Examining How Racist Exemplars Shape White Americans' Perceptions of Racism

Kelly M. Hoffman

Boyertown, PA, USA

A Dissertation presented to the

Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia

in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 22, 2016

_____

Sophie Trawalter (Chair)

_____

Brian Nosek

_____

Benjamin Converse

_____

Lawrie Balfour

Abstract

Despite recent improvement of race relations in the U.S., racial disparities and intergroup

tensions persist. Part of the problem lies in the divergent perceptions of Black and White

Americans regarding racism. Relative to Blacks, Whites perceive less racism overall, and they

think of racism primarily in terms of individuals, which can have negative consequences for race

relations. Although previous work has explored the effects of thinking of racism in individual

terms, no work has examined whom people call to mind when they think of racism. The four

studies in this dissertation begin to address this gap by examining the individual racists

(exemplars) who come to mind, the attributions people make for these individuals, and how these

attributions, in turn, shape general perceptions of racism. Study 1 showed that White Americans

spontaneously call to mind a variety of individuals when thinking about racism. Studies 2 and 3

examined the causal influence of close vs. distant exemplars on attributions, demonstrating that

thinking of close others led to more charitable attributions and, in turn, these attributions were

associated with perceptions that racism is not problematic. Study 4 showed that shifting

attributions to be more charitable was associated with decreased perceptions of racism as

problematic. Moreover, Studies 3 and 4 address and rule out potential alternative explanations

for the relationship between closeness and exemplar attributions and perceptions of racism.

Taken together, these findings broaden our understanding of White Americans' perceptions of

racism and suggest a novel, pernicious way by which close others might negatively impact race

relations.

Acknowledgements

It would be an understatement to say that this achievement was anything but a long-running, concerted effort among many. The unconditional love and support of my family, friends, and mentors have contributed greatly to the person I am today and my passion for the work I do. So, this is not just an acknowledgement for my dissertation. This is a heartfelt expression of gratitude for those who made all things possible.

First, I would like to thank the individuals who made this particular process and achievement possible. My dissertation committee members—Sophie Trawalter, Brian Nosek, Benjamin Converse, and Lawrie Balfour—have provided invaluable feedback to this dissertation and to my research goals more broadly.

I am especially grateful for my advisor, Sophie Trawalter. I count myself as an especially fortunate graduate student to have Sophie as my advisor. She has set an example of what a brilliant, hard-working, and passionate scholar should be, while also providing the crucial guidance and support needed to propel others to success. Her dedication to conducting important research, coupled with her steadfast work ethic, has always inspired me to work harder and to continue to pursue the difficult research questions, no matter the consequences. Sophie: thank you for taking a chance on me as your first graduate student and for shaping me into the researcher that I am today. I am here because of you.

Thank you also to Brian Nosek, my secondary advisor who is always keenly attuned to the needs of those around him and who is willing to go to bat for anyone, including me on numerous occasions. In addition to his support, he also taught me how to approach research questions and designs from various perspectives, and provided critical feedback that has greatly improved my work. Thank you to other influential faculty mentors who provided guidance and advocacy throughout my academic career, including Ben Converse, Tim Wilson, and Norm Oliver; my undergraduate mentors, Joel Wade and Chris Boyatzis; and Stacey Sinclair, the awe-inspiring scholar who set me on this path.

I am also grateful to my friends, near and far, who have been important influences in my life and who kept me afloat throughout the years, especially Elie (Kellenda) Hessel, Laura Getz, Adam Herneisey, and Tammi Walker, who also enabled my ice cream, cupcake, and Mexican food habits; Bridget (Kedget) Graves, Camilla Griffiths, and Jenna Henderson. Thanks to my SCABL and Nosek lab mates, all of whom provided invaluable guidance in my research and academic endeavors.

Lastly, I am incredibly grateful for my wonderful family. My parents have been a steadfast, driving force since I was a child. Hard work and unwavering commitment in the face of setbacks was the foundation for everything that I have attempted, and my parents and grandparents set the standard to which I held myself. Momli and Daddy: thank you for making the pathway to my dreams possible, even at your physical, emotional, (and monetary) expense. Thank you to my brother, Kyle, who showed me how to deal with bizarre injuries (e.g., fishhooks to the eye, matchbox cars to the face, etc.) and, critically, helped to build my competitive side that has benefited me in many domains. Kyle, you have always taken care of me, and you also brought the best "seester" and incredible niece into our lives. Amy, no one understands me or brings out the…fullness…of my personality like you do. I could not have asked for a more amazing sister—one who has gone out of her way to be there for me no matter what the circumstances. And of course, Addison, who provided that distinctive, unconditional love of a niece for her Aunt Keh-ey. To all of my family, your love, character, humor, and just plain weirdness are unparalleled. My success is your success.

Examining How Racist Exemplars Shape White Americans' Perceptions of Racism

Black Americans are significantly and systematically disadvantaged compared to White Americans. They are more than twice as likely to live in poverty, twice as likely to be unemployed, and six times more likely to be imprisoned (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2013; National Urban League, 2015). Indeed, a comprehensive report drawing on data collected by federal agencies (e.g., the Census Bureau, the National Center for Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) estimates that the quality of life for Black Americans is only 72.2% of the quality of life for White Americans (National Urban League, 2015). Extant work shows that racism clearly contributes to these disparities. Carefully-constructed longitudinal and audit studies, as well as lab-based experiments, have shown that negative racial attitudes and stereotypes, and racially-biased laws and policies, undermine Black Americans' outcomes (Bendick, Jackson, & Reinoso, 1994; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Carter, Fine, & Russell, 2014; Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2013; Green et al., 2007; Lee, Ayers, & Kronenfeld, 2009; Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2012; Pager, 2003; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003; see also Greenwald, Banaji, & Nosek, 2015). Despite this evidence, many White Americans do not think racism is pervasive or particularly problematic (Gallup, 2014; Pattien, 2013), and some even think that Whites experience *more* racism than do Blacks (Norton & Sommers, 2011). Not surprisingly then, they are less likely to confront racism (Dickter & Newton, 2013) and they are less supportive of policies aimed at redressing racial disparities (Bobo, 2000; Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006; Sidanius, Singh, Hetts, & Federico, 2000).

In the present work, I seek to understand White Americans' perceptions of racism and the factors that contribute to these perceptions. Building on previous work, I propose that Whites

tend to perceive racism as isolated and relatively inconsequential because Whites conceptualize racism as an *individual*-level phenomenon—as individuals holding prejudiced attitudes or committing acts of hatred. They tend not to conceptualize racism as an *institutional*-level phenomenon—as policies and practices that perpetuate racial inequities. An individual conceptualization masks the systemic nature of racism and focuses racism in isolated individuals, rendering it less problematic. In addition, I presume that at least some White Americans call to mind close others when thinking of racist individuals; these close others likely motivate White Americans to further minimize racism. In this dissertation, I will test these claims empirically using mixed methodologies (i.e., correlational and experimental designs). More specifically, I will investigate the factors and processes that shape Whites' perceptions of racism, while also ruling out alternative explanations. Ultimately, the goal is to understand why Whites' perceptions of racism do not align with the realities of racism, and to develop and test interventions to shift Whites' perceptions to align with those realities and thus increase their support of redressing racial disparities.

Racism in the United States: Definitions and Manifestations

Racism against Black Americans takes many forms. At the individual level, prejudiced people perform prejudiced acts—acts that create and promote racial disparities. And indeed, extant research suggests that prejudiced individuals can and do act in prejudiced ways, and contribute to racial disparities. For example, research has shown that prejudiced Whites favor White vs. Black job applicants (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000); they offer less aid to Black vs. White victims (see Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005 for a review); they are harsher toward Black vs. White defendants (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2001, 2003); and they use more force against Black vs. White children suspected of a crime

(Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014). These individual acts of racism can promote disparities in education, the workplace, and criminal justice system, among others.

Racism is not only an individual-level phenomenon, however. It is also the product of broader systems and institutions that "exercise…power against a racial group defined as inferior…with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture" (p. 117, Jones, 1972; see also Feagin & Vera, 1995; Wellman, 1993). This *institutional* racism stems from systemic practices, customs, and policies that maintain subordination of a group; it is not just a larger collection of racist individuals. Scholars across disciplines have documented instances of institutional racism and how they contribute to racial disparities, often in major ways. For example, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 instituted harsher punishment for crack vs. cocaine, mandating the same prison sentence for 5 grams of crack compared to 500-times that amount for cocaine, creating huge disparities in conviction rates for Black vs. White offenders. In 2009, 79% of people arrested for crack were Black vs. 10% who were White, despite data showing that two-thirds of crack users are Whites or Latinos (Kurtzleben, 2010). This represents a policy and systemic practice that maintains the subordination of Black people. Another prominent example is the "Stop and Frisk" program in New York City, where police officers are given substantial leeway to approach anyone who looks suspect, leading to racial profiling and the targeting of Blacks, and young Black men in particular. In 2011, for instance, the NYPD stopped more young Black men than there were young Black men in the city (25.6% of police stops, while making up 1.9% of the population; Mathias, 2012). These statistics capture the deleterious consequences of institutional racism and underscore the point that institutions can create and perpetuate racial disparities in the absence of racist individuals. The systemic power of institutions, coupled with

the fact that eliminating individual racist acts would prove futile, make it clear that institutional racism is a problem.

