Perceiving others and oneself in terms of group identity influences the way people interact with others. When group memberships are salient, interactions are often guided by social roles (Eagly & Wood, 1999). To the extent that people rely on category-based, rather than individual-based, processing in their interaction, their perceptions will be influenced by group stereotypes and attitudes that can be activated automatically and without full awareness. When people think of themselves as members of a group, they view themselves not only as a
representative of that group but also as the embodiment of that group’s values, beliefs, and interests (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, interpersonal interactions under these conditions become, in essence, intergroup encounters. Because of the importance of social identity in everyday activity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and the need to manage the complexity and demands of social functioning (Fiske, Lin, & Neuberg, 1999), such intergroup interactions are common.

This chapter examines nonverbal behavior in an intergroup context. We begin by considering how members of different groups, defined by majority and minority status, may differ systematically in their intra-group nonverbal behavior. Next, we focus on the dynamics of interactions between members of different groups, identifying important elements that can influence nonverbal behavior. We present a general model of “mixed social interaction” and explore the role of nonverbal behavior in these interactions, considering the causes and consequences of these nonverbal behaviors. We conclude with a discussion of the importance of understanding the reciprocal relationship between interpersonal and intergroup interaction and the fundamental importance of nonverbal behavior in these interactions.

Although we examine a range of intergroup contexts in this chapter, we illustrate the relationship between intergroup relations and nonverbal behavior mainly within the context of Black-White relations and primarily within the cultural context of the United States. Even though there has been substantial recognition of the importance of culture (see Matsumoto, this volume) and gender (see Hall, this volume) for nonverbal behavior, the literature on nonverbal behavior and intergroup relations is relatively sparse. Focusing on Black-White relations thus helps provide a coherent test, within a defined context, of the hypothesized dynamics of intergroup identity and nonverbal behavior.

### Group Differences in Nonverbal Behavior: Status and Race

In this section of the chapter, we provide an overview of theoretical perspectives that suggest why and how members of majority and minority groups in general may differ in the types of nonverbal behaviors they display regularly. The focus, thus, is on systematic group differences in nonverbal behavior during intragroup interaction. We summarize the empirical literature building on Halberstadt’s (1985) comprehensive review of racial differences in nonverbal behavior by drawing on more recent work.

Because of personal and group motivations for esteem and social dominance, status is a fundamental dimension of intergroup encounters (see Burgoon & Dunbar, this volume). Power and status are relational concepts that are often determined contextually. For instance, a college senior may be high status in an interaction with a college freshman but low status in a meeting with a professor. In general, high-status individuals may have more freedom of movement and thus may be more open in their postures and approach others more closely than do low-status individuals (Ellyson & Dovidio, 1985). Low-status individuals may be more inhibited in their actions and monitor their partners more closely than do high-status individuals. Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson (2003) hypothesize that high power and status are associated with a general approach orientation, whereas lower power and status are related to inhibition.

Consistent with this view, individual status has been found to exert a strong influence on nonverbal behavior between people (see Hall, Coats, & Smith LeBeau, 2005).
In a comprehensive meta-analytic review of the literature, Judith Hall and her colleagues found that people who have higher status or social power showed greater facial expressiveness, held more open postures (with arms and legs), interacted with others at closer distances, and interrupted others more often than did those with lower status or power. Whereas Hall and her colleagues did not find systematic differences for touch, gesturing, postural relaxation, or visual contact, it is possible that such behaviors can be tied to status but that the relationship is more complex. For instance, in the case of visual contact, lower status people look more while listening but less while speaking than do higher status people (Dovidio & Ellyson, 1985).

Because societies are structured strongly in terms of group hierarchy, group identities also can produce relatively stable core experiences of status. For example, in the United States, men have had higher status and greater social power traditionally than have women, and Whites have had higher status and greater social power than Blacks. These chronic differences in status have been hypothesized to produce consistent differences in the nonverbal behavior of minority- and majority-group members. The oppression hypothesis (Henley, 1977; LaFrance & Henley, 1994) posits that the chronic stigmatization of certain groups produces adaptations that lead members of oppressed groups to exhibit systematic nonverbal skills and behaviors that differ from those of members of dominant groups and that are functional for coping with their low status. In particular, members of chronically oppressed groups are hypothesized to be more sensitive and attentive to their social environment, making them better at decoding others’ nonverbal behaviors and leading to higher levels of visual contact in social interaction; they also tend to be more vigilant and guarded, making them more inhibited in their emotional expression and nonverbal behaviors (Frable, Blackstone, & Sherbaum, 1990).

