engaging with the perpetrator and educating them about issues regarding race, hurt and betrayal are reduced.

Furthermore, it is possible that situational attributions, particularly those focused on systemic issues of race, afforded to ingroup perpetrators also led to empathy and understanding even while feeling hurt and betrayed. It seems that knowledge of white supremacy and an analysis of its effects, rooted in power and access (i.e., the critical consciousness of racism), allowed participants to feel bad for ingroup perpetrators and to want to *approach* the person, to engage them in a conversation about the nature of the behavior, and to further educate them about the insidious effects of white supremacy. The greater empathy and understanding participants felt led them more often than not either to dismiss the race-based behavior or to approach the person (e.g., use it as a "teachable moment" to explain what was hurtful about the behavior).

By giving ingroup members the benefit of the doubt and providing space to explain why a behavior was perceived as discriminatory, targets of horizontal racism could maintain a sense of identity, attachment, and belonging to their group. This protection of group identity and feelings of belonging can be especially important for communities of color who often exist in predominantly white spaces and need to find ways to maintain solidarity in the face of outgroup discrimination. By providing these situational and structural attributions and subsequently feeling more willing to approach other people of color engaging in horizontal discrimination, targets may be able to create larger communities of allies in the fight against white supremacy. This finding also suggests that the level of critical consciousness development from the target may be yet another factor that can contribute to the various ways that horizontal discrimination can impact a person. This was not anticipated in our original hypotheses and warrants further exploration.

In contrast to horizontal discrimination, both overt and subtle experiences of discrimination perpetrated by outgroup members (i.e., vertical discrimination) were described by participants as expected and often lead to anger. Participants mentioned mostly expecting that White people would engage in racist behavior.

This expectation was attributed to dispositional factors (i.e., *that White person is racist*). While not being surprised at these instances, participants did report feeling angry at White perpetrators, a feeling which often led them to withdraw from these people in an act of self-preservation. Therefore, while participants indicated they would engage with and educate perpetrators of color (ingroup members), they were disinclined to do the same with White perpetrators (outgroup members).

In summary, the situational attributions afforded to people of color perpetrating overt and subtle acts of discrimination and the dispositional attributions afforded to White perpetrators engaging in both subtle and overt discrimination suggest that our original hypotheses were not entirely incorrect. Instead, our study suggests that the ultimate attribution error may play a larger role in interpretations of racial/ethnic discrimination than theories regarding the black sheep effect. It is possible that making situational attributions for race-based discriminatory behavior by people of color may be protective to the ingroup identity as well as to the emotional well-being of the target. While participants' responses reflected higher levels of hurt and betrayal when ingroup members were perpetrators of discrimination, participants indicated a willingness to engage and educate these perpetrators and showed empathy toward ingroup members. However, with outgroup perpetrators, participants did not feel the need to engage or educate and often left the situation in anger and with no ability or desire to repair that relationship.

Our study also suggests that a prior level of understanding of the historical and systemic nature of racism and white supremacy can lead to varying attributions and emotional responses from the target. To more accurately describe the nuances that may exist in a target's response toward different racially discriminatory behavior, we need to account for the critical consciousness development of the target. For instance, individuals in our sample who expressed a willingness to approach ingroup perpetrators were those who called upon the historical context of colonialism and the systemic nature of white supremacy to explain the behavior. These also tended to be participants whose definitions of racism focused on multiple levels of racism, including internalized, interpersonal, and systemic/institutional. It is possible that critical consciousness development may be one way in which targets can make sense of the incomprehensible experiences of horizontal discrimination that they were not necessarily prepared for through early experiences of racial socialization. While not the focus of the current study, we also argue that critical consciousness development may be beneficial in yet another way, in that it can potentially prevent the internalization of racism. Theoretically, if someone is lower in internalized racism, they are less likely to perpetrate horizontal discrimination. Reducing all forms of racial/ethnic discrimination is our goal, and preventing it from happening by promoting critical consciousness is one promising approach. Indeed, many scholars have developed programs to do just that with youth of color, to great benefits (Heberle et al., 2020; Maker Castro et al., 2022).