White Americans' Perceptions of Racism

Even though the existence and pervasiveness of racial disparities are well-documented using objective measures, people's subjective *perceptions* of these disparities do not always align with these figures. National polls provide clear evidence that White Americans do not think racism is pervasive or hugely problematic, particularly relative to Black Americans. For example, according to recent polling data from the American National Election Study (ANES), 16% of Whites (vs. 56% of Blacks) indicated that there is a lot of discrimination in America today, and only 9% of Whites (vs. 56% of Blacks) thought that the federal government treats Whites better than it treats Blacks (Byrd & Mirken, 2011). And, 67% of Blacks are accurate in reporting that Blacks make less money compared to Whites, while 37% of Whites report the same (Byrd & Mirken, 2011). In addition, a recent national survey found a large gap between Black and White Americans' perceptions of institutional racism. Respondents were asked whether Blacks in their community are treated less fairly than Whites across seven institutions, including dealing with the police (B: 70%, W: 37%), in the workplace (B: 54%, W: 16%), in stores or restaurants (B: 44%, W: 15%), and when getting healthcare (B: 48%, W: 14%), among others (Pew Research Center, 2013). Overall, about half of Whites (49%) reported that there was no unfair treatment across all seven of the institutions listed, while only 13% of Blacks indicated the same (Pew Research Center, 2013).[1]

---

[1] Empirical work corroborates the fact that, on average, Blacks tend to better approximate objective reality (i.e., have greater accuracy) than Whites (Kaplowitz, Fisher, & Broman, 2003; Lillie-Blanton, Brodie, Rowland, Altman, & McIntosh, 2000; Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2012; see also Kaplowitz, Broman, & Fisher, 2006).

Whites' perceptions that racism is no longer pervasive and problematic have been "reaffirmed" by the presidential election of Barack Obama. For many people, White Americans in particular, the election of a Black man to the highest position in the country signaled that racial equality had finally been achieved (Young, 2009). Indeed, several post-election national surveys and studies documented these perceptions and opinions (Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009; Knowles, Lowery, & Schaumberg, 2009; Valentino & Brader, 2011). For example, Kaiser and colleagues (2009) measured participants' perceptions of racial progress and their support of race-related policies both before and after the 2008 presidential election. They found that participants thought that greater racial progress had been made after, compared to before, Obama's victory, and they were less likely to support policies to address racial inequalities (e.g., affirmative action programs).

Incidentally, Whites' perceptions of racism were relatively unaffected by the events of Ferguson, MO and other widely-publicized police shootings of unarmed Black men. Surveys post-Ferguson revealed similar perception gaps between White and Black Americans, with White Americans reporting that these police shootings were isolated incidents and not necessarily race-related incidents at that. For example, 40% of Whites vs. 6% of Blacks thought that the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson was an isolated incident, while only 35% of Whites compared with 76% of Blacks thought that the shooting is part of a broader pattern in the way police treat Black men (Moore, 2014). Not only that, but Whites were four times less likely than Blacks to say that the events in Ferguson warranted discussions about race (18% vs. 80%; Pew Research Center, 2014).

Potential Causes Underlying Whites' Perceptions of Racism

The factors underlying Whites' perceptions of racism are likely complex and multiply determined (see Carter & Murphy, 2015 for a review of social cognitive factors influencing group perceptions of racism). Past research suggests that Whites' perceptions are influenced partly by psychological factors, such as racial resentment and belief in the Protestant work ethic (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Sears & Henry, 2003), and just-world beliefs (Lerner, 1980). Relatedly, research suggests that Whites' motivation to perceive themselves and their ingroup as good and moral (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Tafjel & Turner, 1986), to distance themselves from the stereotype that White people are racist (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Sommers & Norton, 2006), and to view the status quo as legitimate, can lead Whites to minimize the pervasiveness and consequences of racism (Adams, O'Brien, & Nelson, 2006; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Knowles & Lowery, 2011; Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). In the present work, I will focus on another psychological variable: individuals' lay conceptions of racism.

Research in social psychology has found that White Americans often define racism at an individual level and not at an institutional level. In other words, this work finds that Whites often deny the existence of institutional racism, particularly when their self-image is at stake. For example, in one study, researchers either affirmed or threatened participants' self-image by providing positive or negative feedback on an intelligence test (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). They found that affirmed participants endorsed more instances of institutional racism than threatened participants, suggesting that allaying self-image concerns can increase Whites' acknowledgement of institutional racism. Interestingly, participants did not differ in their endorsement of acts of individual racism regardless of whether they were affirmed, presumably because an individual conception is less threatening to individuals' self-image (Unzueta &

Lowery, 2008). This research, taken together with polling data, suggest that many White Americans define (and choose to define) racism as an individual-level phenomenon and not an institutional phenomenon.

Conceptualizing racism as an individual phenomenon has important consequences. It influences whom Whites perceive as victims of racism as well as what action is needed to address it (O'Brien et al., 2009). For example, in a study of Whites' perceptions of racism after Hurricane Katrina, participants who thought of racism in individual vs. institutional terms thought that there was less racism during the relief and aid efforts after the hurricane (O'Brien et al., 2009). This and other work suggest that Whites' denial of racism may be harmful for intergroup relations; it may fuel intergroup mistrust (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002) and decrease Whites' support toward policies to redress racial inequities (Kluegel & Smith, 1983; Lowery et al., 2006). In the present work, I consider how an individual conception of racism might be especially problematic depending on which individuals—which racists— come to mind. I propose that an individual conception of racism is particularly pernicious if and when the individuals who come to mind are close others.

Given that Whites often define racism as an individual phenomenon—they think of racism as isolated acts by racist people—then understanding the individual racists that come to mind could shed light on the factors that inform Whites' perceptions of racism s more generally. Thus, in the present work, I will document *who* people imagine these "racist people" to be and how these individuals influence perceptions of racism.

Racist Exemplars

Existing work on conceptions of racism suggests that Whites tend to think of racism as an individual phenomenon (Knowles & Lowery, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2009; Unzueta & Lowery,

2008), and as such, Whites might call to mind a wide range of individuals—exemplars—when thinking of racism and racists. Borrowing from Smith and Zarate (1992), exemplars in the present work are defined as "cognitive representation[s] of an object of the same type as the current judgment" (p. 4). Thus, racist exemplars are the representations that come to mind when individuals think of racism. These exemplars could vary along numerous dimensions, including whether the exemplars are groups of people vs. a single individual (e.g., Southerners vs. Paula Deen), vague vs. specific others (e.g., people who say racist things vs. the neighbor who calls Black people derogatory names), or close vs. distant to the self (e.g., a relative vs. a stranger), among others. In this dissertation, I focused on the social distance of exemplars because close (vs. distant) others are likely to have disproportional impact on individuals. People often define and evaluate themselves in terms of their close relationships (Anderson & Chen, 2002; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). They even blur psychological boundaries between the self and close others (i.e., "self-other overlap"; Aron & Aron, 1986; Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998, 2002). Consequently, people are likely to make very different kinds of attributions for close vs. distant others' attitudes and behavior.

Additionally, close others play an important role in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors through processes such as social modeling and social tuning (e.g., Allport, 1954/1979; Castelli, Zogmaister, & Tomelleri, 2009; Fishbein, 2002; Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001; Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005; Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001; Zitek & Hebl, 2007). For example, a recent meta-analysis revealed significant overlap in children's and parents' attitudes in several domains, including race, gender, and nationality (Degner & Dalege, 2013). The sharing of attitudes with close others extends beyond passive learning, however. People seek to validate their attitudes through similar others,

and are more open to shifting attitudes to match those of close others—even those of strangers in contexts where there is a sense of interdependence or a desire to be liked (Sechrist, & Milford-Szafran, 2011; Sinclair et al., 2005). Taken together, this research suggests that people's attitudes are often shaped by the attitudes of close others, and as such, likely believe that those attitudes are right and/or moral.

In this dissertation, I offer a different, more-cognitive process through which close others shape race-related attitudes and behaviors. More specifically, I test whether the racist exemplars that are called to mind influence people's general perceptions of racism and their motivations, in part because people make different attributions for exemplars that are close to vs. distant from the self. People are motivated to protect both their own self-concept, as well as that of those close to them (Beach & Tesser, 1995), and this can manifest in the types of attributions people make. People are motivated to make charitable, situational attributions for close others' negative traits and behaviors and, conversely, are motivated to make less charitable, dispositional attributions for distant others' negative traits and behaviors (Beach & Tesser, 1995; Sande, Goethals, & Radloff, 1988; Sedikides, Campbell, et al., 1998, 2002; Taylor & Koivumaki, 1976). In other words, people give close others the 'benefit of the doubt' for negative behaviors, but do not do so for more distant others.

I contend that this tendency to make charitable attributions for close, but not distant, others' racism has important consequences for individuals' perceptions of racism more generally. Specifically, when Whites think of racism and racists, they should make different attributions for close vs. distant others' prejudices. There are three potential attributions people are likely motivated to make for close vs. distant others' racism. When thinking of racism and racists that are close to the self, people are likely to: 1) minimize close others' racism, thinking that they are

harmless and that their racism is not problematic; 2) think that close others are less able to

change and that they should not have to—if their racism is not harmful, change does not matter;

and 3) view close others as less responsible and blameworthy for their racism. To illustrate these

attributions, consider the following two examples: an exemplar that is distant from the self and

an exemplar that is close to the self.

    Example 1 – Distant Other: First, think about Paula Deen, a celebrity chef who recently

made headlines for her racist comments and casual use of the "N-word." For example, in

planning a "true Southern plantation-style wedding" for her brother, Deen was caught on video

stating, "Well, what I would really like is a bunch of little n*****s to wear long-sleeve white

shirts, black shorts and black bow ties, you know in the Shirley Temple days, they used to tap

dance around" (as cited in Reuters, 2013). The *Slate* even dubbed her "America's racist

grandma" (Colby, 2013). When thinking of a distant exemplar, such as Paula Deen, people may

be apt to make internal, dispositional attributions for her negative behavior (e.g., "she is a bad

person"). They may be more likely to make less charitable attributions more generally; they

might blame her for broader racial tensions and thus hold her responsible for changing her

negative racial attitudes and discriminatory actions. And, they may see her attitudes and actions

as extremely negative and harmful.

