Racial Differences in the Appraisal of Microaggressions Through Cultural Consensus Modeling

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WHILE SOCIETY GENERALLY denounces overt acts of racism (Nadal, 2018), more subtle forms of discrimination regularly impact the daily lives of people of color. Chester Pierce (1970) referred to these seemingly innocuous but racially discriminatory acts as *microaggressions*. Directed towards people of color and those with lesser power (Nadal), microaggressions are exhibited through actions, verbal remarks, or nonverbal behaviors that are perpetrated consciously or unknowingly by both ill-intentioned and well-meaning people (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Examples could include locking the car door when a Black man walks by; asking a woman where she is from just because she is not White; refusing to learn how to pronounce a non-Anglo name; a White student giving a professor of color unsolicited advice on how to improve the class syllabus; or telling a Hispanic person born in Puerto Rico that they are not a real American. Microaggressions reinforce pathological stereotypes and communicate hostility that can have detrimental psychological effects (Chapman, DeLapp, & Williams, 2014; Kanter et al., 2017; Sue, Zane, Hall, & Berger, 2009; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010; Williams, Kanter, & Ching, 2017), as the subtlety of microaggressions introduces uncertainty into the evaluation of a situation and may be internalized by the victim, resulting in psychological distress (Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007).

Microaggressions and everyday racial discrimination are associated with increased stress (Torres et al., 2010), anxiety (Soto, Dawson-Andoh, & BeLue, 2011), depression (Huynh, 2012; Mouzon, Taylor, Keith, Nicklett, & Chatters, 2016; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014), PTSD symptoms (Williams et al., 2017; Williams, Printz, & DeLapp, in press), low self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2014; Thai, Lyons, Lee, & Iwasaki, 2017), obsessive-compulsive disorder (Williams, Taylor, Mouzon, et al., 2017), substance use (Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny, 2012; Clark, Salas-Wright, Vaughn, & Whitfield, 2015; Gerrard et al., 2012) and suicide (Hollingsworth et al., 2017; O'Keefe, Wingate, Cole, Hollingsworth, & Tucker, 2015). While some have argued that the association between microaggressions and negative health outcomes may be driven by trait-level differences in negative affectivity, the majority of studies conclude that negative affectivity does not sufficiently account for the relation of microaggression to poor health outcomes (Broudy et al., 2007; Wadsworth et al., 2007; Williams, Kanter, & Ching, 2017). Within the context of therapy, the commission of microaggressions by clinicians against clients of color may further exacerbate racial health disparities by contributing to lower engagement, reduced therapeutic alliance, and poor treatment adherence (Sue et al., 2007). Indeed, in one study, African American satisfaction with counseling was directly correlated to their experiences of being microaggressed against by their clinicians (Constantine, 2007). It is important that therapists understand how subtle, everyday forms of racism contribute to the etiology of psychological stress in clients of color and also receive training to prevent these acts from undermining the therapeutic process itself.

Current efforts to operationalize microaggressions have largely focused on stigmatized individuals' self-report of these negative experiences. This includes various groups that experience microaggressions, including people of color (Forrest-Bank, Jenson, & Trecartin, 2015; Gamst et al., 2002; Jones & Galliher, 2015; Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, & Sue, 2013), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals (Nadal, Whitman, Davis, Erazo, & Davidoff, 2016), and women (Capodilupo et al., 2010). Although there are several well-validated self-report measures of racial microaggressions, these measures have generally been intended for victims of microaggressions, with little examination of those who may commit these acts.

The feasibility of operationalizing an interpersonal construct that can take so many forms has come under criticism. Some have argued that there is no clear agreement on what sorts of behaviors constitute microaggressions, even asserting that challenges in operationalizing this construct provide evidence against its validity (Haidt, 2017; Lilienfeld, 2017b). Yet in the psychological sciences, many lived experiences and internal appraisals have strong validity and consensus but can be challenging to operationalize through self-report. Indeed, many psychological constructs, ranging from state anxiety and quality-of-life to happiness and stigma, are well understood by evaluating the subjective state of involved actors (Elasy & Gaddy, 1998). By their very definition, microaggressions occur within inherently ambiguous circumstances that can therefore differ by context and be shaped by the racial and ethnic stereotypes of the interacting people. Accurately understanding the context-dependent experiences of microaggressions may improve our understanding of the extent to which microaggressions reflect verifiable acts of discrimination by both perpetrators and victims (Kanter et al., 2017).