When socially meaningful and enduring groups, such as racial groups, are involved, cultural differences also need to be considered to understand intergroup relations and nonverbal behavior. Jones (1986), for example, observed that Black culture is composed of both reactive and evolutionary components. The reactive component refers to the collective adjustments U.S. Blacks have made to cope with oppression; the evolutionary component refers to aspects of Black culture that represent “the unfolding of a cultural core laid in an African past and characterized in function, if not form, across the cultures of the African Diaspora” (Jones, 1986, p. 294). In particular, Jones identified key elements of many Blacks’ cultural orientation, reflected in five dimensions: time, rhythm, improvisation, oral expression, and spirituality. These cultural values guide a range of social behaviors, including nonverbal behaviors. E. T. Hall (1966) emphasized the importance of culture in understanding racial differences in nonverbal behavior, hypothesizing that Black culture, relative to that of Whites, reflects a closer and more “sensorially involved” orientation. These ideas can be organized theoretically as the cultural hypothesis. Both the oppression hypothesis and the cultural hypothesis suggest different patterns of racial differences in nonverbal behavior.

Systematic patterns of behavior in intergroup relations can influence nonverbal behavior and produce chronic racial differences in nonverbal skill and behavior. In terms of skill at decoding other’s nonverbal behavior, Halberstadt’s (1985) meta-analysis of racial differences revealed that although Black children (ages 4–11) showed equivalent or slightly lower levels of decoding accuracy relative to Whites, Black college students showed a higher level of accuracy than did White college students. Halberstadt interpreted these
results as consistent with the oppression hypothesis. In general, though, Whites and Blacks are more accurate in decoding the nonverbal behavior of members of their own race than they are of other races (Bailey, Nowicki, & Cole, 1998; Weathers et al., 2004). Greater intragroup than intergroup accuracy is a function of greater familiarity and more experience with in-group members than with out-group members (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002).

Racial differences in nonverbal behaviors have been studied most commonly in terms of proxemics (interpersonal distance and body orientation), touch, and visual contact (gaze). Halberstadt’s (1985) review of studies on interpersonal distances maintained between Blacks and between Whites showed no overall racial differences. Age was an important moderating factor, however. Halberstadt’s review revealed that Black children maintained closer interpersonal distances than did White children, but Black adults maintained greater interpersonal distance than did White adults. Reid, Tate, and Berman (1989), however, found that Black children do not always maintain closer distances than White children. They found that Black children (ages 4–7) stood farther away from an infant of the same race than did White children.

Across the eight studies of body orientation reviewed by Halberstadt (1985), Blacks exhibited a less direct body orientation than did Whites when interacting with others, and this difference tended to increase with age. With respect to touch, Halberstadt’s review of eight studies revealed that Blacks touched one another during their interactions more often than Whites did. Finally, with respect to visual contact, both the oppression hypothesis and E. T. Hall’s (1966) cultural hypothesis predict that Blacks will exhibit higher levels of eye gaze than will Whites. The results of Halberstadt’s (1985) analysis of eight visual contact studies, however, are inconsistent with both positions. In same-race interactions, Blacks displayed significantly lower levels of visual contact than did Whites. In addition, other studies of adults (Smith, 1983) and children (Reid et al., 1989), beyond the literature Halberstadt (1985) reviewed, have also shown that Blacks display lower levels of visual contact than do Whites.

In summary, the results of studies that examined racial differences in nonverbal behavior have revealed systematic differences in spatial behavior, touch, and visual contact. The pattern of findings does not provide clear support for either the oppression hypothesis or Hall’s (1966) cultural hypothesis, however. In particular, the findings for spatial behavior (i.e., greater interpersonal distance among Black than White adults) are more consistent with oppression than with the cultural hypothesis, the results for touch (more touching by Blacks than Whites) are more consistent with the cultural hypothesis, and the findings for visual behaviors (less eye contact by Blacks than by Whites) are inconsistent with both positions. Although racial differences in nonverbal behavior do not conform uniformly to predictions derived from the oppression hypothesis or the cultural hypothesis, it is important to recognize that nonverbal behavior is highly sensitive to social context. Racial differences may therefore be more pronounced, apparent, and consistent in situations in which social identity is salient, such as in dyadic interactions between members of different social identity groups.

Social Identity and Nonverbal Behavior in Intergroup Interaction

One of the most influential theories of group influences on intergroup interaction and nonverbal behavior is expectation
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state theory (Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003). According to this sociological framework, interactions between members of different groups are accompanied by differential expectations about the status of the interactants in cases in which group membership is associated systematically with prestige and status in everyday life. Berger et al. (1985) referred to characteristics of individuals that give rise to differential status expectations as “diffuse status characteristics.” These expectations, in turn, can generalize to a broad range of situations and, through a process of behavioral confirmation of expectancies similar to the self-fulfilling prophecy, affect power-related behavior and perceptions across a variety of social contexts. Expectation states theory has received substantial empirical support with respect to interaction between women and men, and it has received some support in the realm of interracial behavior (see Berger et al., 1985; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003).