    Example 2 – Close Other: As a second example, think about a close other, such as one's

own grandmother who makes prejudiced comments. Unlike with someone more distant, people

are likely more motivated to make charitable attributions for their own grandmother. They are

likely to see her negative behavior as resulting from external, situational factors rather than

dispositional factors (e.g., "she is a sweet person who just happened to grow up in different

times"). They may be more likely to make charitable attributions more generally; they might not

blame her for broader racial tensions and are thus less likely to hold her responsible or think that she needs to change her negative racial attitudes and discriminatory actions. And, they may see her attitudes and actions as innocuous.

In addition to making different attributions for close vs. distant others, I contend that people will also extend these attributions to their perceptions of racism more broadly. In other words, if close vs. distant others serve as exemplars, then people will likely use these exemplars to form their perceptions of others' racial attitudes and of racism more generally. For example, if people call to mind a distant exemplar when thinking about racism, such as Paula Deen, then they might think that racism is more harmful, that racist individuals should be held responsible, and that they should change. Conversely, if people call to mind a close exemplar when thinking about racism, such as their own grandmother, then they might think that racism is not that harmful, that no one is to blame for negative racial tensions, and therefore no change is warranted. It would be ironic if people's perceptions do indeed align with these predictions; close individuals with whom people interact daily may be viewed as less harmful than individuals with whom people do not interact. That is, first-hand (and perhaps multiple) experiences with a close other's racism may be more easily-discounted than thinking of racism perpetuated by unknown others.

More generally, racist exemplars may be particularly pernicious because one need not have any contact with them for the exemplars to exert influence over perceptions of racism. In other words, whereas previous work has shown that having social relationships with prejudiced people can lead to negative race-related attitudes and opinions (Castelli et al., 2009; Lowery et al., 2001; Sinclair et al., 2005; Stangor et al., 2001; Visser & Mirabile, 2004; Zitek & Hebl,

2007), the present work shows that simply having prejudiced people in mind can influence race-related attitudes and beliefs, often in a negative way.

The Present Work

Racism—including institutional racism—is pervasive and harmful. Yet, many White Americans fail to appreciate the extent to which racism exists (Byrd & Mirken, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2013), in part because Whites tend to conceive of racism in *individual* rather than institutional terms (Knowles & Lowery, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2009; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). However, no work has examined what *individuals* people call to mind when they think of racism. The present work examines the individual racists (exemplars) who come to mind, the attributions people make for these individuals, and how these individuals and attributions shape perceptions of racism.

Figure 1 provides a framework of the hypothesized relationships that will be referred to throughout the rest of the paper to indicate the links within the framework that are tested in each study. Using correlational and experimental methods, I examine the relationships among these variables and consider possible alternatives to some of these links. Below is an overview of the studies and the primary aim(s) for each:

- Study 1: establish that people think of individuals when thinking about racism;
- Study 2: establish the causal effect of the social distance of the exemplar (close vs. distant) on exemplar attributions (link a) and general perceptions of racism (link c); establish a correlational relationship between exemplar attributions and general perceptions of racism (link b);

- Study 3: test more directly the causal impact of social distance on exemplar

  attributions (link a) and general perceptions (link c); control confounding variables to

  rule out potential alternatives;

- Study 4: test the causal effect of exemplar attributions on general perceptions (link b);

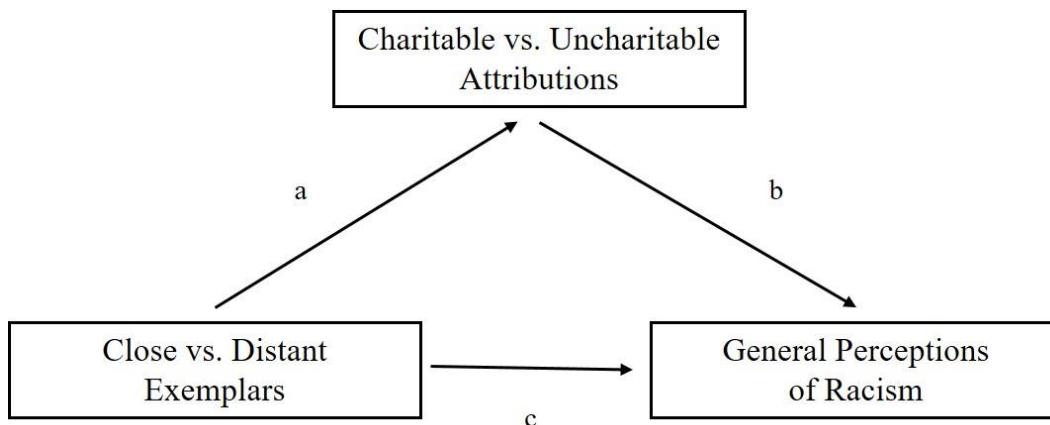 control confounding variables to rule out potential alternatives

Figure 1. Conceptual framework depicting the hypothesized relationships among exemplars, attributions, and general perceptions. Lowercase letters represent links between two of the variables.

Study 1

Establishing racist exemplars

The first task of this dissertation is to demonstrate that White Americans spontaneously call to mind exemplars when thinking about racism. To do that, I turned to research in cognitive psychology, which has shown that people store and reference exemplars when making judgments or when categorizing social and non-social stimuli (e.g., Medin, Dewey, & Murphy, 1983; Medin & Schaffer, 1978; Nosofsky, 1987; see also Smith & Zarate, 1992). Because my primary aim is to document exemplars that people call to mind *spontaneously* (i.e., without priming or asking explicitly), and perhaps *idiosyncratically* (e.g., one's racist grandmother vs. a KKK member), I adapted a paradigm used in research by Sia and colleagues (1997). I simply asked

participants to define racism and then provide an example that best represents their definition. Importantly, I made no explicit mention of individuals or groups in order to document whether people spontaneously think of individuals or groups when thinking about racism. I then coded participants' responses.

Method[2]

      Participants. I recruited 60 participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk).[3] Given the exploratory nature of this study, I aimed to recruit 50 White American participants and recruited additional participants to approximate this number after removing participants who did not meet the a priori exclusion criteria (i.e., participants who were not White, U.S. born, and/or native-English speaking). Eleven participants who did not meet these criteria were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 49 participants (51% female; $M_{age} = 32.33$, $SD = 8.08$).

      Procedure and materials. After consenting, participants were told that we were interested in people's thoughts about various social topics and that all information they provided would remain confidential. I included a reminder of confidentiality to help allay self-presentational concerns, and did so for all studies in this work.

      In this study, participants were first asked to provide their definition of racism. Then, the next screen displayed the definition they provided, along with a question asking them to "give a specific instance of racism that you have seen or heard about in real life and that represents the definition you provided above." I then coded participants' responses. For the variables of primary interest, I coded whether the participant referenced a person or group of people (coded

---

[2] Experimental materials and data for all studies will be openly accessible at [osf project page].
[3] I recruit participants from MTurk rather than undergraduate populations for most of our samples because I are interested in perceptions and attitudes more representative of the broader adult population, rather than a population that is younger, wealthier, and more educated than the general population (see Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

0=no, 1=yes), and for those who mentioned a person or people, whether it was an individual or group of people (coded 0=individual, 1=group), as well as whether the person or group were presumably close (i.e., family or friend; coded as a 1) vs. distant (coded as a 0) to the participant. I also recorded whether participants mentioned Blacks as targets of racism (coded 0=no, 1=yes). These ratings served as the focal variables for this study.

In addition to the focal variables, I included several questions to begin to explore participants' general, race-related perceptions. Participants first responded to five questions about their perceptions of racism and race relations in the U.S. (e.g., "To what extent do you think racism is changeable?" and "To what extent do you think race relations between Blacks and Whites are problematic?"), on a 5-point scale (1=not at all; 5=extremely). Next, participants responded to three items about the extent to which they think of racism as an individual, institutional, and cultural product using a 5-point scale (1=not at all; 5=completely). These items were formed based on the three processes put forth by Jones (1997; e.g., "To what extent do you think racism occurs in face-to-face interactions, including personal acts intended to denigrate or humiliate an individual because of his or her racial group membership?"). Lastly, participants provided demographic information, including their age, gender, race/ethnicity, political attitudes, country of birth, and native language.

Results

Primary analysis. Participants gave a wide range of responses, from more specific instances (e.g., "My grandfather is racist. He thinks he is better than other people because he is white, and he looks down on others and calls them derogatory names."), to more general examples (e.g., "When a person receives a smaller salary than someone of another race while doing the same job."). Of the 49 participants, 40 (83%) referenced other people; of these, 22

(55%) mentioned an individual and 6 (15%) mentioned people close to them. In addition, 35

participants mentioned Blacks as targets of racism (76%).

      Secondary analysis. I next explored the patterns of means for participants' perceptions

of racism and race relations (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics). On average, participants'

reported that racism and race relations are moderately changeable ($M = 3.37$ and $M = 3.65$,

respectively), that racism is very harmful ($M = 4.37$), and that racist individuals are largely

responsible for ongoing tensions between Whites and Blacks ($M = 3.88$). The three items

exploring perceptions of different forms of racism showed that, on average, participants reported

that racism is somewhat a function of individual and institutional processes ($M = 3.08$, and $M =$

3.31, respectively), and that it is more so a function of culture ($M = 3.67$).