To this end, the Cultural Cognitions and Action Survey (CCAS) was developed to investigate the ability of both perpetrators and victims to appraise the nature of various microaggressions delivered by White students and aimed toward Black students (Kanter et al., 2017). The present study addresses the issues of ambiguity in the experience of microaggressions by utilizing the analytical and methodological strengths of Cultural Consensus Modeling (CCM). CCM is a mathematical technique developed in a collaboration between anthropology and psychology experts, which measures the degree to which group

members share an underlying knowledge representation (Anders & Batchelder, 2012; Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986). It is based on a concept of shared cultural knowledge, as opposed to universal ground truth. That is to say, it foregrounds what groups of participants agree to be true, rather than focusing on validation of self-report by other measures. This makes it especially apt for the study of microaggressions, which may be appraised differently by individuals and across groups (Kanter et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2007; Williams, Kanter, Collins, et al., 2017). The model takes as its foundation that participants use a shared cultural understanding of the true answers when responding to questions. The differentiation in participants' answers arises from four sources: random variation, between-participant differences in cultural expertise, question difficulty, and individual response biases. Using these foundations, along with signal

detection theory and item response theory, CCM estimates the underlying group knowledge on which participants draw. These analyses can reveal nuanced distinctions between group understandings of the same knowledge domain. The CCM method has been used to understand ecological cognition (Medin, Ross, Cox, & Atran, 2007; Ojalehto, Medin, & García, 2017), mental models of romantic affection (Heshmati et al., 2017), and organizational innovation (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2004). Using this technique in the study of microaggressions allows us to take advantage of the nuanced nature of the microaggressive phenomena.

This study examines the ability of Black and White students to accurately appraise whether subtle situational statements and actions (microaggressions) are undesirable. Specifically, it was predicted that White students' ratings of whether they would think about or commit a microag-

gressive behavior would be negatively correlated with Black student and diversity expert ratings of whether or not such behaviors were racist, determining if both student samples can accurately appraise microaggressions as universally undesirable across a variety of social situations. Specifically, we hypothesize that the more likely Black students and diversity experts would rate the behavior as racist, the more likely White students are to indicate that they would not think or say/do the microaggression. Furthermore, we conducted CCM to explore similarities and differences in the culturally shared knowledge among the groups of participants.

Methods

Data included in the present analysis were collected during the baseline testing phase of a larger study, the Racial Harmony Workshop (RHW), and pretesting

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data from a validation study using the CCAS. The RHW was conducted at a predominately White university and was designed to evaluate the efficacy of a 6-hour campus-workshop intervention for undergraduate students aimed at addressing racism, decreasing microaggressions, and promoting cross-racial understanding. This study and its main outcomes are reported elsewhere (Kanter & Williams, 2018). The university's Institutional Review Board approved the study.

Participants

Participants were 20 Black and 44 non-Hispanic White undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 40 attending a large university in the northeastern United States, who completed the measures on a computer in the lab and were provided with cash or course credits for their participation. Among Black students, 10 (50%) were female and the mean age was 19.95 (SD = 4.62). Among White students, 20 (45%) were female and the mean age was 20.49 (SD = 2.11). There was no significant different in gender, χ^2(3) = 6.60, p = 0.36, or age, t(63) = -0.63, p = 0.53, between the two racial groups. An additional group of participants, consisting of 18 experts in the fields of multicultural psychology, diversity education research, social psychology, and sociology, were recruited by direct email invitation (herein referred to as the expert sample) and completed the survey online. Compared to the undergraduate sample, the experts were, on average, older (M = 34.17, SD = 9.12) and the majority female (83.33%). The expert sample reflected a broader range of racial backgrounds compared to the student samples with 44.4% Black/African American, 16.7% Non-Hispanic White and 16.7% Asian/Asian-American, 11.1% multiracial, and 5.6% Native American or other.

