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CHAPTER **5**

RACE AND ETHNICITY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

5.1 Compare the concepts of race and ethnicity and how they are socially constructed.

5.2 Critically examine the real consequences of race and ethnicity in society.

5.3 Compare the various theories for how and why prejudice develops in society and the ways that it can be reduced.

5.4 Explain the different routes through which immigrants come to the United States and assess how well the United States incorporates newcomers.

Rachel Dolezal was the president of the Spokane, Washington, chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from February 2014 until June 2015. The NAACP is one of the largest and most well-known groups working for civil rights for African Americans in the United States. It was founded in 1909 by a group that included W. E. B. Du Bois (a well-known sociologist you will hear about later in this chapter). What is interesting about this story is that, although Dolezal had been describing herself as a Black woman, both of her parents are White and of European ancestry (Malkin, 2015). In fact, she does not have any known Black or African ancestry. When this story came out, Dolezal resigned from her job at the NAACP and was dismissed from her position as an instructor in Africana studies at Eastern Washington University. In a November 2015 television interview, Dolezal publicly stated for the first time that she was born White, but that she still identified as Black (Malkin, 2015).

This story incited a heated debate about racial identity. Critics of Dolezal argued that she was engaged in cultural appropriation and fraud in claiming she was Black when she did not have Black ancestry. Dolezal and her supporters argued that her self-identification is genuine, if not based on race or ancestry, and was, in part, based on her close attachment to her four adopted Black siblings. Regardless of your feelings about Dolezal personally, this story highlights the uncomfortable nuances of racial and ethnic identity. Is racial identity about biology or is it about personal self-definition? This question gets to the heart of the differences between race and ethnicity and the ways that society shapes our understanding of these categories.

Rachel Dolezal identifies as a Black woman despite having two parents of White, European ancestry and no known Black or African ancestry. What are the consequences of her identifying in this way for Dolezal, the African American community, and the way society thinks about race?

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The words "*race*" and "*ethnicity*" are often used interchangeably, but there are key distinctions between them. **Race** is a social distinction based on perceived physical or biological characteristics. For example, we often look at hair texture, eye color, nose shape, or other physical traits to determine a person's racial group. **Ethnicity** is rooted in cultural differences such as language, religion, and the shared history among people in a group. For example, the ethnic group of Italian Americans may share a language, a cuisine, the Catholic religion, and a common history in Italy and in the migration to the United States.

Traditionally, we thought of race and ethnicity as natural and permanent. This view, known as **essentialism**, argues that some essential or inherent element makes a person part of a specific racial or ethnic group. From this perspective, each racial or ethnic group contains traits that have been carried from the past to the present with little or no change. As a result, ethnic groups exist because they are based on biological factors (such as similar appearance, skin color, or eye color) and in a territorial location (a region or country). This argument relies on kinship: members of an ethnic or racial group believe they share characteristics, origins, or sometimes even a blood relationship.

One of the criticisms of essentialism is that it sees race and ethnicity as fixed and permanent. Thus, it cannot account for the ways our ideas of different ethnic groups or races have changed. For example, our idea of who falls under the category of White has changed. In the early settlement of the United States, people who came from Greece and Eastern Europe were not considered White, although they are often categorized in this way now. Finnish immigrants in North America were

labelled as Asian, a label that has also changed. If race is fixed and essential, how is it possible that our labels of racial groups differ over time and across countries? Most sociologists would argue that these changing definitions occur because race and ethnicity are both socially constructed categories.

Race and Ethnicity as Social Constructions

Our ideas of race and ethnicity are socially constructed. Berger and Luckmann (1966, 55) argue that "all knowledge, including the most basic, taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday life, is derived from and maintained by social interactions. When people interact, they do so with the understanding that their respective perceptions of reality are related to one another. And, when we are interacting together, our common knowledge of reality becomes reinforced. Through these processes, our ideas of deviance are socially constructed." Social constructionists argue that racial and ethnic categories are not natural but instead are created within society. For example, many societies categorize people based on their skin color. This choice is rooted in historical contexts such as slavery and colonialism. However, we could just as easily use eye color or height to divide people into groups. Such arbitrary focus on a certain feature highlights how the different physical characteristics perceived to be significant between racial categories hold no intrinsic value and are not rooted in biological differences between groups.