Table 1
Study 1 descriptive statistics for exploratory variables

	M	SD	Min	Max
Racism changeable	3.37	.95	2	3
Racism harmful or problematic	4.37	.70	3	5
Racist individuals responsible	3.88	.83	2	5
Race relations changeable	3.65	.90	2	5
Race relations harmful or problematic	3.43	1.0	1	5
Individual racism	3.08	.81	2	5
Institutional racism	3.31	.92	1	5
Cultural racism	3.67	.77	2	5

Discussion

      Study 1 provides initial evidence that White Americans think of individuals when

describing racism and not just historical events or abstract concepts, and, importantly, not

institutions or institutional practices. This is consistent with previous work suggesting that

Whites tend to prefer an individual conception of racism (Knowles & Lowery, 2011; Unzueta &

Lowery, 2008). Additionally, these data suggest that there is variability in whether Whites report

thinking of individuals vs. groups and whether they think of others whom are presumably close vs. distant. Participants mentioned groups and specific individuals, and they mentioned exemplars ranging from relatively-close to the self (e.g., a family member) to more distant from the self (e.g., a stranger).

Study 2

Examining the causal effect of close vs. distant exemplars on Whites' attributions and perceptions

In Study 2, I began to test the conceptual links in the framework provided in Figure 1 by experimentally manipulating the type of exemplar that people call to mind when thinking of racism, and then measuring people's attributions for these exemplars (link a) and their general perceptions of racism (link c). In accordance with the literature showing the strong influence of close others on attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954/1979; Castelli et al., 2009; Fishbein, 2002; Lowery et al., 2001; Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005; Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005; Stangor et al., 2001; Zitek & Hebl, 2007), I focused on exemplars that are close to the self (i.e., family member or close friend) vs. more distant from the self (i.e., the average American) vs. a control condition (no exemplar). If the type of exemplar that Whites think of matters, then asking people to think of a close vs. distant exemplar should shape their attributions in divergent ways. Specifically, because people are prone to make more charitable attributions for close others (Beach & Tesser, 1995; Sande et al., 1988; Sedikides et al., 1998, 2002; Taylor & Koivumaki, 1976), thinking of a close vs. distant racist other should be associated with trivializing the exemplar's racism and providing justifications for negative traits and behaviors. In other words, thinking about the racist attitudes of a close relative, for example, should lead to perceptions that this person's attitudes are not problematic, changeable, and that s/he is not to blame for racial tensions. Thinking about

the racist attitudes of a distant stranger, however, should lead to the opposite, whereby the distant stranger's attitudes are problematic, changeable, and s/he is to blame for racial tensions.

In addition to attributions for the exemplars, I examined whether the types of attributions people make for close vs. distant exemplars generalize to perceptions of racism and racism more generally (link c). I predicted that people will make more charitable attributions for close vs. distant others' racism—they will perceive close others' racism as less changeable and less harmful, and will hold these individuals less responsible for interracial tensions—*and,* that these perceptions will generalize such that people will perceive *racism in general* as less harmful, less changeable, and that no one is to blame. A control condition with no exemplar prompt was included to determine whether a baseline might shed light on the relative influence of close vs. distant exemplars on general perceptions of racism.

Method

Participants. I recruited 140 participants from MTurk, aiming for between 30-40 participants per condition after excluding participants who did not meet a priori exclusion criteria (i.e., participants who were not White, U.S. born, and/or native-English speaking). I excluded 43 participants from this sample who did not meet these criteria. The final sample consisted of 97 participants (56% female; $M_{age} = 36.63$, $SD = 13.97$).

Procedure. After consenting, participants were randomly assigned to think and write about either a close vs. distant other who has negative racial attitudes, or they were assigned to a no-information control condition. Then, participants answered questions about their attributions for the exemplars' racial attitudes, followed by their general perceptions of racism. They then provided demographic information, including their gender, race/ethnicity, political attitudes, native language, country of birth.

Materials.

Exemplar prompts. Participants in the "close other" condition read that we were interested in people's perceptions of others whom they know very well, and specifically a close family member or friend who might hold particular attitudes about other social groups. They were then asked to think about a family member or close friend who has negative racial attitudes toward Blacks, and to write about this person or group's characteristics. Participants in the "distant other" condition received a similar prompt except that we changed the target exemplar to someone whom they do not know, specifically the average American who has negative racial attitudes toward Blacks. Examples of study participants' responses in the "close" vs. "distant" condition can be found in the appendix.

Exemplar perceptions and attributions. Participants in the experimental conditions ("close" and "distant" conditions) rated their agreement with four statements about the exemplar's negative attitudes. Using a 5-point scale (1=*not at all;* 2=*somewhat;* 3=*moderately;* 4=*very;* 5=*extremely*), participants rated the following items: 1. "To what extent do you think this person's negative racial attitudes are changeable?" 2. "To what extent do you think this person should change her/his negative racial attitudes?" 3. "To what extent do you think this person's negative racial attitudes are harmful?" and 4. "To what extent do you think this person is to blame or is responsible for the negative racial tensions between Whites and Blacks?" The first two questions assess attributions related to changeability; the third item assesses harmfulness; and the fourth item assesses blameworthiness. To create an exemplar perception composite, I averaged three of the items, excluding the item assessing ability to change. [4]

---

[4]Across studies, the two items regarding can/should change were never significantly correlated, rs < .13, ps > .11. It appears that participants consider others' ability to change (i.e., *changeability*) as distinct from, and as less likely

General perceptions. Participants in all three conditions responded to three questions about their perceptions of racism using the same 5-point scale from the exemplar perceptions: 1. "To what extent do you think racism is changeable?" 2. "To what extent do you think racism is harmful or problematic?" 3. "To what extent do you think racist individuals are responsible for the ongoing racial tensions between Whites and Blacks?" These items were averaged to great a composite of participants' general perceptions of racism.

I also included two additional items about perceptions of race relations between Blacks and Whites: "To what extent do you think race relations between Blacks and Whites are changeable?" and "To what extent do you think race relations between Blacks and Whites are problematic?"

Results

Exemplar perceptions and attributions (link a). Descriptive statistics for exemplar perceptions and attributions by experimental condition are presented in Table 2. Note that the control condition is not included in these analyses because participants in this condition did not think of an exemplar. To examine participants' attributions, I constructed a General Linear Model (GLM) predicting the exemplar composite from condition ("close" vs. "distant"), controlling for age, gender, and political attitudes.[5] As predicted, participants in the "close" vs. "distant" condition reported more charitable attributions of the exemplars' racism, such that close others do not need to change, are less harmful, and less blameworthy, $F (1, 58) = 15.93$, $p = .0002$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$, 95% CI [.05, .37]).

---

than, whether others *should* change. In addition, the alpha for the exemplar perceptions composite increases substantially when removing this item (αs > .72). I thus used the composite without this item for all analyses.
[5] I controlled for age, gender, and political attitudes regarding social issues (e.g., abortion, same-sex marriage) because of extant work showing that these demographic variables influence race-related judgments (e.g., Katz & Hass, 1988; Wilson, 1996).

I constructed a similar GLM for the two exploratory items measuring participants'

perceptions of internal and external influences on exemplar attitudes. Participants did not differ

by condition for either the internal (F (1, 58) = 1.87, p = .18) or external (F (1, 58) = .62, p = .43)

variables.

General perceptions by condition (link c). Descriptive statistics for general perceptions

by condition are presented in Table 3. First, I examined the effect of all three conditions on

general perceptions of racism, controlling for age, gender, and political attitudes. While the

"control" mean fell between the other two conditions, there was no difference among conditions

in the omnibus analysis, F (2, 88) = 2.05, p = .135. I also conducted a planned contrast

comparing the "close" and "distant" conditions. This contrast revealed that exemplar perceptions

in the "close" condition were marginally less negative compared to the "distant" condition, F (1,

88) = 3.95, p = .050, η_p^2 = .04, 95% CI [0, .14].

Condition did not predict perceptions of race relations between Blacks and Whites as

problematic or changeable, Fs < 1.24, ps > .250. The contrasts between "close" and "distant'

conditions for these two items were also not significant, Fs < 2.38, ps > .127.

Relationship between exemplar and general perceptions (link b). A central hypothesis

of the framework predicts that the attributions people make for individual exemplars should map

onto more general perceptions of racism. Indeed, exemplar perceptions predicted general

perceptions of racism, such that more charitable attributions were associated with perceptions

that racism more generally is less problematic, β = -.51, SE = .09, F (1, 58) = 29.77, p < .0001.

To examine the potential mediating role of exemplar perceptions, I conducted an analysis

examining whether exemplar perceptions mediated the relationship between condition (distant =

-1, close = 1) and general perceptions. Traditionally, constructing mediation models necessitated

a direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. However, over the last several years, researchers have begun advocating for pursuing mediation analyses even when there is no direct effect, arguing that requiring a direct effect can stifle theory development and preclude further exploration (e.g., Hayes, 2009; MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011; Shrout & Bolger, 2002; Zhao, Lynch, Chen, 2010). Using these recommendation, I conducted a bootstrapping analysis drawing 5,000 random samples with replacement to estimate the size of the indirect-only effect of condition on general perceptions through exemplar perceptions. This analysis yielded a mean indirect effect that was negative (a x b = -.232), with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero (-.412, -.098), suggesting mediation.

Table 2
Study 2 raw means and standard deviations for exemplar attributions by condition

	Close		Distant	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Able to change	1.71	.76	2.22	1.12
Should change	3.54	1.23	4.44	.94
Harmful	3.00	1.28	3.97	.88
Blameworthy	2.14	.97	2.97	1.06
Composite (α = .72)	2.89	.96	3.80	.66
Internal causes	2.61	.99	2.92	1.00
External causes	4.00	.98	3.81	.86

Table 3
Study 2 raw means and standard deviations for general perceptions by condition

	Close		Distant		Control	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Racism changeable	3.21	1.07	3.44	.97	3.09	.98
Racism harmful	3.64	1.16	4.31	.86	4.30	.88
Racists to blame	3.43	1.23	3.81	.98	3.67	1.16
Composite (α = .68)	3.43	.97	3.85	.68	3.69	.78
Race relations changeable	3.64	.91	3.83	.94	3.52	.83
Race relations problematic	3.07	1.07	3.53	.94	3.31	1.09

Discussion

Study 2 provides compelling experimental support for link a, demonstrating that people make more charitable attributions for close vs. distant racist exemplars. It also provides correlational evidence for link b, showing that individual attributions are related to people's general perceptions of racism. Participants who thought about a close other made more charitable attributions and minimized this person's racism compared to participants who thought about a distant other. Relative to participants in the distant other condition, participants in the close other condition reported that the close other is less able to change and should not have to change, that this person's racism is less harmful, and that the person should not be held responsible.