Measures

Cultural Cognitions and Attitudes Survey (CCAS). CCAS was developed for measuring a would-be perpetrator's self-reported likelihood of engaging in a microaggression. The wording and scaling of items was changed slightly to enable Black participants and the expert sample to rate how racist the behavior would be if they had observed it. An initial account of the scale's development has been described previously (Kanter et al., 2017). This expanded version of the scale consists of 112 items across eight scenarios involving potential Black-White individual or group

interactions. The scenarios presented were as follows:

1. Having a conversation with a Black law student at a social get-together
2. Meeting a young Black female with African-style dress and braided hair
3. A discussion about White privilege at a diversity training
4. A study session talking about various current events and political issues
5. A lost Black man asking for directions in your neighborhood
6. Doing karaoke with friends and a song with the "N-word" comes up
7. Watching the news about police brutality with mixed-race friends at a sports bar
8. Talking to a racially ambiguous lab mate about a science project

For each scenario, White students are presented with a series of behaviors that one might think, say, or do during the interaction, including those that are microaggressive (S2: "Are you from Africa?") and those that are not (S1: "What is law school like for you?"). Rating scales differed by participant groups; both Black raters and expert raters were asked to identify how racist or nonracist each item was on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*very racist*) to 5 (*very positive/nonracist*) while White participants were asked to separately rate whether they would (a) think or (b) say/do each item with anchors from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 5 (*very likely*). Although microaggressions are generally defined as consisting of behaviors, they are also socially unacceptable and therefore the White version of the CCAS asks about microaggressive thoughts in order to assess cognitive processes that may precede overt microaggressive behaviors, as well as whether some individuals may endorse having such thoughts but inhibit their behaviors, thereby potentially holding similar beliefs to perpetrators but differing in their actions. Previous studies have demonstrated that the prior shorter version of the CCAS had good concurrent validity and items correlated with other self-report measures of discrimination and racism (Kanter et al., 2017). In the present samples, the CCAS demonstrated strong reliability across the 88 microaggressive items, for Black participants (α = .97), White participants' thoughts (α = .95), White participant actions (α = .93), and the expert sample (α = .95). It had good reliability for the 18 supportive items among the expert sample (α = .84), the Black par-

ticipant (α = .80) and White participant actions (α = .81), with somewhat weaker reliability for White participant thoughts (α = .69).

Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS). The MCSDS (Crowne & Marlow, 1960) is a 13-item scale measuring the extent to which responses are consistent with social desirability effects. It has been shown to improve predictive accuracy of measures on socially sensitive topics (Evans, 1982; Kanter et al., 2017).

Statistical Analysis

As the current report is a secondary analysis of a larger dataset, no a priori power calculations were conducted to determine sample size. Using G*Power (Erdfelder, Faul, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) post hoc obtained power for the correlational analysis was .80 for a medium-sized effect. All statistical analysis were conducted in either SPSS (IBM Corp., 2017) or R (R Core Team, 2013).

Given that White participants may consider microaggressions and racism to be socially sensitive topics, we tested whether social desirability effects drove race-based differences in CCAS responses. We conducted an independent samples *t*-test between the two groups on total scores of the 13-item MCSDS. Given that there was no significant difference in social desirability between Black and White students, t(42) = 1.12, p = .27, total MCSDS scores were entered as a control variable in item-level correlational analyses between groups. Item-level Pearson correlations were conducted between groups by averaging the scores of items that were deemed microaggressive (at least slightly or very racist) by the CCM analysis (described below) of the expert dataset. For Black students, responses were reverse-scored to match the White participants' scale. These item-level correlations were conducted between each of the three groups (White students, Black students, and experts) and separately for the two responses from White participants (thinking and saying/doing the behavior).