Whereas expectation states theory views the effect of group membership on interpersonal interaction as a relatively rational, albeit not necessarily conscious, process of evaluating the relative contributions of interactants in creating social organization, psychological perspectives have posited a much more pervasive and fundamental influence of group membership and identity. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) view the distinction between personal identity and social identity as critical. According to these theories, when personal identity is salient, a person’s individual needs, standards, beliefs, and motives determine behavior. In contrast, when social identity is salient, “people come to perceive themselves as more interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others” (Turner et al., 1987, p. 50). Under these latter conditions, collective needs, goals, and standards are primary.

Social categorization and social identity can influence the nature of communication, and thus nonverbal behavior, through a broad range of cognitive, affective, and motivational mechanisms. Social categorization activates, often without awareness or control, stereotypic associations that can influence expectations of the encounter and online attributions of the behavior of the other person in the interaction (see Lakin, this volume). In addition, the general evaluative biases that accompany recognition of different group memberships can produce general approach or avoidance tendencies that are systematically reflected in nonverbal behaviors. These prejudices may be blatant or subtle (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), and people who have explicitly nonprejudiced attitudes may still harbor implicit intergroup biases (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004).

Recognition of different group memberships in the interaction also typically arouses intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 2000). Part of this anxiety may be due to uncertainty about how to behave in this intergroup context, and part may be a function of feelings of real or symbolic threat. In addition to anxiety, intergroup interactions can arouse a number of different motivations. For members of majority groups, for instance, intergroup interactions can arouse dominance orientations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) or the desire to appear nonprejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). For members of minority groups, the desire to detect and potentially compensate for anticipated discrimination by majority-group interaction partners may be activated (Miller & Myers, 1998; Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005).

In general, these positions suggest that majority-group members would be likely to display nonverbal behaviors associated with lower levels of liking or attraction and with higher levels of social dominance or power.
than would minority-group members in intergroup interaction. Minority-group members would be expected to show nonverbal behaviors associated with greater vigilance (e.g., greater sensitivity to nonverbal cues) and defensiveness or inhibition (e.g., less direct orientation) more strongly than would majority-group members.

Overall, there is some support for these expectations. For instance, young and middle-aged adults have been shown to patronize older adults by speaking in a higher pitch and modified register similar to that used to address babies and pets (Caporael, 1981; Caporael & Culbertson, 1983; Kemper, Vandeputte, Rice, Cheung, & Gubarchuk, 1995). Similarly, Whites show less intimate, attentive, and involved nonverbal behaviors with Blacks than with Whites (Feldman, 1985; Weitz, 1972; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). In addition, Blacks tend to show heightened attentiveness and sensitivity to nonverbal cues of prejudice (Richeson & Shelton, 2005; Rollman, 1978). Nevertheless, because of the complexity of intergroup interaction, generalizations about differences in the behavior of members of majority and minority groups in intergroup interaction may obscure important dynamics and reciprocal relationships in intergroup communication. Thus, in the next section we present a model of interactions between majority- and minority-group members that incorporates nonverbal communication as part of a general interaction process.

Interaction in an Intergroup Context: A Model of Mixed Social Interaction

One of the first comprehensive models to articulate the components of nonverbal interaction was Patterson’s (1982) Sequential Functional Model of Nonverbal Exchange.

In this model, Patterson explained and predicted changes in the levels of nonverbal involvement that social interactants display toward each other. More specifically, Patterson proposed that people approach each other with preexisting orientations (antecedent conditions), such as personal factors, experiential factors, and relational or situational factors, that can influence whether and how they interact. These antecedent conditions trigger preinteraction variables in the context, such as cognitions and affective reactions, levels of arousal, and behavioral propensities to act, that mediate the effect of these preexisting orientations and determine whether an individual will engage in interaction. Once individuals decide to interact, they make functional judgments about an interaction and determine the extent to which they should become behaviorally involved. In this stage, interactants also determine whether their expressed level and their partner’s expressed level of involvement match their expectations, which in turn influence future cognitions and affect and can produce stable or unstable exchanges. Ultimately, these interaction variables determine whether interactants will terminate or continue the interaction.

Hebl and Dovidio (2005) broadened the scope of Patterson’s (1982) model to address the uniquely complex interactions that occur between majority- and minority-group interactants. This model is depicted in Figure 25.1. The shaded areas represent the extensions by Hebl and Dovidio (2005) from Patterson’s (1982) model to address key elements of an intergroup interaction. In the remainder of the chapter, we review each component of the model (i.e., antecedents, preinteraction mediators, and interaction phase), addressing within each component both majority and minority interactants’ perspectives. Where the data exist, we discuss how each of the components influences or is influenced by nonverbal behaviors.
Figure 25.1 Hebl and Dovidio’s (2005) Model of Mixed Social Interactions Based on Patterson’s (1982) Sequential Functional Model of Nonverbal Exchange
ANTECEDENTS

Majority- and minority-group interactants bring different resources and background experiences to social interactions. Three critical factors described by Patterson (1982) are (a) personal, (b) experiential, and (c) relational-situational. The fourth factor, type of stigma, was identified by Hebl and Dovidio (2005). These four factors lay the groundwork for creating an ideology that individuals use to express themselves verbally and nonverbally in interactions.