Interestingly, condition did not directly influence participants' perceptions of racism more generally, with the exception of the marginally-significant contrast between the close and distant conditions. Rather, the attributions people made for exemplars mapped onto participants' general perceptions of racism, and in fact mediated the relationship between condition and general perceptions. Across experimental conditions, increases in charitable attributions was associated with decreased perceptions that racism is changeable, harmful, and that racist individuals are to blame.

The indirect effect of exemplar attributions in the absence of a direct effect of condition on general perceptions was not anticipated. There are several possibilities for the lack of a direct effect in this case (see Rucker et al., 2011). One possibility is that the study may have been too underpowered to detect the direct effect of condition on general perceptions. In the next study, I address this possibility by increasing sample size.

While this study established the causal impact of exemplars on attributions, the manipulation suffered from a number of confounding factors, including the accessibility and the extremity of the exemplars that are called to mind. More specifically, it does not rule out the possibility that thinking of distant others may be less effortful for people than thinking of close others, and that this accessibility accounts for these effects rather than exemplar closeness. It also could be the case that the distant exemplars Whites spontaneously call to mind tend to be more extreme than closer exemplars. In the next study, I used a more direct manipulation of exemplar closeness, while also attempting to control these confounding factors.

Study 3

Examining the causal effect of exemplar closeness and addressing potential confounds

Study 3 takes a more direct approach to examine the causal effect of closer vs. more distant exemplars on exemplar attributions (link a) and general perceptions (link c). It also aims to address potential confounds that might serve as alternative explanations for the impact of close vs. distant exemplars. For example, distant exemplars might be more readily accessible in individuals' memory, and this ease of retrieval allows individuals to more easily apply stereotypes associated with racists in their perceptions (see Dijksterhuis, Macrae, & Haddock, 1999). Similarly, the distant exemplars called to mind may simply be more extreme, whether in number (e.g., a group rather vs. an individual) or in actions (e.g., killing an unarmed Black man

vs. telling a racist joke), thus resulting in less charitable attributions and more negative

perceptions of racism (see Skowronski & Carlston, 1987).

In this study, I asked all participants to call to mind two exemplars whom they know, and

then manipulated the closeness of the exemplar. Presumably, asking participants in both

conditions to think of two individuals whom they know removes the potential confounding of

accessibility and extremity of exemplars with social distance of the exemplar (i.e., close vs.

distant). That is, in this design, participants should not differ in the ease of accessing exemplars

or the extremity of the exemplars they call to mind. My prediction, then, is that participants who

rate the closer exemplar will make more charitable attributions for the exemplars' racism than

participants who rate the more distant exemplar, and these attributions will again shape general

perceptions of racism.

Method

Participants. I recruited 250 participants from MTurk, aiming for between 50-60

participants per condition after excluding participants who did not meet a priori exclusion criteria

(i.e., participants who were not White, U.S. born, and/or native-English speaking). I excluded

102 participants from this sample who did not meet these criteria. The final sample consisted of

148 participants, with 70 in the "close" condition and 78 in the "distant" condition (53% female;

$M_{age} = 36.38$, $SD = 12.87$).

Procedure. After consenting, participants were asked to think of two people who they

know might have racist attitudes toward Blacks. Next, they were randomly assigned to indicate

which of the two people they listed was closer to vs. more distant from them. They then

completed the exemplar ratings about this person and general perceptions of racism, followed by

demographic information, including their gender, race/ethnicity, political attitudes, native

language, and country of birth.

Materials. Participants were asked to think about two individuals who might have racist

attitudes toward Blacks and to put the initials of these individuals in a textbox. These initials

appeared on the next screen, and participants were randomly assigned to indicate the person they

feel closer to vs. more distant from. The initials of their choice appeared on the next screen,

where participants were asked to complete the same exemplar perceptions about this individual,

followed by the same measure of general perceptions as in Study 2.[6]

Lastly, I included a manipulation check given the subtlety of the closeness manipulation,

asking participants to rate the extent to which they felt distant vs. close to each of the people they

listed at the beginning of the study (the initials for each were again displayed on the screen;

scale: 1=Extremely distant, 2=Very distant, 3=Somewhat distant, 4=Somewhat close, 5=Very

close, 6=Extremely close).

Results

Exemplar perceptions and attributions (link a). Descriptive statistics for exemplar

perceptions and attributions by experimental condition are presented in Table 4. First, the

manipulation check revealed that the closeness manipulation was successful; participants in the

"close" condition ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.16$) reported greater closeness than did participants in the

---

[6] I also included two additional items to explore whether people differ in their conceptions of racism as individual and/or institutional. Specifically, they were asked to rate the extent to which they thought racism, "lies within individuals--that people hold negative attitudes or behave negatively toward others based on their race? These can be overt acts (e.g., racial slurs; violence) or more covert, less-conscious acts (e.g., negative facial expressions, body postures, and other interaction behaviors; approval of harsher punishment for a Black vs. White defendant)," and "is embedded within our society, including in our history, culture, politics, economics, and institutions--that it occurs in the form of discriminatory treatment, unfair policies, and inequitable opportunities produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.)." These ratings were made on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*).

"distant" condition ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.12$), $F (1, 146) = 120.45$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .45$, 95% CI [.33,

.54].

To examine participants' attributions for the exemplars, I constructed a GLM predicting

exemplar perceptions from condition ("close" vs. "distant"), controlling for age, gender, and

political attitudes. As predicted, participants in the "close" condition reported more charitable

attributions for the exemplar than did those in the "distant" condition, $F (1, 141) = 7.21$, $p =$

.008, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, 95% CI [.003, .13]).

General perceptions by condition (link c). Descriptive statistics for general perceptions

by condition are presented in Table 5. Condition did not directly influence general perceptions of

racism, $F (1, 141) = .68$, $p = .41$. Participants' self-reported closeness to the exemplar did,

however, predict general perceptions of racism, $\beta = -.15$, $SE = .07$, $F (1, 141) = 4.91$, $p = .028$.

Higher levels of self-reported closeness were associated with less negative perceptions of racism

more generally.

Relationship between exemplar and general perceptions (link b). Again, a central

tenet of this framework is that the attributions people make for individual exemplars map onto

more general perceptions of racism. I constructed a GLM predicting general perceptions from

exemplar perceptions, controlling for age, gender, and political attitudes. In replication of Study

2, exemplar perceptions was a strong predictor of general perceptions of racism, $\beta = -.41$, $SE =$

.06, $F (1, 141) = 44.52$, $p < .0001$. The more charitable attributions participants made for the

exempla, the less they thought of racism as problematic.

I conducted two mediation analyses examining whether exemplar perceptions mediated

the relationships between condition (distant = -1, close = 1) and general perceptions, and self-

reported closeness and general perceptions. Bootstrapping analyses drawing 5,000 random

samples with replacement for each analysis revealed a mean indirect effect of exemplar

perceptions that was negative (condition: a x b = -.089; self-reported closeness: a x b = -.193),

with 95% confidence intervals that did not include zero (condition: CI [-.171, -.027]; self-

reported closeness: CI [-.309, -.116]), again suggesting mediation.

Table 4
Study 3 raw means and standard deviations for exemplar attributions by condition

	Close		Distant	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Able to change	2.50	1.07	2.12	1.06
Should change	3.57	1.21	3.97	1.03
Harmful	2.57	1.17	3.08	1.33
Blameworthy	1.80	.89	2.26	1.31
Composite (α = .79)	2.65	.87	3.10	1.06

Table 5
Study 3 raw means and standard deviations for general perceptions by condition

	Close		Distant	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Racism changeable	3.33	1.13	3.37	1.08
Racism harmful	3.81	1.18	4.10	.99
Racists to blame	3.37	1.07	3.64	1.12
Composite (α = .68)	3.50	.90	3.71	.80
Individual racism	3.49	.93	3.64	.87
Institutional racism	3.24	.91	3.27	1.07

Discussion

Study 3 conceptually replicates the finding from Study 2 by providing causal evidence

for link a and correlational evidence for link b. Participants who thought of a person they know

who is relatively closer to them made more charitable attributions for the exemplars' racism than

did those who thought of a known person who is relatively distant from them. This lends

additional support that social distance—even subtle differences in closeness among known

others—can lead to divergent attributions for racist others, which in turn are associated with differences in perceptions of racism. As in Study 2, exemplars attributions indirectly influenced general perceptions in the absence of the direct effect of condition on general perceptions. This suggests that power is not the issue. Rather, there might not be a direct effect without exemplar attributions or there is an unmeasured variable that is suppressing the direct effect.

Importantly, the findings from Study 3 begin to address some of the confounding factors from Study 2. Participants in both conditions first thought of two known individuals before being randomly assigned to the closeness manipulation to remove the potential confounding of social distance with accessibility or extremity. While random assignment assumes these differences would be distributed across conditions, it is still possible that participants first thought of an exemplar who came to mind more readily and/or who was more extreme than the second exemplar. However, follow-up analyses revealed that participants rated the first exemplar they reported as being significantly closer than the second exemplar regardless of condition, suggesting that the first exemplar called to mind was likely not more extreme, insofar as individuals are motivated to perceive close others in a more positive light.