8.4 Cubic Model

Given the findings of our study, we have moved away from the initial study hypotheses in Table 3.2 and now propose an alternative model of the impact of racial/ethnic discrimination. The cubic model expands on our original model. It considers ingroup/outgroup perpetrator status and the overtness/subtlety of the discriminatory act, as in the original model, but adds a new dimension: the critical consciousness development of the target (Fig. 8.1). This model suggests that to understand what a target will think about and feel and consequently what they will do when they experience racial/ethnic discrimination requires us to consider at minimum these three factors. For example, participants who were high in critical consciousness and experienced overt discrimination from an ingroup member were likely to (a) think that the person had been a victim of white supremacy and had internalized racist beliefs and prejudices, which led them to (b) feel empathy for their ingroup member, which in turn led them often to (c) address the behavior with the perpetrator, almost like a "teachable moment." In contrast, participants who were high in critical consciousness and experienced subtle discrimination from an outgroup member were likely to (a) think this was expected by a White person in a white supremacist society, which led them to (b) feel anger and, often, exhaustion, which in turn led them to (c) avoid or pull away from interacting with that person, if they could. And so on.

The model adds needed complexity to the study of racial/ethnic discrimination, something especially useful to studies of microaggressions or horizontal racism. We do not contend that these are the only factors that are important for understanding the impact of discrimination experiences, only that these three were salient for our participants as they described their experiences with friends, family members, acquaintances, and strangers.

There are important benefits to expanding our theories of racial/ethnic discrimination, as we do here with the cubic model. To begin, research in discrimination in

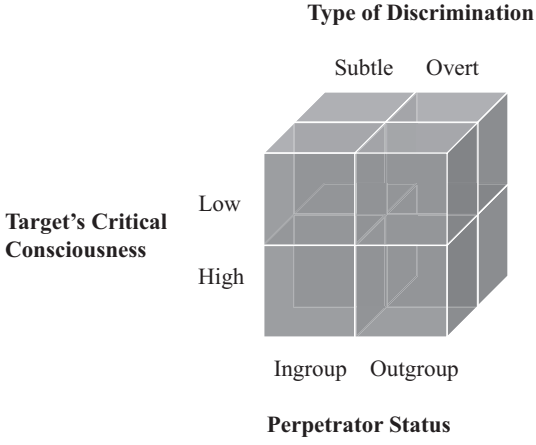

Fig. 8.1 Cubic model of attributions and impact of racial/ethnic discrimination

general, and subtle discrimination in particular, has been criticized for a lack of construct clarity (Lilienfeld, 2017). Vigorous defenses of these critiques have been mounted (e.g., Sue, 2017; Williams, 2020); nevertheless, such critiques do have the benefit of helping advance an area of scientific inquiry by insisting scholars bring greater precision to their work. We think that the cubic model does this, especially if it is applied to microaggression research. Rather than assuming specific discriminatory acts will be uniformly understood and interpreted as racist, the cubic model suggests that context (who is being targeted) and individual differences (critical consciousness) are necessary to measure and consider. There are likely additional dimensions that could and should be added to the model—for example, the relationship between the perpetrator and target is likely relevant to attributions and effects—but this did not clearly emerge as a theme in our research study. Perhaps evidence of other dimensions that can be added to the cubic model will come from future studies.

Second, there is a general lack of parsimony in theories that inform scientific predictions for the effects of racial/ethnic discrimination. In this book alone, we have listed approximately half a dozen theories that are relevant to the study of discrimination, including the fundamental attribution error, the ultimate attribution error, ingroup favoritism, the black sheep effect, and cultural betrayal trauma theory. The cubic model provides a framework for *which* theory or theories might be operating within a specific cell in the cube, and therefore what one would predict from racial/ethnic discrimination at the intersection of these factors. These kinds of models that can pull together information about which processes are operating under specific contexts are especially useful for synthesizing a vast, and sometimes unwieldy, literature. For instance, cultural betrayal trauma theory applies in the case of an overt act of horizontal discrimination targeted toward someone with high critical consciousness, while the fundamental attribution error probably applies in the case of a subtle act of vertical discrimination (regardless of the target's level of critical consciousness).

Another benefit to the cubic model is that it provides new paths for how to reduce the negative impacts of racial/ethnic discrimination. Our original model focused only on the perpetrator—*who* was it and *what* were they doing. Of course, the best course of action is for people to stop perpetrating discrimination against people of color and that should remain a top priority. However, by including the critical consciousness level of the target, the cubic model provides a clear additional avenue for reducing the negative impact of horizontal discrimination. Raising the critical consciousness of people of color should provide an alternative to cultural betrayal and the potential for trauma responses that Gomez (2021) articulates. While this remains to be tested empirically, our qualitative study suggests this is important, and, as we noted above, studies of children whose parents and schools intentionally foster critical consciousness support this notion (Heberle et al., 2020; Maker Castro et al., 2022).