The role of biology in distinguishing between racial and ethnic groups is seriously undermined by the fact that all humanity is 99.9% genetically similar. As the work of Spencer Wells makes clear, genetic testing cannot reveal a person's race. Wells (2002) examined the Y chromosome (the pieces of DNA carried by males) and found that all humans alive today share a common male ancestor who lived in East or Southern Africa about 60,000 years ago. In other words, all humans trace their ancestors back to this one man and apparent differences between people are simply skin deep because all people are separated by only 2,000 generations.

Another reason that the biological basis of race is questionable is that within-group variation is much larger than between-group variation. For example, a person might be categorized as Black but have lighter skin than another person categorized as White. The distinction between white and black categories of skin tone is arbitrary.

Definitions of races have also changed over time and across cultures. We discussed how Americans tend to define race primarily by unchanging physical characteristics and have changed some of our racial categorizations over time. However, in some parts of the world race is not simply a matter of permanent physical features and is seen to be changeable. For example, in Brazil a person's race can change and is intimately connected with her class and social status. Roy (2001, 16) explains: "A disproportionate number of dark people are poor, but if a person becomes wealthier, he or she is understood by others to become whiter." In addition, rich non-White and interracial parents in Brazil are more likely than poorer parents to label their children White. This system of racial and ethnic divisions challenges our usual understanding of these categories as being fixed and immutable (impossible to change); it supports the theory that race and ethnicity are shaped by the social context and are socially constructed.

Defining and Calculating Racial Groups

Many governments around the world conduct a **census** to systematically collect and record data about the people living within their borders. The earliest censuses were collected in Egypt in about 3,340 BC. The U.S. government has conducted a census every 10 years since 1790, so there have been 23 censuses of the United States as of this writing. The census provides important demographic data about individuals living in the United States. This information is used to plan social services, including health care, education, and transportation. It also enables the government to track population changes and trends.

Censuses in the United States and other countries collect information about racial and ethnic groups. Questions about race and ethnicity are posed in different ways across countries and periods.

Think about how you would identify yourself and then answer the following questions.

Canada
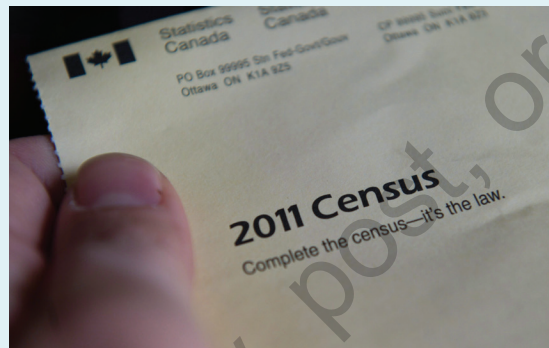
AP Photo/ Sean Kilpatrick

United States
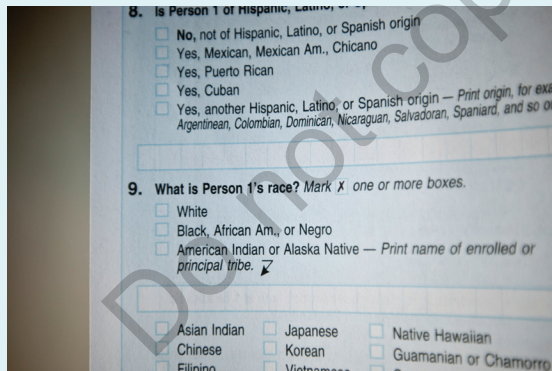
Ted Pink / Alamy Stock Photo

Ireland

Radharc Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Please go to the following websites to see the Census questions about race and ethnicity from the United States, Canada, and Ireland:

United States: https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf

Canada: Question 17-19 at https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/statistical-programs/document/3901_D18_T1_V1

Ireland: http://census.cso.ie/censusasp/census/Question14_000.htm

1. What do these questions tell us about how these countries think about race and ethnicity? Do these categories make sense? Why are some categories countries, some categories racial or ethnic groups, and other categories regions?