These limitations aside, Study 3 provides stronger, converging evidence that attributions for an exemplar's racist behavior may shape Whites' perceptions of racism more generally. In the last study, I take a more direct approach to testing the causal influence of the proposed mediating variable. Specifically, I manipulate the attributions that one could make about a racist exemplar to be either more charitable or uncharitable.

Study 4

Examining the causal link effect of attributions on general perceptions

Studies 2 and 3 clearly demonstrate the correlational relationship between exemplar attributions and general perceptions of racism. In this final study, I examined whether manipulating the attributions people make for exemplars *causally* impacts perceptions of racism (link b). Specifically, I provided participants with the same exemplar and racist behavior and then manipulated whether participants were asked to think about charitable vs. uncharitable attributions. Incidentally, similar to Study 3, holding the exemplar constant again attempts to control for the potential confounds related to accessibility and extremity. I predicted that participants who are encouraged to make charitable vs. uncharitable attributions for an exemplar's racism will think that racism is not all that problematic.

Method

Participants. I aimed to recruit 250 participants from MTurk, but ended data collection early due to time constraints, resulting in 236 participants prior to excluding participants who did not meet a priori exclusion criteria (i.e., participants who were not White, U.S. born, and/or native-English speaking). I excluded 89 participants from this sample who did not meet these criteria. The final sample consisted of 147 participants (48% female; $M_{age} = 37.16$, $SD = 12.92$).

Procedure and materials. After consenting, participants were given information about a racist exemplar—in this case, Paula Deen—and were randomly assigned to consider charitable vs. uncharitable attributions for her racist actions. Participants were shown information about Paula Deen, a celebrity chef whose racist comments and behaviors were widely publicized. They were shown a picture of her along with the quote mentioned previously in the introduction. Then, the next screen provided a brief commentary about some of the responses to Paual Deen's behavior that was identical across conditions except for whether participants were asked to

consider and write some ways in which her behavior is not so harmful vs. harmful (i.e., make charitable vs. uncharitable attributions). Specifically, they read:

> *Many people--Black and White--were angered and outraged by Paula Dean's comments. They thought that these comments were extremely offensive and harmful, and they demanded that she take responsibility for her actions. Some even expected her to make efforts to change, to become more tolerant. But many people--Black and White--simply dismissed Paula Dean's comments as ridiculous and trivial. They thought that these comments were not harmful and they did not demand that she take responsibility. Indeed, they did not blame her or expect her to change her beliefs, reasoning that she grew up in the South, in a less tolerant era, and thus cannot change. Regardless of your personal opinions, please think about some of the ways in which her behavior is **[not so] harmful**.*

Participants then completed the same ratings for exemplar and general perceptions as in Studies 2 and 3, followed by demographic information, including their gender, race/ethnicity, political attitudes, native language, and country of birth.

Results

　　Exemplar perceptions and attributions (link a). Descriptive statistics for general perceptions by condition are presented in Table 6. Because I manipulated whether participants made charitable vs. uncharitable attributions for the exemplars, this measure of perceptions and attributions serves as a manipulation check. The manipulation of attributions was successful, as participants in the "charitable" condition reported less negative attributions (i.e., less harmful, less in need of change, less blameworthy) for the exemplar's racism than did those in the "uncharitable" condition, $F (1, 141) = 8.26$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, 95% CI [.01, .14]).

General perceptions by condition (link b, manipulated). Descriptive statistics for

general perceptions by condition are presented in Table 7. The primary aim for this study was to

examine whether manipulating exemplar attributions directly influences general perceptions.

Contrary to this prediction, condition did not directly influence general perceptions of racism, F

$(1, 141) = 1.04$, $p = .31$.

Relationship between exemplar and general perceptions (link b). While the measure

of exemplar perceptions essentially serves as a manipulation check, I again examined the

relationship between this measure and general perceptions for the purpose of replication, keeping

in mind the limitations associated with these variables. In replication of Studies 2 and 3,

exemplar perceptions was a strong predictor of general perceptions of racism, $\beta = -.48$, $SE = .06$,

$F (1, 141) = 61.27$, $p < .0001$. The more charitable the attributions participants made for Paula

Deen's racism, the less problematic they perceived racism more generally, and replicating

Studies 2 and 3, exemplar perceptions again mediated the relationship between condition

(charitable $= -1$, uncharitable $= 1$) and general perceptions (a x b $= .108$, 95% CI [.038, .196].

Table 6
Study 4 raw means and standard deviations for exemplar attributions by condition

	Charitable		Uncharitable	
	M	SD	M	SD
Able to change	2.68	1.10	2.47	1.21
Should change	3.75	1.16	3.94	1.20
Harmful	2.96	1.35	3.42	1.33
Blameworthy	1.74	.93	2.11	1.18
Composite ($\alpha = .79$)	2.80	.95	3.15	1.07

Table 7
Study 4 raw means and standard deviations for general perceptions by condition

	Charitable		Uncharitable	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Racism changeable	3.49	1.06	3.30	1.15
Racism harmful	3.86	1.14	4.04	1.15
Racists to blame	3.70	1.06	3.82	1.14
Composite (α = .72)	3.68	.84	3.72	.96
Individual racism	3.71	.96	3.38	1.02
Institutional racism	3.18	1.02	3.27	1.03

Discussion

Study 4 attempted to establish a causal relationship between the attributions people make for exemplars and general perceptions (link b). While the manipulation was successful at shifting exemplar perceptions, it did not directly influence general perceptions. This study did, however, replicate the findings from Studies 2 and 3, showing that exemplar perceptions are consistent, sizable predictors of general perceptions of racism. More charitable perceptions of an exemplar's (Paula Deen in this case) behavior as less harmful, less in need of change, and less blameworthy, again, mapped onto perceptions that perceptions that racism more generally is less harmful, less changeable, and that individuals are less to blame.

One limitation of this study is that the manipulation of exemplar attributions could be construed as a manipulation of exemplar impact. That is, thinking of an exemplar (i.e., Paula Deen)'s racism as not so harmful could represent more charitable attributions for her racist behavior *or* perceptions that her racism is not as impactful, irrespective of attributions. The manipulation check suggests that the manipulation did indeed shift exemplar attributions, however, it does leave open the possibility that exemplar impact could have also influenced perceptions. A replication of this study in which the manipulation is more closely matched to

attributions rather than impact would provide an important, more direct test of the claim that attributions are fundamental in shaping general perceptions.

General Discussion

Racial disparities continue to plague the lives of Black Americans. These disparities are pervasive and well-documented (Bendick et al., 1994; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Carter et al., 2014; Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2013; Green et al., 2007; Greenwald et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2009; Milkman et al., 2012; Pager, 2003; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Smedley et al., 2003; see also Kurtzleben, 2010; Mathias, 2012; National Urban League, 2015). And yet, many White Americans fail to see or acknowledge the role that racism plays in perpetuating racial disparities (Gallup, 2014; Pattien, 2013)—or, fail to even recognize disparities in the first place (Kaiser et al., 2009; Knowles et al., 2009; Valentino & Brader, 2011). Part of this stems from Whites' definitions of racism and their motivation to perceive racism as an individual phenomenon that exists only to the extent in which there are racist people committing racist acts (Adams et al., 2006; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Knowles & Lowery, 2011; Lowery et al., 2007; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). As such, Whites are likely to minimize or deny racism and refrain from taking action to reduce disparities, further fueling intergroup tensions (Bobo, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2002; Lowery et al., 2006; Sidanius et al., 2000). Whites' perceptions of racism are thus an important factor in understanding race relations, however, no work has considered what individuals Whites think of when thinking of racism, and how these individuals might shape perceptions of racism more generally. This dissertation begins to address this gap.

Four studies document the importance of racist exemplars and reveal that the attributions people make for these exemplars play a significant role in shaping broader perceptions of racism. Study 1 established that White Americans not only think of individuals when thinking about

racism, but that there is also variability in the types of individuals and the closeness of these

individuals who are called to mind. Study 2 showed that close vs. distant exemplars led to more

charitable attributions, and in turn, these attributions were associated with perceptions that

racism is not all that harmful problematic. Study 3 provided more direct evidence of the

influence of closeness to an exemplar and charitable attributions, while also attempting to control

for the potential confounding of closeness with accessibility and extremity. Finally, Study 4

revealed that shifting exemplar attributions to be more charitable was associated with decreased

perceptions of racism as problematic.

        While these studies provide hints of experimental evidence in support of my claim that

racist exemplars can be consequential, the effects of closeness and attributions on general

perceptions are largely correlational. Specifically, while Studies 3 and 4 attempted to establish

causality, the manipulation of exemplar closeness (Study 3) and attributions (Study 4) did not

directly impact general perceptions of racism. Rather, self-reported closeness and exemplar

attributions shaped general perceptions. Thus, future work will need to provide stronger,

experimental evidence to establish whether these relationships are in fact causal. It will also be

important to examine possible third variables or other control variables that might account for the

effect of exemplars, such as racial attitudes. The present studies controlled for political attitudes,

thereby showing the impact of social distance and exemplar attributions independent of political

ideology. Insofar as political attitudes track with racial attitudes (e.g., Sears & Henry, 2003),

these findings provide some evidence that individual differences in racial attitudes cannot fully

account for these effects. Additional work including measures of racial attitudes could shed light

on the unique role of racist exemplars independent of racial prejudice.