8.5 Additional Considerations: Intersectionality, Frequency of Behavior, and Relationships

Participants in our study occasionally highlighted that intersectionality and multiple forms of privilege impacted their understanding of horizontal discrimination. Although we specifically asked them to consider racial/ethnic discrimination experiences, some people mentioned colorism, homophobia, and classism as forms of horizontal discrimination. This suggests that oftentimes our identities as people of color cannot be untangled from our other social identities—and that being oppressed or marginalized in one aspect of identity does not preclude the occupation of privilege in other aspects of identity. [To this point, both of the authors of this book are light-skinned, cis-gendered, immigrant Latina women with high levels of formal education.] However, what was not addressed in our study was how privileged identities from racial ingroup members may impact the target's experience and interpretation of horizontal discrimination. In other words, if an ingroup member held multiple privileged identities outside of their oppressed racial identity and committed an act of racial/ethnic discrimination toward a target, would we still see the target make the same situational/structural attributions for the behavior, feel empathy for the perpetrator, and want to engage them in a conversation about internalized racism? Or would other dimensions of privilege preclude this path to be taken?

Throughout the book, we have used Kanye [Ye] West as a prominent example of someone who is Black but also perpetuates white supremacy. When these interviews were conducted in 2020, the sentiment from participants regarding West's comments about slavery being a choice (Kaur, 2018) were that he was a victim of white supremacy or that he "drank the kool-aid" of a white supremacist culture and was trying to fit in. In brief, he was seen as suffering from internalized racism. As his racist behavior grew to the point of stating support for Adolf Hitler (Paybarah, 2022), it seems that situational attributions from people of color toward West became less common. Instead, many prominent people of color have posted on social media condemning West and his upholding white supremacy. It appears that West is no longer seen as a victim of white supremacy (a situational attribution), but rather as a white supremacist (a dispositional attribution). It is possible that the wealth and power he holds (privileged identities related to fame and class) have offset the earlier empathy people felt for him. The more he leans into his privileged identities, the higher the possibility he is viewed as an outgroup member by other Black people. While this may theoretically make sense, further research into how oppressed and privileged identities of perpetrators impact the effects of discrimination on targets is warranted.

Additionally, it is possible that West's consistent and repeated racist statements and discriminatory behavior have relegated him to a repeat offender, a status which may no longer evoke empathy. Targets may be able to forgive one or even a few instances of cultural betrayal or horizontal discrimination, but if the person keeps on engaging in discriminatory or racist behavior, it is likely that at some point, the targets may want to disengage in order to protect themselves. This frequency of

discriminatory behavior from the perpetrator is an additional dimension that should be explored and included in future expansions of the model.

In addition to the exploration of intersecting identities of perpetrators, another topic that may warrant future research is the relationship between the perpetrator and target of racial/ethnic discrimination. For instance, whether the perpetrator is perceived as part of the community or is a family member versus a total stranger can potentially add nuance to the experience and interpretation of racial/ethnic discrimination. As people of color ourselves, both authors have had experiences where we feel more betrayed by those in our racial/ethnic ingroup who are also related to us or closer to us *but* we also feel more willing to approach and educate them compared to someone we may not be closely tied to. This may very well go back to the basic understanding of what a target considers to be an ingroup member versus an outgroup member. Affiliation or relationship with the person may add additional feelings of betrayal due to the violation of trust on multiple levels. Therefore, we also encourage further research on how affiliation or relationships may add to our understanding of a target's interpretations and experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination.

8.6 Conclusion

By speaking with people of color about their experiences of both horizontal and vertical discrimination, we learned the following. First, people of color believe that ingroup members can perpetuate racism and act in a discriminatory fashion toward other people of color (interpersonal rather than systemic). Second, racial/ethnic discrimination through overt and subtle behaviors leads to more dispositional attributions of behavior for White perpetrators (*they are racist*) compared to more situational attributions of behavior for ingroup perpetrators (*they were trying to make a joke; they are a victim of white supremacy, colonialism, imperialism,* etc.). And finally, ingroup racial/ethnic discrimination can lead to more feelings of hurt and betrayal due to its shocking nature compared to the expected nature of White-perpetrated racism. Our findings highlight the importance of the ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979) in situations regarding racial/ethnic discrimination as ingroup perpetrators were afforded more situational than dispositional attributions compared to outgroup perpetrators. Our findings also suggest that cultural betrayal trauma theory (Gómez, 2021) provides a good framework to understand how racial/ethnic discrimination from ingroup members may lead to more feelings of betrayal and hurt than racial/ethnic discrimination from outgroup members.