The calculation of a cultural consensus model (CCM) focuses on the agreement between multiple group members on a set of questions (in this case, whether contextualized actions and statements are microaggressive). After identifying high-agreement questions, the model identifies relative expertise in a given culture's knowledge by seeing how much individual participants are in agreement with these

high-agreement questions. Using this information, it iteratively estimates the cultural representation underlying participant responses. Finally, the resulting model is used to generate simulated data, and model fit is assessed by comparing responses to the simulated datasets. Recent advances have expanded the technique, enabling the detection of multiple distinct subcultures within a data set (Anders & Batchelder, 2012). By comparing single-group and multigroup models within the same data, it is possible to evaluate the strength of the evidence for a single shared consensus in a group. Several measures of model fit are reported for the CCM analysis. The Deviance Information Criterion (DIC) is a Bayesian model fit statistic analogous to AIC (Akaike, 1973) and BIC (Schwarz, 1978), which trades off between overparameterization and reduced variance in repeated use of the model. Lower values indicate better model fit (Gelman et al., 2004; Spiegelhalter et al., 2002). There are two posterior predictive checks that assess how well the simulated data match the real data. The item difficulty check (which relies on the Variance Dispersion index, or VDI) reports how well the model estimates differences between questions based on item difficulty. The culture number check is a visual comparison of the screen plots of the simulated and true data to determine whether the appropriate number of cultures has been assigned (Anders & Batchelder, 2014).

We then use the results of the best-fitting model to describe the group consensus within the domain: in this case, how racist or supportive a behavior is (among the Black students and the expert sample), or how likely one is to think or do/say a particular behavior (among the White students). The model defines consensus values as continuous parameters. For considering the distribution of scores within a model (i.e., how many of the items a model classifies as "Very Racist"), we round the parameters to match the original response options of the participants. When considering the correlation between consensus values in different models, we use the continuous consensus value.

Using R (R Core Team, 2013) and CCT-Pack (Anders et al., 2014) we ran a latent truth rater model (LTRM) with the expert sample in order to establish which items were microaggressive, with all 112 statements rated from 1 to 5 by each expert participant.

Results

Expert Participant Latent Truth Rater Model

The best model fit among the experts was a single-group model, where difficulty varied by question and expertise and bias varied by person. This model demonstrated strong consensus among the expert sample and had good fit to the expert data (DIC = 3414.96, VDI = 25.2). The model-assigned evaluations of the stimuli were strongly bimodal: 16% (18 statements) of items were judged to be supportive (i.e., rated as "positive/non-racist" on the original scale), and 79% (88 statements) were judged to be microaggressive (i.e., rated as "racist" on the original scale), with only 5% (6 statements) falling into the intermediate "neutral" range. These classifications fall very close to the original design: 100% of investigator-designed supportive statements were model-assigned supportive (plus one extra), and 93% of investigator-designed microaggressive statements were model-assigned microaggressive. The results from this model were used to define subsets of questions—microaggressive behaviors and supportive behaviors—which were used in subsequent analyses of Black and White respondents. The 5% of intermediate items were omitted from further analysis.

Between-Group Correlations

In order to investigate the extent to which the items from the classification from the expert CCM were evaluated similarly across groups, item-level Pearson correlations were conducted between each of the three samples (with White responses being separated into thoughts and behaviors). There was a significant negative correlation between Black students' ratings of the statement being racist with White students' ratings of their likelihood of thinking the microaggression, $r(86) = -.64$, $p < .001$, and an even larger negative correlation with White students' ratings of saying or doing the microaggression, $r(86) = -.93$, $p < .001$. A similar pattern emerged when comparing White responses to expert responses; there was a larger negative correlation of White students' ratings of committing the microaggression, $r(86) = -.70$, $p < .001$, compared to the negative correlation of expert ratings with White students' ratings of thinking the microaggression, $r(86) = -.54$, $p < .001$. Consistent with our hypothesis, there was also a significant positive correlation between expert ratings and Black students' ratings of microaggressive

items, $r(86) = .69$, $p < .001$, indicating strong agreement. Within the expert group, average CCAS ratings of microaggressive items were fairly similar by racial group.