Relatedly, Studies 2 and 3 suggest that additional variables might also influence general perceptions. The lack of a direct effect of exemplar closeness on general perceptions suggest that this relationship may be more complicated. Specifically, these studies provide consistent evidence that exemplar attributions strongly predict general perceptions in the absence of a direct effect. There are several possibilities for this lack of a direct effect (see Rucker et al., 2011). First, the studies may be too underpowered to detect the direct effect, although the consistent findings across studies suggests that this is likely not the case. Second, there may be some unmeasured variable that suppresses the direct effect. For example, personal guilt could be leading to the opposite effect of attributions on general perceptions; when people think of a close exemplar, they might experience guilt for this person's attitudes or concern for how they personally might be implicated in racism, leading to *increased* perceptions of racism more generally. In other words, thinking of a close other might lead to both increased charitable attributions and increased guilt, which in turn exert opposing effects on general perceptions. Third, it could be that the data accurately reflect that there is no direct effect to detect in the first place. In this case, attributions might be necessary for this effect—that thinking of close vs. distant others requires these attributions (spontaneously or not), without which there is no effect of close vs. distant exemplars on general perceptions at all. These possibilities are all plausible and speak to the complex, multiply-determined nature of perceptions of racism, and as such, merit future research.

These limitations aside, the present work contributes to the literature on White Americans' conceptions of racism as an individual phenomenon (Adams et al., 2006; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Knowles & Lowery, 2011; Lowery et al., 2007; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). It provides a more nuanced understanding of Whites' perceptions, demonstrating that the

individuals Whites' call to mind when thinking about racism can have divergent consequences for perceptions of racism more generally. More generally, it underscores the insidious nature of an individual conception of racism—people's perceptions of racism can be shaped by racist others, absent any contact with these individuals.

Concluding Remarks

In response to the not-guilty verdict of Darren Wilson, the White police officer who shot and killed Michael Brown, Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) noted that, "the focus on the deeds of alleged individual perpetrators, on perceived bad actors, obscures the broad systemic corruption which is really at the root." This quote reveals a common narrative in White Americans' perceptions of racism that goes beyond the criminal justice system. It speaks to Whites' seeming tendency to focus on individual racists and not on the institutional nature of racism. However, there may be more to Whites' perceptions of individual racism than "bad actors." The present work suggests that even individuals who are presumably "good actors", such as close others, can be just as, if not more, problematic.

References

Adams, G., O'Brien, L. T., & Nelson, J. C. (2006). Perceptions of racism in Hurricane Katrina: A liberation psychology analysis. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *6*(1), 215-235.

Allport, G. W. (1979). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison Wesley. (Original work published 1954).

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: an interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological review*, *109*(4), 619.

Apfelbaum, E. P., Sommers, S. R., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Seeing race and seeming racist? Evaluating strategic colorblindness in social interaction. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *95*(4), 918.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N. (1986). *Love and expansion of self: Understanding attraction and satisfaction.* Washington, DC: Hemisphere.

Beach, S. R. H., & Tesser, A. (1995). Self-esteem and the extended self-evaluation maintenance model: The self in social context. In M. H. Kernis (Ed.), *Efficacy, agency, and self-esteem. Plenum series in social/clinical psychology,* (pp. 145-170). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Bendick, M., Jackson, C. W., & Reinoso, V. A. (1994). Measuring employment discrimination through controlled experiments. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, *23*(1), 25-48.

Berinsky, A. J., Huber, G. A., & Lenz, G. S. (2012). Evaluating online labor markets for experimental research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk. *Political Analysis*, *20*, 351-368.

Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha

    and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *American Economic*

    Review, 94, 991-1013.

Bobo, L. (2000). Race and beliefs about affirmative action. In D. O. Sears, J. Sidanius, & L.

    Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America* (pp. 137–164).

    Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Brief, A. P., Dietz, J., Cohen, R. R., Pugh, S. D., & Vaslow, J. B. (2000). Just doing business:

    Modern racism and obedience to authority as explanations for employment

    discrimination. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, *81*(1), 72-97.

Buhrmester, M., Kwang, T., & Gosling, S. D. (2011). Amazon's Mechanical Turk a new source

    of inexpensive, yet high-quality, data?. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *6*, 3-5.

Byrd, D., & Mirken, B. (2011). "Post-racial? Americans and race in the age of Obama."

    Retrieved from http://greenlining.org/wp-

    content/uploads/2013/02/AmericansandRaceinAgeofObama.pdf

Carter, P., Fine, M., & Russell, S. (2014). "Discipline Disparities Series: Overview." Discipline

    Disparities Research to Practice Collaborative. Retrieved from

    http://www.district287.org/uploaded/A_Better_Way/DisciplineDisparitiesSeriesOvervie

    wMarch2014.pdf

Carter, E. R., & Murphy, M. C. (2015). Group-based Differences in Perceptions of Racism:

    What Counts, to Whom, and Why?. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *9*(6),

    269-280.

Castelli, L., Zogmaister, C., & Tomelleri, S. (2009). The transmission of racial attitudes within

    the family. *Developmental Psychology, 45,* 586-591.

Coates, T-N. (2015, March 5). The gangsters of Ferguson. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from

      http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/03/The-Gangsters-Of-

      Ferguson/386893/

Colby, T. (2013, June 25). *Paula Deen is America's racist grandma.* Retrieved from

      http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/26/us-pauladeen-idUSBRE95N17T20130626

Crocker, J., & Luhtanen, R. (1990). Collective self-esteem and ingroup bias.

      Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58, 60–67.

Degner, J., & Dalege, J. (2013). The apple does not fall far from the tree, or does it? A meta-

      analysis of parent–child similarity in intergroup attitudes. *Psychological bulletin*, *139*(6),

      1270-1304.

DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Smith, J. C. (2013). "Income, poverty, and health insurance

      coverage in the United States: 2012." U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports.

      Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p60-245.pdf

Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2013). "Housing discrimination against racial

      and ethnic minorities 2012: Executive summary." Retrieved from

      http://www.huduser.org/portal/Publications/pdf/HUD-514_HDS2012_execsumm.pdf

Dickter, C. L., & Newton, V. A. (2013). To confront or not to confront: Non-targets' evaluations

      of and responses to racist comments. *Journal of Applied Social Psycholoyg, 43,* 262-275.

Dijksterhuis, A., Macrae, C. N., & Haddock, G. (1999). When recollective experiences matter:

      Subjective ease of retrieval and stereotyping. *Personality and Social Psychology*

      Bulletin, *25*(6), 766-774.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and
1999. *Psychological science*, *11*(4), 315-319.

Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. E., Kawakami, K., & Hodson, G. (2002). Why can't we just get
along? Interpersonal biases and interracial distrust. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic
Minority Psychology*, *8*, 88-102.

Feagin, J. R., & Vera, H. (1995). *White racism.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Fishbein, H. D. (2002). *Peer prejudice and discrimination: The origins of prejudice.* Mahwah,
NJ: Erlbaum.

Gallup (2014, December 19). *As a Major U.S. Problem, Race Relations Sharply Rises.* Retrieved
from http://www.gallup.com/poll/180257/major-problem-race-relations-sharply-
rises.aspx

Goff, P. A., Jackson, M. C., Di Leone, B. A. L., Culotta, C. M., & DiTomasso, N. A. (2014). The
essence of innocence: Consequences of dehumanizing Black children. *Journal of
personality and social psychology*, *106*(4), 526-545.

Goff, P. A., Steele, C. M., & Davies, P. G. (2008). The space between us: stereotype threat and
distance in interracial contexts. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *94*(1), 91-
107.

Green, A. R., et al. (2007). Implicit bias among physicians and its prediction of thrombolysis
decisions for black and white patients. *Journal of General Internal Medicine, 22,* 1231-
1238.

Greenwald, A. G., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2015). Statistically small effects of the
Implicit Association Test can have societally large effects. *Journal of Personality and
Social Psychology, 108,* 553-561.

Hayes, A. F. (2009). Beyond Baron and Kenny: Statistical mediation analysis in the new
millennium. *Communication monographs*, *76*(4), 408-420.

Jones, J. M. (1972). *Prejudice and racism*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Jones, J. M. (1997). *Prejudice and racism* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system justification
and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33,* 1–
27.

Kaiser, C. R., Drury, B. J., Spalding, K. E., Cheryan, S., & O'Brien, L. T. (2009). The ironic
consequences of Obama's election: Decreased support for social justice. *Journal of
Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*(3), 556-559.

Kaplowitz, S. A., Broman, C. L., & Fisher, B. J. (2006). Perceptions of economic and behavioral
differences between Blacks and Whites: Racial attitudes of White Americans and status
generalization. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 69,* 367-379.

Kaplowitz, S. A., Fisher, B. J., & Broman, C. L. (2003). How accurate are perceptions of social
statistics about blacks and whites? Effects of race and education. *Public Opinion
Quarterly, 67,* 237-243.

Katz, I., & Hass, R. G. (1988). Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational
and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. Journal of Personality and Social
Psychology, 55, 893– 905.

Kinder, D. R., & Sears, D. O. (1981). Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial
threats to the good life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40*, 414-431.

Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1983). Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial
affect, and stratification beliefs on Whites' views. *Social Forces*,*61*(3), 797-824.

Knowles, E. D., & Lowery, B. S. (2011). Meritocracy, self-concerns, and Whites' denial of racial
    inequity. *Self and Identity, 11,* 202-222.

Knowles, E. D., Lowery, B. S., & Schaumberg, R. L. (2009). Anti-egalitarians for Obama?
    Group-dominance motivation and the Obama vote. *Journal of Experimental Social
    Psychology, 45,* 965-969.

Kurtzleben, D. (2010, August 3). Data show racial disparity in crack sentencing. *U.S. News &
    World Report.* Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/08/03/data-
    show-racial-disparity-in-crack-sentencing

Lee, C., Ayers, S. L., & Kronenfeld, J. J. (2009). The association between perceived provider
    discrimination, health care utilizations, and health status in racial and ethnic minorities.
    Ethnic Disparities, 19, 330-337.

Lerner, M. J. (1980). *The belief in a just world*: *A fundamental delusion*. New York, NY: Plenum
    Press.