Personal variables include differences in attitudes or ideologies that predispose people to act in particular ways during an interaction. For example, Whites who are more prejudiced toward Blacks will be more predisposed to behave more negatively toward Blacks in the interaction (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). Similarly, Blacks with more in-group-favoring attitudes are more likely to avoid contact with Whites (Ashburn-Nardo, Knowles, & Monteith, 2003; Patchen, 1983). Furthermore, individual differences in racial identity may predispose Blacks to perceive the prejudice and discrimination displayed toward them as well as to shape their affective and coping responses (Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

Experiential variables also serve as antecedent conditions predicting nonverbal involvement. People who have more intergroup contact tend to have more positive intergroup attitudes and display less anxiety in intergroup interaction (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). In addition, Whites with more previous interracial contact showed less cardiovascular evidence of threat during interracial interactions (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001).

Relational-situational variables, such as the social domain, the type of relationship, and power balances, are also critical considerations when examining the way in which interracial interactions unfold. Social norms and legal requirements differ across situations (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), and thus they produce very different patterns of nonverbal expression and interaction outcomes. In general, Whites’ discrimination against Blacks is less pronounced in situations with stronger and clearer normative expectations (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Thus, Whites tend to experience greater discomfort and invest more effort in consciously regulating their behavior in interracial interactions that are less structured or in which they receive feedback that they may be responding in a biased and inappropriate fashion (Richeson & Trawalter, 2005).

Individuals’ power in the interaction also influences their nonverbal displays. People in power show less restraint from taking action (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003), are more likely to express anger (Tiedens, 2000), and show greater variability in their interactive behaviors than do less powerful people (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002). Low power, by contrast, produces a tendency to inhibit responses (Keltner et al., 2003). Furthermore, when members of dominant groups are in a high-power position, implicit biases toward lower status partners become activated (Richeson & Ambady, 2003) and are expressed openly (e.g., explicit bias in verbal evaluation) or more subtly (e.g., standoffish nonverbal behavior; Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997).

What makes power even more influential in relationships is the finding that interactants tend to assume complementarity in behavioral interactions (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). That is, individuals exposed to dominant, powerful individuals tend to react in very submissive ways, which reinforces the power imbalance. Similarly, individuals
exposed to submissive behavioral displays tend to react by assuming more dominant stances. Such complementarity, which may be present in some situations more than in others, serves to reinforce the power differentials that exist in mixed interactions (Dovidio, Brown, Keating, Heltman, & Ellyson, 1988).

In addition to personal, experiential, and relational or situational factors, the nature of intergroup biases and relations differs substantially as a function of the types of stigma attached to people (i.e., obesity, facial disfigurement, devalued racial group; Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Whereas Whites’ attitudes toward Blacks are characterized by both negative attitudes and status differentials, sexism involves strong subordinate role prescriptions for women but not antipathy toward women generally (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In addition, some types of intergroup biases have a stronger emotional component than others (Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991), and some biases (e.g., racism) are inhibited more strongly by social norms than are others (e.g., heterosexism; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Thus, the type of stigma can be an important antecedent factor that may determine whether and how members of these different groups will interact.

PREINTERACTION MEDIATORS

Antecedent conditions influence the preinteraction states with which Whites and ethnic minorities enter into interracial interaction (see paths labeled S1 and T1 in Figure 25.1). These states include stereotypes and prejudices, affective reactions and arousal levels, behavioral predispositions and propensities to act, and motivations and goals (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Although these interaction elements often work together and cannot always be disentangled from each other clearly, we discuss them separately to maximize the readers’ understanding of each component’s potential contribution to nonverbal behavior during intergroup interactions.

Much of past research on the dynamics of interracial interaction can be captured within the stereotypes and cognitions component of the model. A vast amount is known about how Whites’ attitudes, expectations, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding racial minorities influence their behavior during interracial interactions. Overall, this literature largely finds that Whites often react negatively to Black interaction partners; however, Whites’ responses are not necessarily simple and direct. For instance, people’s unconscious (implicit) attitudes, which are often measured with response latency techniques (Fazio & Olson, 2003), and their overt (explicit) expressions of bias, which are measured with self-reports, frequently diverge (Dovidio et al., 2002).

In addition, interactants in intergroup encounters not only possess stereotypes of members of other groups but also possess beliefs about how the members of other groups will perceive them. Whites anticipating interracial interaction often express concerns that they will be viewed as prejudiced (Vorauer, Main, & O’Connell, 1998). Similarly, Blacks anticipating interracial interactions often express concerns that they will be stereotyped by Whites (Pinel, 1999). These beliefs about how they will be perceived can alter the behavior that individuals display during intergroup interactions (Shelton et al., 2005; Vorauer & Turpie, 2004).