Cultural Consensus Modeling

Exploratory cultural consensus modeling (using the LTRM) was conducted separately on the supportive and microaggressive items on three distinct data sets: the Black students' ratings of racism, the White students' reported thoughts, and the White students' reported behaviors. For each of these, multiple models were run to assess the presence of up to three consensus subgroups. Fit was assessed by model convergence (i.e., > 1.10), DIC, per-culture item difficulty check, and a visual inspection of the similarity between the CCT scree plot and the scree plots of the simulated data. The results indicate that for each of the six models, the best-fitting solution was a one-consensus model, where difficulty varied by item, and competence and bias varied by participant (supportive: DIC_{black} = 718.25, VDI_{black} = 51.2; $DIC_{white-thoughts}$ = 2017.5, $VDI_{white-thoughts}$ = 29.2; $DIC_{white-actions}$ = 2038.1, $VDI_{white-actions}$ = 27.6; microaggressive: DIC_{black} = 3570.256, VDI_{black} = 93.6; $DIC_{white-thoughts}$ = 7440.2, $VDI_{white-thoughts}$ = 63.2; $DIC_{white-actions}$ = 4705.6, $VDI_{white-actions}$ = 86.4). In some cases, the higher-subgroup versions of the model failed to converge, an indication that the data does not support a multisubgroup model. In cases where the multisubgroup model did converge, the single-culture model had superior fit statistics (i.e., lower DIC, fewer > 1).

Microaggressive Models

The consensus model for microaggressive behaviors among Black students showed that the students generally agreed with the expert sample: 89.8% of the items (79 items) were classified as slightly or very racist. However, 4 of the 88 items (4.5%) were classified as slightly or very positive by Black students. These included three statements (S2: "Where did you grow up?", S8: "What is your nationality?", and S8: "What is your ethnicity?") that queried a Black person about their background. One item, where a White student says as little as possible because they are worried a Black student will become upset by something they say [S4], was rated very positively by Black students. These points of disagreement suggest some divergence between the understanding of microaggressions among

the experts and African American students. However, there was still a notable subset of Black students that deemed these items to be racist (28%, 33%, 13%, and 38%, respectively), and several similar items were deemed highly offensive by most (e.g., S8: "What are you?" and S2: "How long has your family been in the U.S.?", and S3: "We shouldn't talk about race. It makes people uncomfortable").

The consensus models about microaggressive thoughts and behavior among the White students were highly concentrated: the consensus was "Very Unlikely" for thinking 83.0% of the statements and doing 93.2% of them. Table 1 illustrates microaggressive items that White students were most likely to think or do—items that were rated as "Neutral" for either thought or behavior. This included two items involving denial of personal racism, and an item about minimizing interactions with a Black man who was lost. White ratings of these items suggest some ambiguity in their appraisal and perhaps uncertainty about how such items would be perceived. In terms of mean item scores, there were significant differences between White students' thoughts ($M = 1.85$, SD 0.54) and actions ($M = 1.41$, SD 0.38), $t(6.46)$, $p < .0001$.

Black students' consensus ratings of an item as racist were correlated with White students' consensus ratings of unlikelihood to think or do a behavior, $r(86) = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$; $r(86) = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$. This suggests that both groups are tapping into shared knowledge about the socially undesirable nature of these behaviors.

Supportive Models

The ratings for the African American consensus model were highly concentrated: 17 of the 18 statements were rated as "Very Positive" (the 18th was rated as "Slightly Positive"). This suggests that Black students have a strong basis of agreement about evaluating statements as nonracist, and that it matches closely with that of the experts.

The distribution of ratings in the consensus models (thought and behavior) of the White students were less concentrated, where 4 of the supportive statements were seen as "Very Unlikely" or "Unlikely" thoughts and behaviors of the White students. This includes one item asking about the differential experience of being Black and three involving direct actions to assist or show consideration for a Black person (Table 1). The consensus rating of the supportive items in the White-thought and

White-behavior models were highly correlated, $r(16) = 0.95$, $p < 0.01$, indicating that the cultural model for thinking and saying each of the supportive items was similar.