2. You will note that the current censuses allow respondents to define their ethnicity as within two different categories and to combine categories. Why is this option useful? Are there any problems with it?

3. Find a census from a different country online. How does it compare to these three censuses?

4. Some people argue that we should no longer collect information about race and ethnicity in the United States and that we should be a color blind society. Why is it useful (or not useful) to collect information about race and ethnicity? How could we use this information to plan government programs (such as health care, education, pensions, policing), communities, or other things?

The idea of race and ethnicity being socially constructed implies that individuals have a choice over how they construct their racial and ethnic identities. This is true, to some extent. However, some people can choose to highlight certain parts of their ethnicity over others. Who has this choice and who does not?

READING: "OPTIONAL ETHNICITIES: FOR WHITES ONLY?"

By Mary C. Waters

In the following article, sociologist Mary C. Waters discusses what she labels optional ethnicities. She argues that White people in the United States have the ability to select the ethnic label they would like to claim or to claim no ethnic label at all. These White Americans can choose to be seen as a hyphenated American (e.g., German American, Italian American, Polish American) or to simply categorize as American. For them, claiming an ethnicity is often symbolic. According to Waters, **symbolic ethnicity** is an individualistic label that has little cost for the individual. In this way, White people can celebrate Oktoberfest or Cinco de Mayo but ignore other ethnic holidays and traditions. Racialized people, however, do not have this same freedom. They often have no control over the ethnic labels that others assign to them.

Ethnic Identities for Whites in the 1990s

What does it mean to talk about ethnicity as an option for an individual? To argue that an individual has some degree of choice in their ethnic identity flies in the face of the common sense notion of ethnicity many of us believe in—that one's ethnic identity is a fixed characteristic, reflective of blood ties and given at birth. However, social scientists who study ethnicity have long concluded that while ethnicity is based in a *belief* in a common ancestry, ethnicity is primarily a *social* phenomenon, not a biological one (Alba 1985, 1990; Barth 1969; Weber [1921] 1968, p. 389). The belief that members of an ethnic group have that they share a common ancestry may not be a fact. There is a great deal of change in ethnic identities across generations through intermarriage, changing allegiances, and changing social categories. There is also a much larger

amount of change in the identities of individuals over their life than is commonly believed. While most people are aware of the phenomena known as "passing"—people raised as one race who change at some point and claim a different race as their identity—there are similar life-course changes in ethnicity that happen all the time and are not given the same degree of attention as "racial passing."

White Americans of European ancestry can be described as having a great deal of choice in terms of their ethnic identities. The two major types of options white Americans can exercise are (1) the option of whether to claim any specific ancestry, or to just be "white" or American, [Lieberson (1985) called these people "unhyphenated whites"] and (2) the choice of which of their European ancestries to choose to include in their description of their own identities. In both cases, the option of choosing how to present yourself on surveys and in everyday social interactions exists for whites because of social changes and societal conditions that have created a great deal of social mobility, immigrant assimilation, and political and economic power for whites in the United States. Specifically, the option of being able to not claim any ethnic identity exists for whites of European background in the United States because they are the majority group—in terms of holding political and social power, as well as being a numerical majority. The option of choosing among different ethnicities in their family backgrounds exists because the degree of discrimination and social distance attached to specific European backgrounds has diminished over time. . . .