Lillie-Blanton, M., Brodie, M., Rowland, D., Altman, D., & McIntosh, M. (2006). Race,
    ethnicity, and the health care system: Public perceptions and experiences. *Medical Care
    Research and Review, 57,* 218-235.

Lowery, B. S., Hardin, C. D., & Sinclair, S. (2001). Social influence effects on automatic racial
    prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 842-855.

Lowery, B. S., Knowles, E. D., & Unzueta, M. M. (2007). Framing inequality safely: Whites'
    motivated perceptions of racial privilege. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33*,
    1237–1250.

Lowery, B. S., Unzueta, M. M., Knowles, E. D., & Goff, P. A. (2006). Concern for the in-group and opposition to affirmative action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90,* 961-974.

MacKinnon, D. P., Krull, J. L., & Lockwood, C. M. (2000). Equivalence of the mediation, confounding and suppression effect. *Prevention science*, *1*(4), 173-181.

Mathias, C. (2012, June 15). NYPD stop and frisks: 15 shocking facts about a controversial program. *Huffington post.* Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/13/nypd-stop-and-frisks-15-shocking-facts_n_1513362.html

Medin, D. L., Dewey, G. I, & Murphy, T. D. (1983). Relationships between item and category learning: Evidence that abstraction is not automatic. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 9,* 607-625.

Medin, D. L., & Schaffer, M. M. (1978). Context theory of classification learning. *Psychological Review, 85,* 207-238.

Milkman, K. L., Akinola, M., & Chugh, D. (2012). Temporal distance and discrimination: An audit study in academia. *Psychological Science*, *23*(7), 710-717.

Moore, P. (2014, August 18). Ferguson, MO.: Racial and political divide over Brown shooting.*YouGov.com.* Retrieved from https://today.yougov.com/news/2014/08/18/ferguson-mo/

National Urban League. (2015). *The State of Black America*. New York, NY: National Urban League.

Nelson, J. C., Adams, G., & Salter, P. S. (2013). The Marley Hypothesis: Denial of racism reflects ignorance of history. *Psychological science*,*24*(2), 213-218.

Norton, M. I., & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are

        now losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6,* 215-218.

Nosofsky, R. M. (1987). Attention and learning processes in the identification and categorization

        of integral stimuli. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and*

        Cognition, 13, 87-108.

O'Brien, L. T., Blodom, A., Alsbrooks, A., Dube, R., Adams, G., & Nelson, J. C. (2009).

        Understanding White Americans' perceptions of racism in Hurricane Katrina-related

        events. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 12,* 431-444.

Pager, D. (2003). The mark of a criminal record. *American Journal of Sociology, 108,* 937-975.

Pager, D., & Shepherd, H. (2008). The sociology of discrimination: Racial discrimination in

        employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets. *Annual review of sociology*, *34*,

        181-209.

Pattien, E. (2013, August 28). *The Black-White and urban-rural divides in perceptions of racial*

        fairness. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/08/28/the-black-

        white-and-urban-rural-divides-in-perceptions-of-racial-fairness/

Pew Research Center. (2013, August 22). *King's dream remains an elusive goal; Many*

        Americans see racial disparities. Retrieved from

        http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/08/22/kings-dream-remains-an-elusive-goal-many-

        americans-see-racial-disparities/

Pew Research Center. (2014, August 18). *Stark racial divisions in reaction to Ferguson police*

        Shooting. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2014/08/18/stark-racial-divisions-

        in-reactions-to-ferguson-police-shooting/

Reuters. (2013, June 26). *Celebrity chef Paula Deen denies she is a racist, dropped by Walmart.* Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/26/us-pauladeen-idUSBRE95N17T20130626

Rucker, D. D., Preacher, K. J., Tormala, Z. L., & Petty, R. E. (2011). Mediation analysis in social psychology: Current practices and new recommendations. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *5*(6), 359-371.

Salvatore, J., & Shelton, J. N. (2007). Cognitive costs of exposure to racial prejudice. *Psychological science*, *18*(9), 810-815.

Sande, G. N., Goethals, G. R., & Radloff, C. E. (1988). Perceiving one's own traits and others': The multifaceted self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54,* 13-20.

Saucier, D. A., Miller, C. T., & Doucet, N. (2005). Differences in helping whites and blacks: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *9*(1), 2-16.

Sears, D. O., & Henry, P. J. (2003). The origins of symbolic racism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 259-275.

Sechrist, G. B., & Milford-Szafran, L. R. (2011). "I Depend on You, You Depend on Me. Shouldn't We Agree?": The Influence of Interdependent Relationships on Individuals' Racial Attitudes. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *33*(2), 145-156.

Sedikides, C., & Brewer, M. B. (Eds.). (2001). *Individual self, relational self, collective self.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Sedikides, C., Campbell, W. K., Reeder, G. D., & Elliot, A. J. (1998). The self-serving bias in relational context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 378-386.

Sedikides, C., Campbell, W. K., Reeder, G. D., & Elliot, A. J. (2002). The self in relationships: Whether, how, and when close others put the self "in its place." *European Review of Social Psychology, 12,* 237-265.

Shrout, P. E., & Bolger, N. (2002). Mediation in experimental and nonexperimental studies: new procedures and recommendations.*Psychological methods*, *7*(4), 422-445.

Sia, T. L., Lord, C. G., Blessum, K. A., Ratcliff, C. D., & Lepper, M. R. (1997). Is a rose always a rose? The role of social category exemplar change in attitude stability and attitude-behavior consistency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 501-514.

Sidanius, J., Singh, P., Hetts, J., & Federico, C. (2000). It's not affirmative action, it's the Blacks: The continuing relevance of race in American politics. In D. O. Sears, J. Sidanius, & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: Values, ideology, and prejudice in American public opinion* (pp. 183–219). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sinclair, S., Dunn, E., & Lowery, B. S. (2005). The relationship between parental racial attitudes and children's implicit prejudice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*, 283–289.

Sinclair, S., Lowery, B. S., Hardin, C. D., & Colangelo, A. (2005). Social tuning of automatic racial attitudes: The role of affiliative motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89,* 583-592.

Skowronski, J. J., & Carlston, D. E. (1987). Social judgment and social memory: The role of cue diagnosticity in negativity, positivity, and extremity biases. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *52*(4), 689-699.

Smedley, B. D., Stith, A. Y., & Nelson, A. R. (Eds). (2003). *Unequal treatment: Confronting racial and ethnic disparities in health care.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Smith, E. R., & Zarate, M. A. (1992). Exemplar-based model of social judgment. *Psychological Review*, *99*, 3-21.

Sommers, S. R., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2001). White juror bias: An investigation of prejudice against Black defendants in the American courtroom.*Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *7*(1), 201.

Sommers, S. R., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2003). How much do we really know about race and juries-a review of social science theory and research. *Chi.-Kent L. Rev.*, *78*, 997.

Sommers, S. R., & Norton, M. I. (2006). Lay theories about White racists: What constitutes racism (and what doesn't). *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *9*(1), 117-138.

Stangor, C., & Sechrist, G. B., and Jost, J. T. (2001). Social Influence and intergroup beliefs. In J. P. Forgas and K. D. Williams (Eds.), *Social Influence*, (pp. 235-252). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In W. G. Austin & S. Worschel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Taylor, S. E., & Koivumaki, J. H. (1976). The perception of self and others: Acquaintanceship, affect, and actor-observer differences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 33,* 403-408.

Unzueta, M.M., & Lowery, B.S. (2008). Defining racism safely: The role of self-image

maintenance on White Americans' conceptions of racism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*, 1491–1497.

Valentino, N. A., & Brader, T. (2011). The sword's other edge: Perceptions of discrimination and racial policy opinion after Obama. *Public Opinion Quarterly*,*75*(2), 201-226.

Visser, P. S., & Mirabile, R. R. (2004). Attitudes in the social context: The impact of social network composition on individual-level attitude strength. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87,* 779-795.

Wellman, D. T. (1993). *Portraits of white racism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, T. C. (1996). Cohort and prejudice: Whites' attitudes toward blacks, Hispanics, Jews, and Asians. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *60*(2), 253-274.

Young, C. (2009, January 28). *Obama may boost foes of affirmative action.* Chicago Sun-Times.

Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of consumer research*,*37*(2), 197-206.

Zitek, E. M., & Hebl, M. R. (2007). The role of social norm clarity in the influenced expression of prejudice over time. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 43,* 867-876.

Appendix

Study 2 Examples of Participants' Responses by Condition

<u>"Distant" condition:</u>
"They're usually closed minded, redneck, religious freaks. They do nothing but spew hate and bigotry. There is nothing positive about these kinds of people."

"A person who has negative racial attitudes towards Blacks is likely to have almost no positive qualities. They are likely, however, to be uneducated, ignorant, and violent."

"A person who has a negative racial attitude towards black is first and foremost misguided and uneducated on the topic of race. This person might have some qualities such as hateful, unintelligent, and very narrow minded."

<u>"Close" condition:</u>
"An older family member of mine does not really like minorities, especially blacks. However, I think it is because he grew up in a different time, where such opinions were not uncommon. Furthermore, I think he dislikes them more for their economic and social status than their race. He thinks many of them are lazy and entitled, yet he does not mind the black people at his work who are of a similar economic and social status as he is. I think this person's attitudes are bad, but I think they would be a lot worse coming from someone closer to my age."

"My mother is a generous and caring individual but is intolerant of different cultures. She makes snap judgements [sic] about people who are Black, assuming that they are welfare recipients, criminals, lazy, etc. even though one of her close friends in high school was Black. However, for the few Black people she has come into contact with, she is generous and has only nice things to say…She is just not very wordly [sic] and hasn't had much contact with people and ideas outside of the very rural, conservative area in which she was raised. I think her ignorance would be banished and her attitudes would be more compassionate had she managed to leave this region, even if only for a little while."