Black-rated positivity of the statement and the White-rated likelihood of thinking, $r(16) = 0.54$, $p = 0.02$, or doing, $r(16) = 0.60$, $p = 0.01$, the behavior were significantly correlated. This suggests that White students usually expressed interest in engaging with behaviors that the Black students perceived to be supportive, but that Black students perceiving an act as supportive was not enough to ensure that White students would express interest in that behavior.

Competence in Consensus Knowledge

One component of cultural consensus modeling is the assignment of competence scores to each individual. This continuous parameter indicates how closely each participant hews to the consensus model—how much of an expert they are at accessing and reporting the shared knowledge. Among the African American students, competence in reporting the two models (i.e., the microaggressive consensus model and the supportive consensus model) was not significantly correlated, $r(18) = 0.23$, $p = 0.32$, though a post-hoc analysis indicates our power to detect this correlation was limited (i.e., 70% power to detect a correlation of 0.53).

Among White students, competence in the two microaggressive models (i.e., thoughts and behaviors) were highly correlated, $r(42) = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$, as well as in the supportive models, $r(42) = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$. This suggests that participants successfully drawing on consensus knowledge about microaggressions had similar access to that knowledge about both thoughts and behaviors and therefore these were combined for comparing across models. Comparing microaggressive and supportive competence scores in the White sample (collapsing competence across thoughts and behaviors), there was a significant positive correlation, $r(42) = 0.38$, $p = 0.01$. This suggests that White participants who were close to their consensus on microaggressive statements—i.e., did not endorse thinking or doing any of the microaggressive behaviors—were also close to their consensus on supportive statements—i.e., endorsed doing some but not all of the supportive behaviors. This correlation indicates that the distribution of knowledge within this population is similar for the two models: White students who apply group knowl-

edge do so about both microaggressive and supportive situations.

Discussion

This study utilized a CCM approach to characterize the complex appraisal of microaggressions by potential perpetrators, victims, and experts. While a few researchers have claimed that the construct of microaggressions defies operationalization (Lilienfeld, 2017a), these data support that both minority and majority individuals demonstrate a shared understanding of the construct. Both Black and White students are tuning into similar signals, even if they may approach these interactions differently. When comparing item-level correlations of White student ratings to Black student or expert ratings, there was a stronger negative correlation with actions compared to thoughts. These findings suggest the possibility that White students are suppressing or otherwise not acting on these thoughts in racially sensitive settings and are more likely to think microaggressive statements but less likely to act on these thoughts.

Analysis of points of disagreement indicates that Black students rated several microaggressive statements as slightly positive. Most of these items concerned questions about the Black individual's ethnicity, nationality, or place of birth. It may be that Black students interpreted this question as genuine interest in learning more about them as individuals (rather than as members of a racialized group), although the rating of only slightly positive suggests that there was some uncertainty around intention. It is possible that people in other ethnoracial groups would rate these items as more racist, given that similar statements have been used as exemplars of microaggressions as they presume one is foreign born (Ong et al., 2013), which is a type of microaggression that may be more salient to Asian and Hispanic Americans. While one microaggressive item (S2: "The White student says as little as possible because they are worried [the Black student] will get upset at something they say") was rated very positively by Black students, it should be noted that this statement does not reflect active avoidance of racial topics but rather White students censoring their verbal content. It may be that people of color prefer that White students censor or limit their actions when uncertain about whether such behavior would be considered microaggressive in nature. Importantly, in this scenario, doing so does not result in the

avoidance of discussing racial topics, an action that is viewed as a microaggression itself (Constantine et al., 2008).

