

INTRODUCTION

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Despite long-standing historical evidence that racial discrimination has been and continues to be a chronic and pervasive part of the life experiences of people of color (Jones, 1997), both theoretical developments and empirical investigations into the experiences of people of color as targets of racism have only recently emerged. Until relatively recently, the majority of the scholarship in this area focused on the acquisition and/or the prevention of racist attitudes rather than the experiences of people of color as the target of racism (Burkard, Medler, & Boticki, 2001). Yet, since the late 1990s the literature in this area has rapidly accelerated. For instance, in one study, Paradies (2006) found that of 138 studies on racial discrimination across all racial groups, only six were conducted before 1990. Research on people of color's experiences with racism in the psychology literature has significantly increased. The central purpose of this collection is twofold: (a) to compile the most current and up-to-date literature on the theoretical, empirical, and applied research that examines the racial discrimination experiences of

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The Cost of Racism for People of Color: Contextualizing Experiences of Discrimination, A. N. Alvarez, C. T. H. Liang, and H. A. Neville (Editors)

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people of color and (b) to be a catalyst for innovation and expansion of this rapidly growing area of scholarship.

By assembling the leading scholars on the experience of being a target of racism, we hope that we are able to capture a comprehensive yet concise overview of the major themes and trends in the field. Whereas the majority of empirical research focuses on a single racial ethnic group, each chapter in this collection attempts to capture the experience of racism across various communities of color, whenever possible. This facilitates a comparison of both the shared and unique racial experiences of various racial and ethnic groups. The text integrates perspectives from multiple disciplines to foster further development and refinement of conceptual, methodological, and analytical innovations in psychology. Although the book is designed for individuals within various subfields in psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling, school, community, developmental, industrial–organizational), the content and perspectives also should appeal to scholars and practitioners from a range of disciplines outside of psychology, such as ethnic studies, sociology, public health, and allied health. Throughout the text, the chapter authors provide a concise resource that critically synthesizes the existing literature and they cover methodological innovations and interventions within the literature.

The edited work is organized around three broad sections that capture the state of the field: (a) Theoretical and Methodological Foundations, (b) Contexts and Costs and (c) Interventions and Future Directions. The incorporation of theoretical, empirical, and applied dimensions in the book aligns well with the scientist-practitioner model within applied psychology and is designed to capture the full breadth of the scholarship in this area. Although the material covered in the text is grounded in psychological science, the authors of each chapter integrate literature from multiple disciplines and examine the literature across multiple communities of color to represent the full breadth of the literature in this area. That being said, a caveat is in order. It is beyond the scope of this text to fully describe and do justice to the breadth of experiences with racism—both historical and contemporary—that communities of color face, much less the myriad of outcomes that result from such experiences. That task is best left to a body of literature rather than a single text. Without a doubt, readers will find areas that are not covered as fully as they might prefer. However, as a synopsis that compiles the expertise of leading scholars about broad theoretical and empirical trends, this compilation points readers to insights, resources, and studies that in turn will sharpen their understanding of the impact of racism.

The first section, Theoretical and Methodological Foundations, provides the underlying framework for the entire book by covering current conceptual frameworks that are the impetus for empirical research and also applied interventions. In Chapter 1, Pieterse and Powell provide an essential historical

overview of racism and its manifestations, as well as an operational definition grounded in both the ideological and institutional elements. Scholars and practitioners alike will find Chapter 1 to be an invaluable resource as a concise overview of the major theoretical models that attempt to delineate the pathways and mechanisms of the impact of racism and its correlates. More important, however, Pieterse and Powell challenge readers by providing a thoughtful critique of these existing models, with a particular emphasis on the need to incorporate and address the role of resistance and empowerment in responding to racism.

Continuing to challenge readers' understanding of the impact of racism on people of color, Lewis and Grzanka in Chapter 2 call upon scholars to integrate intersectionality theory into their conceptual and methodological frameworks and argue for the need to recognize the multiple social identities that shape one's experience of discrimination. They begin with a historical overview of intersectionality theory and scholarship and the multidisciplinary roots of intersectional critiques, followed by an overview of the intersectional research on perceived racism, gender, social class, and sexual orientation. To facilitate the shift away from single-axis approaches to studying the impact of racism, Lewis and Grzanka conclude their chapter with methodological considerations for researchers in developing intersectional studies that capture the complexities of being the target of racism.

The section then segues into Chapter 3 and Williams's exploration of the major measurement and methodological challenges facing scholars who are attempting to advance the literature on the impact of perceived discrimination. In particular, Williams provides cogent and compelling arguments that for the literature to advance, scholars will need research designs that (a) incorporate a more comprehensive assessment of racism in its various forms, (b) minimize bias, and (c) disentangle the effects of racial stressors from the effects of other psychosocial stressors that confront people of color. Last, to deepen understanding of the intervening variables that influence the impact of racism, the section concludes with Alvarez, Liang, Molenaar, and Nguyen's chapter on selected mediators and moderators of perceived discrimination. Particularly in light of the mounting empirical evidence of racism's adverse impact on people of color, this chapter highlights the imperative to clarify what mitigates this impact. To this end, Alvarez et al. provide an overview of key constructs and issues that refine the understanding of racism's impact.

The outcomes of racism are another main focal point of this volume as evidenced by the largest section of the book—Contexts and Costs. Racism is associated with a number of outcomes. Its negative effects can be observed at the psychological level, behavioral level, physiological level, and community level. Racism also interferes with academic and career well-being. In the chapters in this section (Chapters 5–10), racism's impact is documented and future

directions are presented. In Chapter 5, Brondolo, Ng, Pierre, and Lane present a social cognitive perspective to examine the link between racism and depression. In doing so, the authors address multiple cognitive variables (schemas about the self, the world, and others) that are influenced by discrimination and that in turn explain the association found between racism and depression.