There is considerable evidence that affect and arousal, such as feelings of threat and anxiety, are also significant factors in mixed interaction (Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Negative affect may be particularly
likely to translate into the display of nonverbal behaviors in an interaction (see path S2 of Figure 25.1). Individuals may be able to monitor their cognitions (e.g., explicit attitudes and verbal behaviors) relatively easily, but they may be less skilled at monitoring and controlling their affective reactions. Instead, affective reactions may “leak out” through nonverbal and paraverbal channels (Ekman, Friesen, & O’Sullivan, 1988). Affective reactions may arise from different processing modes than those that trigger cognitive reactions, such that affective reactions may be more experiential or immediate, whereas cognitive reactions may be more rational and deliberative.

Whereas Whites’ anxiety may relate to increased cognitive demand associated with not wanting to appear biased (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005; Shelton, 2003), Blacks’ anxiety and arousal may be related to ways of coping with potential prejudice and discrimination, which may involve greater vigilance and mindfulness than would otherwise occur (Hyers & Swim, 1998). Consistent with this possibility, Ickes (1984) found that Blacks were particularly anxious during interactions with White partners who generally avoid interracial contact. In addition, Tropp (2003) found that ethnic minorities who had reason to believe their White interaction partners were prejudiced against their group experienced considerable anxiety in anticipation of the interaction. Similarly, Shelton (2003) found that Blacks who were led to believe that their interaction partners might be prejudiced fidgeted more during the interaction than Blacks who were not given the prejudice expectancy.

Both Blacks’ and Whites’ interaction outcomes are influenced by the propensities, the intentions, and the past ways in which they have responded. That is, the antecedent conditions combine to create behavioral tendencies or predispositions, which can influence verbal and nonverbal communication within an interaction (see path S2 of Figure 25.1). These behavioral predispositions may be activated automatically and without awareness in response to racial categorization. Chen and Bargh (1997), for instance, demonstrated that White participants who were primed subliminally with photographs of Blacks, compared with those primed with photographs of Whites and those in a no-photograph control condition, behaved with more hostility in a subsequent interaction with another White participant and elicited more hostile behavior from the partner in return.

Both context-dependent, as well as chronic, motivations and goals shape individuals’ responses to each other during intergroup interactions. For example, Whites’ motivation to appear nonprejudiced in interracial interaction may be internally driven, based on personal standards of behavior, as well as externally oriented, rooted in a concern with social norms and sanctions (Plant & Devine, 1998). The motivation to appear nonprejudiced can influence Whites’ nonverbal behavior in interracial interactions (Shelton, 2003). Blacks, in contrast, are often motivated to avoid the stigmatization process altogether: Targets do not want to be the target of stereotypes typically or to be devalued across social interaction contexts or be the recipient of interpersonal rejection, social discrimination, and financial disadvantage. Research suggests, however, that concern about being the target of prejudice can sometimes facilitate smooth interactions between Whites and Blacks. Specifically, Whites experienced less negative affect and enjoyed interactions more with Black individuals who had been primed to expect prejudice compared with Black individuals who were not primed to expect prejudice (Shelton et al., 2005).
INITIAL INTERACTION PHASE

According to Hebl and Dovidio’s (2005) model, the preinteraction mediators just discussed influence the expression of verbal and nonverbal behaviors within a social interaction (see paths S2 and T2 in Figure 25.1). As discussed earlier, intergroup attitudes and stereotypes, because of the negative feelings and assumptions of status differences embedded in them, influence both verbal and nonverbal behaviors in intergroup interaction. Weitz (1972), for example, demonstrated that Whites use colder voice tones for interactions with Blacks than with Whites. Word et al. (1974) found that Whites terminated interactions sooner with Blacks than with other Whites, and they exhibited greater physical distance during the interactions. Similarly, Fugita, Wexley, and Hillery (1974) reported that Whites maintained less eye contact and shorter glances with Black interviewers than with White interviewers. Feldman (1985) likewise reported that both White and Black teachers behaved more positively with members of their own race than with members of the other race. Consistent with the status differences associated with race, Turkstra, Ciccia, and Seaton (2003) found that Whites tended to take the floor more often, whereas Blacks tended to answer more questions in intergroup conversations.

Antecedent factors and preinteraction mediators can not only influence the expression of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in intergroup interaction but may also affect the correspondence between these behaviors. Although many Whites report that they are nonprejudiced on self-report measures, and presumably believe that they are not prejudiced at a conscious level, they commonly harbor negative feelings and beliefs at an unconscious, implicit level (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Beach, 2001). These explicit and implicit attitudes are dissociated frequently.