Points of disagreement were especially illustrative for understanding microaggressive statements that White respondents were more likely to endorse. These items centered around minimizing interactions and denial of being or acting racist. This suggests that White individuals may frequently interact with minorities superficially and in a manner consistent with racial color-blindness, an approach that is linked to racism and bias despite White individuals' claims that it is not (Apfelbaum, Norton & Sommers, 2012; Neville et al., 2013). White students were less likely to endorse several supportive items, notably those that centered on direct engagement with Black students and objecting to potentially racist actions. These suggest that White individuals' interracial anxieties and avoidance may result in hesitation to ask people of color about their experiences, failure to directly interact with people of color, or failure to intervene when observing microaggressions (Britt et al., 1996; Trawalter, Adam, Chase-Lansdale, & Richeson, 2012). Such actions would be considered helpful and should not be avoided.

Collectively, these statements provide more specific examples of concepts that would be of particular importance to address during therapy. When working with clients of color, therapists should be aware of color-blind attitudes and interracial anxieties that may result in minimizing the importance of the client's culture or their experiences with racism. Our results support the recommendation that clinicians should seek to understand clients' experiences of racism, discrimination, and microaggressions, acknowledge ways in which they may have benefited from privilege, and understand how such experiences have shaped their own learning experience (Miller, Williams, Wetterneck, Kanter, & Tsai, 2015). Clients of color may perceive the avoidance or inability to discuss racism as a microaggression itself.

The following study has several limitations. Although the sample size was adequate for CCM analysis, it was underpowered to detect the possibility of racial differences between expert responses, a group that was more racially diverse than the student samples. Yet within the expert group, average CCAS ratings of microaggressive statements were fairly similar across race, suggesting that consensus on items was more likely to be due to expertise in the area of multicultural psychology

rather than racial differences in the experience of microaggressions. Another limitation of the sample is its focus on college-aged students within one region of the United States, a demographic that is increasingly exposed to diversity training and therefore whose response may not generalize to older, community or clinical samples. Despite good consensus for characterizing microaggressions through the use of CCM, validation of the CCAS is ongoing and the final scale will be a subset of those included here.

Despite speculation that microaggressions are a vague concept that cannot be reliably measured (Lilienfeld, 2017a), the results of this study indicate that both potential perpetrators and targets can accurately appraise the construct, and that despite endorsing microaggressive thoughts, would-be perpetrators often know better than to act on these thoughts. These findings may be especially helpful for recognizing microaggressive comments and increasing the use of supportive statements in therapeutic context with clients of color, thereby increasing rapport, therapeutic alliance, and engagement. Future work is needed to investigate whether these appraisals can characterize increased ability to recognize microaggressions follow-

ing diversity trainings aimed at reducing racism. Another possible extension of this work may be improving the ability of targets to more quickly recognize and respond to microaggressions, as there is some evidence that doing so may therapeutically protect against internalizing the discriminatory actions of others (Noh et al., 2007). Given the significant mental health impact of these subtle forms of racism (Nadal et al., 2014; O'Keefe et al., 2015), it is imperative that research initiatives aimed at improved operationalization of the microaggression construct translate to improvements in clinical practice such that therapists can better understand the experiences of their clients and avoid replicating previous negative experiences of racism.

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Table 1. Discrepant Microaggressive Items in White Student Models

Item (Scenario)	Behavior Rating	Thought Rating
Microaggressive Items Most Likely to Be Endorsed		
■ The White student gives him directions as quickly as possible to minimize interacting (S5)	Neutral	Somewhat Unlikely
■ "I would never treat a Black person differently than anyone else. I'm not like that." (S3)	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral
■ "I am not a racist." (S3)	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral
Supportive Items Least Likely to Be Endorsed		
■ "What's it like for Black students in the law school?" (S1)	Very Unlikely	Very Unlikely
■ The White student stops singing song that includes the n-word and beat boxes instead. (S6)	Very Unlikely	Very Unlikely
■ The White student walks with the lost Black man to the store since they are going that way anyway. (S5)	Unlikely	Unlikely
■ The White student says s/he objects to the song with the n-word because it bothers their friend. (S6)	Unlikely	Unlikely

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