The attributions participants made and the emotions that these instances evoked were linked to different strategies for navigating discrimination experiences, a finding we did not anticipate. Consistent with an understanding of the diverse forms of racism (from intrapersonal to systemic), participants held nuanced understandings of the impact of racism on individuals of color and, when seeing a perpetrator of horizontal racism as a victim of internalized racism, were likely to feel a mix of both

hurt and empathy, which led them to engage the perpetrator as a teacher might with a student. This was in contrast to the behaviors we expected them to report, since feeling hurt and betrayal tend to lead to avoidance or withdrawal rather than engagement. We found this an exciting discovery and a fruitful avenue for future research and intervention.

While not an explicit focus of our study, our results also suggested some ripe areas for additional exploration, including how intersecting identities of privilege interact with a marginalized racial or ethnic identity to lead to different attributions, emotions, and behaviors. The implications of this study are that white supremacy is insidious and affects people of color in ways that can lead to the perpetration of racism in their own communities. However, with continued education about the origins of racism and white supremacy through critical consciousness development, it may be possible to minimize long-term experiences of cultural betrayal trauma by increasing empathetic understanding and the willingness of people of color to educate others in their own community. It is possible that critical consciousness development can also help prevent horizontal discrimination from occurring in the first place, by minimizing the development of internalized racism among communities of color.

8.7 Summary

- The cubic model helps us understand the diverse ways racial/ethnic discrimination can impact people of color.
- The cubic model advances the scientific study of racism and discrimination by articulating contextual factors and diverse social psychological theories related to the many thoughts, feelings, and behaviors people have when experiencing discrimination.
- The cubic model does not include all possible factors important to understanding the experience and impact of experiencing discrimination; factors of intersectionality, frequency of discriminatory behavior, and relationships with perpetrators are proposed as areas important for future research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Key Terms

Chapter 1

- *Race-based orracial/ethnic discrimination:* the unequal treatment of people because they are of a certain racial or ethnic background. It includes both overt and subtle behaviors reflecting negative attitudes someone holds about a particular racial/ethnic group (National Association of School Psychologists, 2019).
- *System of white supremacy:* a multidimensional system of white domination that maintains laws promoting white authority, capitalism, wealth, and racial exploitation to maintain wealth and includes Eurocentrism (i.e., the practice of viewing non-Western cultures from a European perspective) and media dominance which maintain and promote racist ideology and white normativity (Mills, 2003).
- *White normativity:* the norms and practices that highlight whiteness as what is normal and acceptable and standards of beauty (Ferguson, 2004; Mills, 2003; Munoz, 1999; Pokhrel, 2011).
- *Stereotypes:* generalizations or beliefs about a group of people.
- *Prejudice:* the affective component that often accompanies a stereotype.
- *Interpersonal racism:* occurs when individuals from dominating groups in society inflict harm on other racial groups (APA, 2019).
- *Structural racism:* this occurs as a result of laws, policies, and practices that produce long-term, stable, race-based inequalities. It includes the refusal to eradicate previous laws and practices that serve to uphold racism (Yearby et al., 2020).
- *Institutional racism:* is closely related to structural racism and comes from the policies and procedures *practiced by institutions* (e.g., educational, legal, and medical) that marginalize diverse racial groups (APA Multicultural Guidelines, 2019; Kovera, 2019; Yearby et al., 2020).

C. A. Mujica, A. J. Bridges, *Horizontal and Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination*, SpringerBriefs in Psychology,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33058-2

- *Internalized racism:* occurs when someone from an oppressed or marginalized racial group accepts the negative beliefs and stereotypes about their population that reinforce white supremacy and cause them to feel devalued or powerless (Bivens, 1995; Jones, 2001).
- *Overt discrimination:* behavior that is clearly inequitable and leaves no question that it was racist (e.g., using racial slurs, engaging in lynchings, burning crosses) (Jones et al., 2016).
- *Subtle discrimination:* discriminatory behavior that is more ambiguous in form. Examples include color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Neville et al., 2016), modern racism (McConahay, 1986), and aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004) as well as microaggressions.
- *Microaggressions:* refer to the common, everyday insults that express negative racial messages, whether intentional or unintentional (Sue et al., 2007).
- *Vertical (outgroup)racial/ethnic discrimination:* occurs when the perpetrator of the discriminatory behavior is a person with power and the target is a person from another racial/ethnic group, one that is devalued in white supremacy (e.g., a person of color).
- *Horizontal (ingroup)racial/ethnic discrimination:* horizontal or ingroup discrimination occurs when minoritized group members display bias or violence toward fellow ingroup members.