Symbolic Ethnicities for White Americans

What do these ethnic identities mean to people and why do they cling to them rather than just abandoning the tie and calling themselves American? My own field research with suburban whites in California and Pennsylvania found that later-generation descendants of European origin maintain what are called "symbolic ethnicities." Symbolic ethnicity is a term coined by Herbert Gans (1979) to refer to ethnicity that is individualistic in nature and without real social cost for the individual. These symbolic identifications are essentially leisure time activities, rooted in nuclear family traditions and reinforced by the voluntary enjoyable aspects of being ethnic (Waters 1990). Richard Alba (1990) also found later-generation whites . . . who chose to keep a tie with an ethnic identity because of the enjoyable and voluntary aspects to those identities, along with the feelings of specialness they entailed. An example of symbolic ethnicity is individuals who identify as Irish, for example, on occasions such as Saint Patrick's Day, on family holidays, or for vacations. They do not usually belong to Irish-American organizations, live in Irish neighborhoods, work in Irish jobs, or marry other Irish people. The symbolic meaning of being Irish American can be constructed by individuals from mass media images, family traditions, or other intermittent social activities. In other words, for later-generation white ethnics, ethnicity is not something that influences their lives unless

they want it to. In the world of work and school and neighborhood, individuals do not have to admit to being ethnic unless they choose to. And for an increasing number of European-origin individuals whose parents and grandparents have intermarried, the ethnicity they claim is largely a matter of personal choice as they sort through all of the possible combinations of groups in their genealogies. . . .

Race Relations and Symbolic Ethnicity

However much symbolic ethnicity is without cost for the individual, there is a cost associated with symbolic ethnicity for the society. That is because symbolic ethnicities of the type described here are confined to white Americans of European origin. Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians do not have the option of a symbolic ethnicity at present in the United States. For all of the ways in which ethnicity does not matter for white Americans, it does matter for non-whites. Who your ancestors are does affect your choice of spouse, where you live, what job you have, who your friends are, and what your chances are for success in American society, if those ancestors happen not to be from Europe. The reality is that white ethnics have a lot more choice and room for maneuver than they themselves think they do. The situation is very different for members of racial minorities, whose lives are strongly influenced by their race or national origin regardless of how much they may choose not to identify themselves in terms of their ancestries. . . .

One important implication of these identities is that they tend to be very individualistic. There is a tendency to view valuing diversity in a pluralist environment as equating all groups. The symbolic ethnic tends to think that all groups are equal; everyone has a background that is their right to celebrate and pass on to their children. This leads to the conclusion that all identities are equal and all identities in some sense are interchangeable—"I'm Italian American, you're Polish American. I'm Irish American, you're African American." The important thing is to treat people as individuals and all equally. However, this assumption ignores the very big difference between an individualistic symbolic ethnic identity and a socially enforced and imposed racial identity.

My favorite example of how this type of thinking can lead to some severe misunderstandings between people of different backgrounds is from the Dear Abby advice column. A few years back a person wrote in who had asked an acquaintance of Asian background where his family was from. His acquaintance answered that this was a rude question and he would not reply. The bewildered white asked Abby why it was rude, since he thought it was a sign of respect to wonder where people were from, and he certainly would not mind anyone asking him about where his family was from. Abby asked her readers to write in to say whether it was rude to ask about a person's ethnic background. She reported that she got a large response, that most non-whites thought it was a sign of disrespect, and whites thought it was flattering:

Dear Abby,

I am 100 per cent American and because I am of Asian ancestry I am often asked "What are you?" It's not the personal nature of this question that bothers me, it's the question itself. This query seems to question my very humanity. "What am I? Why I am a person like everyone else!"

Signed,

A Real American

Dear Abby,

Why do people resent being asked what they are? The Irish are so proud of being Irish, they tell you before you even ask. Tip O'Neill has never tried to hide his Irish ancestry.

Signed,

Jimmy.