Moreover, implicit and explicit attitudes are hypothesized to influence behavior in different ways. Dovidio et al. (1997) proposed that explicit attitudes primarily predict deliberative forms of behavior, which people have the ability to formulate carefully, monitor, and control. Dovidio et al. argued further that implicit attitudes, in contrast, predict spontaneous behaviors, which people have little or no ability to control and which typically occur without awareness or reflection. Consistent with this hypothesis, Dovidio et al. (1997) found that explicit (i.e., self-reported) prejudice predicted overt bias in how Whites judged and evaluated Blacks, but implicit prejudice primarily predicted their nonverbal behaviors reflecting anxiety (rate of blinking) and dislike (gaze aversion) in interactions with Blacks. McConnell and Leibold (2001) also reported that Whites’ implicit racial attitudes—but not their explicit racial attitudes—predicted Whites’ speaking time, speech errors, and speech hesitations, and the attitudes tended to correlate with how much the Whites leaned away from their partner and seating distance during interracial interactions.

Hebl, Foster, Mannix, and Dovidio (2002) found parallel results, with more evidence of bias for subtle and spontaneous behaviors than for overt and formal actions, for another type of intergroup bias, the prejudice of potential employers toward gay men and lesbians. In this study, employers did not discriminate against confederates portrayed as homosexual on formal employment behaviors, such as permission to complete a job application and callbacks for further consideration. Bias was expressed more subtly in employers’ interaction behaviors, however. Employers spent less time and used fewer words when interacting with the stigmatized
applicants than with the nonstigmatized applicants.

Systematic differences in communication are also evident in other important types of intergroup encounters. Johnson, Roter, Po, and Cooper (2004), for example, found that physicians displayed greater verbal dominance, less positive affect, and less patient-centered communication with Black patients than with White patients. It is perhaps because of such differences in communication orientation that same-race interactions between physicians and patients (Cooper et al., 2003), and same-race interactions between teachers and students (Feldman & Donohoe, 1978) are experienced more positively than cross-race interactions.

Importantly, subtle differences in these types of interaction behaviors can exert significant impact on the nature and outcomes of intergroup interactions. Specifically, nonverbal behavior is an important mechanism in self-fulfilling prophecies. Word et al. (1974) demonstrated that Whites exhibited less immediate, more negative nonverbal behaviors when interviewing Black relative to White confederates. In addition, they showed that participants with interviewers who showed low-immediacy behaviors (behaviors mirroring Whites’ interactions with Blacks), compared with participants with interviewers who displayed high-immediacy behaviors, responded in a less favorable and responsive way during the interaction and were judged by independent raters as less suitable for the position. Thus, the nonverbal behaviors of the interviewers, which reflected the differences displayed in interactions with Blacks and Whites, elicited complementary verbal and nonverbal responses from the interviewees. This study illustrates the powerful role of nonverbal behavior in perpetuating racial disparities.

Whereas researchers have amassed a great many insights regarding the perspective of majority-group members, the less frequent research conducted on minority-group members suggests that they, too, behave in ways that influence intergroup interaction. In particular, minority-group members attempt to act in strategic ways to manage intergroup interactions. These behaviors may take a number of different forms, but they are characterized generally as ways to cope with actual or anticipated discrimination. Majority and minority members engage in coping strategies in intergroup interactions. They are adjusting to different types of threats, however, and thus the methods and consequences of coping are quite different.

As suggested by Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) (see also Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004), Whites commonly find interracial interaction to be anxiety arousing and, thus, they may avoid interracial interactions when possible. When they cannot avoid these interactions, they may become focused on not acting inappropriately, particularly in ways that can be attributed to racism.

Preoccupation with behaving in a non-prejudiced manner can further contribute to inconsistencies in Whites’ verbal and nonverbal behaviors in interracial interaction. Hebl and Dovidio (2005) found in their review that across a range of different types of interactions, stigmatizers’ (i.e., members of majority or socially dominant groups) display of negative nonverbal behaviors was frequently at odds with their verbal behaviors (see paths S4 and T4 in Figure 25.1). In general, stigmatizers often report feeling positively toward targets, whereas their nonverbal and paraverbal behaviors indicate more negative reactions. This divergence between self-reported favorable orientations and negative nonverbal behaviors is typically observed for Whites in interracial interactions (see Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980). Because Whites may be concerned about acting in a prejudiced or otherwise inappropriate way in interracial interactions (Gaertner
& Dovidio, 1986), they may focus the majority of their attention on managing their verbal behaviors, which can be easier to monitor and control than nonverbal behaviors. Moreover, to the extent that monitoring and controlling of verbal responses involve high cognitive demand, these activities may actually facilitate the expression of more spontaneous responses (see also Patterson, 1995). As a consequence, Whites (and other types of stigmatizers) may be less adept at managing affect-driven behaviors that occur in interactions spontaneously and without time for deliberation.

Vorauer and Turpie (2004) found similar effects in interactions between Canadian majority- (White) and minority- (First Nations) group members. Whereas higher evaluative concerns reduced bias in intimacy-building behaviors (e.g., eye contact, self-disclosure) among high-prejudiced Whites, higher evaluative concerns interfered with intimacy-building behaviors among low-prejudiced Whites. Vorauer and Turpie interpreted these results as low-prejudiced Whites “choking” under the pressure of high evaluative concerns.