Chapter 2

- *Critical consciousness:* an ability to analyze, recognize, and act against social forces that shape society and oppress marginalized groups (Freire, 1970).
- *Critical reflection:* is generally described as the ability to analyze and name the structures and systems that contribute to inequities and oppression in society (Seider et al., 2020).
- *Critical agency* (also known as critical motivation or political efficacy): is the belief or sense that one could enact change on the structures and systems identified during critical reflection (Seider et al., 2020; Watts et al., 2011).
- *Critical action:* is when individuals actively engage in activities that are intended to create change and fight against oppressive structures and systems (Seider et al., 2020).

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Throughout this interview we're going to discuss some situations that may or may not have happened to you. Some of these situations can be uncomfortable and elicit some emotions. If at any point you need to take a break or would like to stop the interview, please let me know.

1. First, in your own words, what is racism?
2. What about discrimination?
3. What do you think are the differences between subtle and overt discrimination/racism?

For the purposes of this study, let's define these terms:

Racism: Racism refers to prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups based on beliefs about one's own racial superiority or the belief that race reflects inherent differences in attributes and capabilities. Racism is the basis for social stratification and differential treatment that advantage the dominant group.

*Discrimination:*Discrimination refers to inappropriate treatment of people because of their actual or perceived group membership and may include both overt and covert behaviors, including microaggressions, or indirect or subtle behaviors (e.g., comments) that reflect negative attitudes or beliefs about a nonmajority group.

*Subtle racism/discrimination:*Subtle racism or discrimination is often ambiguous in nature and can occur in any situation. While someone can potentially attribute the behavior to racism, someone else can see the same situation and attribute the behavior to other factors. You usually have to look at the context of the situation to further arrive to the conclusion that the behavior was racist.

Overt/blatant racism/discrimination: In contrast to the subtle version of racism and discrimination, this behavior is clearly racist and related to the race of the person who is targeted.

4. What kinds of experiences have you had with racism/discrimination?
5. Tell me about a time where you experienced that was clearly racism/discrimination.
   (a) How did you feel when (whatever event) that happened?
   (b) What do you think caused this person to do this?
   (c) Would you think it was racism regardless of who says it? What if it was your mom, friend, or colleague?
6. Tell me about a time where you experienced something where you were uncomfortable in the situation and unsure but thought it was probably racist.
   (a) How did you feel when (whatever event) that happened?
   (b) What do you think caused this person to do this?
   (c) Would you think it was racism regardless of who says it? What if it was your mom, friend, or colleague?

7. Tell me about a time where you experienced something where you were uncomfortable in the situation and unsure but thought it was probably *not* racist.
   (a) How did you feel when (whatever event) that happened?
   (b) What do you think caused this person to do this?
   (c) Would you think it was *not* racist regardless of who says it? What if it was your mom, friend, or colleague? What if it was a white person?

We know that racism exists and that people who are in the majority group (Whites) can perpetuate racism by providing messages of the inferiority of people of color. Because of the presence of these messages across society, people of color can internalize racism. Therefore, even people of color can believe in the inferiority of their race and the supremacy of whiteness. We know this is a developmental process and people can be at any stage of their ethnic identity development at any given time. Given this, it's possible that people of color can be racist; however, there is no agreement about whether this exists. This is why we are trying to understand if it shows up in interpersonal interactions.

8. Do you believe people of color are racist?
9. Have you ever been accused of being racist? What were your reactions to that statement? If not, why do you think they have not said that?
10. Reflecting back, do you believe you have ever been racist?

If they have not mentioned any in groupdiscrimination:

11. Tell me about a time, if any, where someone from your own racial/ethnic group (could be family members, friends, or strangers) said something that you believed was racist toward your own racial/ethnic group.
    (a) How did you feel when that happened?
    (b) What do you think caused this person to do/say this?
    (c) Would it be better/worse if it came from a person who was White or not of the same racial/ethnic group?

In the online survey we asked you to complete, we provided you with some statements and asked how acceptable these statements were when people who were White or of your same racial group said them. I would like to ask you about what your thought process was when you answered some of these questions the way you did.

Final question:

What are some differences in how you perceive racism depending on the race (e.g., White vs someone of your racial background) of the person who does it?

Index

C. A. Mujica, A. J. Bridges, *Horizontal and Vertical Racial/Ethnic Discrimination*, SpringerBriefs in Psychology,
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