In Chapter 6, Gee and Otiniano Verissimo present a life course perspective to explain how racism shapes behavior differently at various life points on the basis of experiences with social stress, institutional barriers encountered, and prevailing social norms. Put differently, Gee and Otiniano Verissimo discuss how racism's impact on behavioral health is in part determined by how people's interaction with social systems change as a function of age and the different social roles available to them at different junctures of their life. In Chapter 7, Kaholokula presents an overview of the growing evidence to support racism's detrimental impact on physiological markers of health and well-being among people of color. Kaholokula provides a detailed review of research on the associations found between racism and adverse birth outcomes, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and shorter life expectancies.

In Chapter 8, Dixson, Clayton, Peoples, and Reynolds address how racism is manifest in education settings to shape the academic experiences of people of color. A major focus of their discussion centers on policy and practices that facilitate de jure and de facto segregation in schools in the United States. In Chapter 9, Perry and Pickett address an understudied area of racism outcome research: gaps and present future directions for research on the impacts of racism on career-related processes among people of color. Pulling from literature in sociology, business, psychology, and economics, they present research indicating the negative associations racism has with the job search process, occupational segregation, job retention, job satisfaction, promotion, productivity, and well-being. In Chapter 10, Santiago-Rivera, Adames, Chavez-Dueñas, and Benson-Flórez shift attention away from individual-level outcomes of racism to a discussion of community-level impacts. The authors provide several examples of how racism impacted communities in the past (e.g., mass relocation of indigenous people, segregation) and how those acts continue to shape people of color today. They also offer how contemporary policies and practices are impacting communities today. They focus their discussion on housing practices, delivery of mental health services, education policy and practices, and violence as examples and sites of racism that have disadvantaged people of color.

We conclude the book with the section Interventions and Future Directions. Building on the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed in the first two sections, the authors of the four chapters in this section present implications for healing from experiences of racial discrimination. The chapters draw, in particular, on the emerging research highlighting people of color's

sense of resiliency and active resistance against racial oppression as pathways to healing and achieving greater equality. We structured this section to discuss interventions on multiple levels, including on an individual level (i.e., therapy), institutional level (e.g., school), and larger societal level (e.g., laws and policies). Each chapter provides case studies to illuminate intervention strategies, and each outlines future directions for psychologists in terms of research and practice with the goal of creating a more equitable society.

In Chapter 11, Comas-Díaz presents a race-informed therapeutic approach to racial wounds, including the effects of historical racial trauma and current everyday microaggressions. She presents a case study to illustrate the healing process. The model consists of various stages of therapy in which clinicians work with clients to assess and determine the extent of the racial trauma, desensitize or assist in symptom relief, reprocess with a focus on growth, promote psychological decolonization or the normalization of resiliency in the face of historical and contemporary forms of racial trauma, and engage in social action. Comas-Díaz concludes by urging psychologists to get involved in eradicating racism; one step toward this goal is for psychologists to work on public information campaigns against racism.

Fine and Cross provide a hard-hitting critique in Chapter 12 of psychology and its complicity in propagating rationalizations of pathology and dysfunction among people of color. The problem with this traditional approach to research is that it places the blame on people of color to explain inequalities, such as the achievement gap, as opposed to focusing on the system of oppression that produced these inequalities. They describe three community collaborative research projects that counter the dominant discourse by grounding their work within the historical realities of racial oppression and resistance and by collaborating with members of social movements to work toward racial justice. As a way to pay the debt for pathologizing communities of color, Fine and Cross urge psychologists to ensure their research and applied work has direct policy implications, in part by highlighting struggles against and resiliency/strength of people of color and by holding themselves accountable to the communities in which they serve.

The final two chapters underscore the role of antiracism interventions in school and community settings. In Chapter 13, Vera, Camacho, Polanin, and Salgado review antiracism educational interventions in K–12 schools, institutions of higher education, and teacher training. Their review incorporates specific case examples and the empirical research supporting the interventions. They encourage psychologists to serve as advocates by educating the public and politicians about how laws and educational policies can either reinforce racial inequality or promote greater racial equality. In the last chapter, Acevedo-Polakovich, Beck, Hawks, and Ogdie discuss the science–practice gap in general and more specifically as it applies to antiracism interventions.

They posit that one way to address this gap is for scientists to develop partnerships with communities using community-based participatory research. Grounding their discussion in two detailed case studies, the authors illustrate the science-to-practice and the practice-to-science approaches to addressing the science–practice gap. Throughout the chapter, they underscore the importance of rigorous, evidence-based practice.

CONCLUSION

Rather than providing definitive and unambiguous answers, it is our hope that this book raises questions, underscores complexities, and illuminates contradictions about the literature on racism. Simply put, these are precisely the intellectual knots that fuel our collective drive to develop more sophisticated and refined theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the impact of racism on people of color. It stands to reason that, after studying a centuries-old phenomenon for fewer than 25 years, psychology's research paradigms are in their infancy and the scholarly road forward will be challenging and incremental. Yet, as we survey the road ahead, we are also reminded of the pointed question that Carolyn Payton (1984) posed in the title of her seminal article "Who Must Do the Hard Things?," which wrestled with the role of psychologists as advocates on social issues. Her answer is simple: "Those who can" (p. 397). As scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, we have the privilege of an education that equips us with considerable research and clinical expertise and invaluable publishing and presentation skills. In writing this book, we have hoped and continue to our hope that—in some small measure—the chapters that follow will empower our readers to use that privilege to do the hard things!

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