Blacks’ coping strategies in interracial interaction are directed generally at coping with actual, perceived, or anticipated bias. Like Whites, Blacks may also avoid interracial interactions when possible (Patchen, 1983), but when avoidance is not an option, they can make use of several coping strategies, including disengagement, vigilance, and compensation. Disengagement involves limiting the extent to which feelings of self-worth are dependent on feedback within the interaction. If Blacks disengage, they do not allow the biases of Whites to influence them in substantially negative, or at least direct, ways. As a consequence, Blacks may be less responsive to feedback, either positive or negative, from Whites than are Whites in interactions (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002).

Repeated disengagement may lead to a more long-term strategy of disidentification, in which Black individuals disengage permanently from the domain of evaluation. Disengagement may be one reason why Blacks tend to be less emotionally expressive in interracial interaction than are Whites (Ickes, 1984).

Alternatively, minority-group members, such as U.S. Blacks, often cope with anticipated discrimination by either being particularly vigilant to cues of bias or compensating for potential bias. With respect to ethnic minority/White relations, daily encounters with potential discrimination may lead ethnic minorities to interpretations that confirm and reconfirm that prejudice exists and to label ambiguous behaviors as discriminatory (Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Instead of monitoring for bias that is occurring, minorities can also compensate for potential bias before it has the opportunity to affect the interracial interactions in which they engage (Miller & Myers, 1998). Specifically, when they are concerned about the potential bias of their White interaction partners, ethnic minority participants often engage in compensatory strategies, such as smiling and talking more, to ward off potentially negative outcomes (Shelton et al., 2005). Thus, coping styles can influence the assessment processes identified in the secondary process phase systematically (see Figure 25.1).

SECONDARY INTERACTION PHASE

After individuals have exchanged verbal and nonverbal behaviors, they are likely to assess the interaction in an attempt to continue or terminate it. In deciding which course to pursue, both individuals often engage in an assessment of their goals, the other interactant, and their outcomes. In terms of assessing one’s goals, interactants,
for example, might examine their social goals (e.g., did they make a good impression on their interaction partner?) or their task-oriented goals (e.g., did they get the job or other outcome they sought?). In terms of assessing the interactant, interactants both evaluate and judge each other actively during the interaction (e.g., what does the other person think of me and my contributions?).

The dissociation of majority-group members’ explicit and implicit attitudes and their consequent effect on verbal and nonverbal behavior can produce a significant divergence in their self-assessments and how they are evaluated by their interaction partners. Dovidio et al. (2002) showed that Whites’ explicit attitudes and verbal behaviors were related, whereas their implicit attitudes and nonverbal behaviors were related. Specifically, Whites’ explicit racial attitudes predicted the positivity of their verbal communications with Black interaction partners, but their implicit racial attitudes predicted the positivity of their nonverbal communication. In addition, Whites based their impressions of how friendly they behaved during their interracial interactions on the attitudes that were accessible (i.e., their explicit attitudes) and the behaviors that they could readily monitor (i.e., their verbal behaviors). Because most of the Whites in the study perceived themselves as nonprejudiced, they generally believed that they behaved in a friendly and unbiased manner toward their Black partners.

Blacks, in contrast, relied on their White interaction partners’ nonverbal behavior in making their assessments of how friendly their partners behaved. Because Whites’ nonverbal behavior was correlated with their implicit attitudes that were, on average, negative, Blacks often left the interaction with a negative perception of their White partners. Thus, Whites’ and Blacks’ assessments of how the White person behaved in the interaction were essentially uncorrelated. Other researchers have shown similarly that Whites’ implicit intergroup attitudes and stereotypes, of which they have limited awareness, predict the impressions that ethnic minorities form of them during interactions (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; McConnell & Leibold, 2001; Sekaquaptewa, Espinoza, Thompson, Vargas, & von Hippel, 2003).

Because of heightened awareness and anticipated rejection in interracial interactions, Whites tend to overestimate the extent to which racial minorities will perceive their behavior as friendly (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2005). Furthermore, both Whites and Blacks often misinterpret anxiety-related behaviors, such as a shorter gaze durations and more frequent self-touching, as signals of unfriendliness more frequently in interracial than in intraracial encounters (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Dovidio & Johnson, 2005). This vigilance may produce more accurate sensitivity to racial bias among Blacks, however (Rollman, 1978). Richeson and Shelton (2005) found, for instance, that Black judges (college student participants) were, on average, better able to detect both the explicit and the implicit racial bias levels of White individuals from 20 seconds of their nonverbal behavior during interracial interactions than were White judges. Specifically, Black judges’ ratings of how positively a sample of White targets behaved during an interracial interaction were more highly correlated (albeit negatively) with those targets’ automatic racial bias scores than were the ratings made by White judges. Furthermore, Black judges’ ratings of the White targets’ prejudice levels were more highly correlated with those targets’ explicit prejudice scores than were the same ratings made by White judges.

In addition to assessing their goals and their interaction partner, individuals engage in ongoing assessment of the costs
and benefits of the interaction (see Figure 25.1). This assessment can be very conscious and deliberative, but it can also involve the use of relatively nonconscious global impressions. The assessment of costs and benefits involves not only the likelihood of gaining (or losing) tangible outcomes or resources but also the cost of self-presentation. In addition, as we noted earlier, whereas the assessment of majority-group members may be based on the more overt aspects of the exchange, minority-group members may weigh more subtle behaviors in their evaluation of the costs and benefits of continuing the interaction. If the ratio indicates net personal gains for the interactant, he or she may choose to continue the interaction, whereas the accumulation of personal losses may lead to interaction termination.

♦ Interaction Continuation or Termination

Majority- and minority-group interaction partners decide ultimately, either unilaterally or consensually, whether to continue or to terminate the interaction. This critical decision is based largely on the verbal and nonverbal behaviors that have been displayed during the interaction and individuals’ assessments of themselves, of their partners, and of the costs and benefits of the interaction. The continuation of an interaction is a negotiation in which both interactants contribute. Disparities may exist, however; for instance, one interactant’s strong desire to continue the interaction may overwhelm the other interactant’s weak desire to end the interaction. In addition, because higher status people often exert more control over conversation and interaction, they may be more influential in determining the length of the interaction.

♦ Implications of the Model for Intergroup Interaction Outcomes

In this chapter, we made use of Hebl and Dovidio’s (2005) model of mixed social interactions to explore how nonverbal behavior may be expressed and interpreted during intergroup interactions. Our examination of each phase of the interaction reveals how susceptible intergroup interactions are to misunderstandings, if not categorically negative outcomes. Nonverbal behavior thus can be a critical element of interpersonal relations that reflects and reinforces intergroup relations.

With respect to race relations, in particular, as our analysis has revealed, Whites’ self-consciousness in interracial interaction may lead them to focus primarily on the controllable aspects of their behavior, such as the verbal content of their speech, but to increase the signs of discomfort and other negative states they exhibit nonverbally. Because they interpret their behavior based on the behaviors they can monitor most easily, Whites tend to overestimate how favorably they are appearing. In contrast, Blacks, because of their self-consciousness, may be particularly vigilant to cues of Whites’ bias in these interactions. As a result, they may rely on nonverbal behavior primarily, largely discounting the verbal content, in forming impressions of Whites and the interaction. Given their vigilance to cues of bias, Blacks are likely to attribute their White partners’ negative nonverbal behavior to racial bias (Dovidio & Johnson, 2005; Richeson & Shelton, 2005). Thus, racial distrust influences how Blacks interpret Whites’ nonverbal behavior, and the discrepancy between Whites’ overt expressions and their nonverbal behavior reinforces this distrust.

Furthermore, the different reliance on verbal and nonverbal behavior by Whites and
Blacks in forming their impressions can lead to vastly divergent views not only about their interpersonal relations but also ultimately to race relations in general. These dynamics provide insight into why Blacks and Whites view race relations so differently. For instance, in the United States, whereas most (69%) of Whites perceive that Blacks are treated “the same as Whites”, the majority of Blacks (59%) report that Blacks are treated worse than Whites (Gallup Organization, 2002). Understanding the role of nonverbal behavior in interaction can thus provide fundamental insights for understanding and improving intergroup relations.

♦ Conclusion

Despite its obvious practical importance and theoretical value, nonverbal behavior in intergroup contexts is a curiously understudied topic. In 1985, Halberstadt observed specifically that “the first research on race and socioeconomic differences in nonverbal communication was conducted in the 1930s . . ., but interest in these issues was not sustained until the early 1970s” (p. 228). Our review of the literature reveals that the interest in race and nonverbal communication peaked in the 1970s; research activity on this topic has waned since then. The bulk of this seminal work on nonverbal behavior, race, and intergroup interaction focuses on the contention that majority- and minority-group members, perhaps because of differences in status, social power, and stigmatization, are likely to develop different styles of communication, reflected in nonverbal and verbal behaviors. The data, however, are suggestive but not yet conclusive.

We propose that a comprehensive understanding of nonverbal behavior requires a consideration of the complex processes involved in intergroup as well as intragroup interactions. Building on Patterson’s (1982) Sequential Functional Model of Nonverbal Exchange, we presented a model of mixed social interaction (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005) that outlines key elements in the dynamics of communication in an intergroup context. Thus, although nonverbal behavior can be studied in terms of separate encoding and decoding processes, the dynamic nature of nonverbal communication can best be studied during interactions. Unfortunately, studies of actual intergroup interaction, including measures of verbal and nonverbal behavior, remain all too rare. Yet we believe that this type of research, along with appropriate theoretical development, is crucial to understanding the important role of nonverbal behavior in intergroup communication and ultimately intergroup relations.

♦ References


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