In this exchange Jimmy cannot understand why Asians are not as happy to be asked about their ethnicity as he is, because he understands his ethnicity and theirs to be separate but equal. Everyone has to come from somewhere—his family from Ireland, another's family from Asia—each has a history and each should be proud of it. But the reason he cannot understand the perspective of the Asian American is that all ethnicities are not equal; all are not symbolic, costless, and voluntary. When white Americans equate their own symbolic ethnicities with the socially enforced identities of non-white Americans, they obscure the fact that the experiences of whites and non-whites have been qualitatively different in the United States and that the current identities of individuals partly reflect that unequal history.

In the next section I describe how relations between black and white students on college campuses reflect some of these asymmetries in the understanding of what a racial or ethnic identity means. While I focus on black and white students in the following discussion, you should be aware that the myriad other groups in the United States—Mexican Americans, American Indians, Japanese Americans—all have some degree of social and individual influences on their identities, which reflect the group's social and economic history and present circumstance.

Relations on College Campuses

Both black and white students face the task of developing their race and ethnic identities. Sociologists and psychologists note that at the time people leave home and begin to live independently from their parents, often ages 18 to 22, they report a heightened sense of racial and ethnic identity as they sort through how much of their beliefs and behaviors are idiosyncratic to their families and how much are shared with other people. It is not until one comes in close contact with many people who are different from oneself that individuals realize the ways in which their backgrounds may influence their individual personality. This

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involves coming into contact with people who are different in terms of their ethnicity, class, religion, region, and race. For white students, the ethnicity they claim is more often than not a symbolic one—with all of the voluntary, enjoyable, and intermittent characteristics I have described above.

Black students at the university are also developing identities through interactions with others who are different from them. Their identity development is more complicated than that of whites because of the added element of racial discrimination and racism, along with the "ethnic" developments of finding others who share their background. Thus black students have the positive attraction of being around other black students who share some cultural elements, as well as the need to band together with other students in a reactive and oppositional way in the face of racist incidents on campus. . . .

Many black students experience racism personally for the first time on campus. The upper-middle-class students from white suburbs were often isolated enough that their presence was not threatening to racists in their high schools. Also, their class background was known by their residence and this may have prevented attacks being directed at them. Often black students at the university who begin talking with other students and recognizing racial slights will remember incidents that happened to them earlier that they might not have thought were related to race. . . .

An example of the kinds of misunderstandings that can arise because of different understandings of the meanings and implications of symbolic versus oppositional identities concerns questions students ask one another in the dorms about personal appearances and customs. A very common type of interaction in the dorm concerns questions whites ask blacks about their hair. Because whites tend to know little about blacks, and blacks know a lot about whites, there is a general asymmetry in the level of curiosity people have about one another. Whites, as the numerical majority, have had little contact with black culture; blacks, especially those who are in college, have had to develop bicultural skills—knowledge about the social worlds of both whites and blacks. Miscommunication and hurt feelings about white students' questions about black students' hair illustrate this point. One of the things that happens freshman year is that white students are around black students as they fix their hair. White students are generally quite curious about black students' hair—they have basic questions such as how often blacks wash their hair, how they get it straightened or curled, what products they use on their hair, how they comb it, etc. Whites often wonder to themselves whether they should ask these questions. One thought experiment whites perform is to ask themselves whether a particular question would upset them. Adopting the "do unto others" rule, they ask themselves, "If a black person was curious about my hair would I get upset?" The answer usually is "No, I would be happy to tell them." Another example is an Italian American student wondering to herself, "Would I be upset if someone asked me about calamari?" The answer is no, so she asks her black roommate about collard greens, and the roommate explodes with an angry

response such as, "Do you think all black people eat watermelon too?" Note that if this Italian American knew her friend was Trinidadian American and asked about peas and rice the situation would be more similar and would not necessarily ignite underlying tensions.

Like the debate in *Dear Abby,* these innocent questions are likely to lead to resentment. The issue of stereotypes about black Americans and the assumption that all blacks are alike and have the same stereotypical cultural traits has more power to hurt or offend a black person than vice versa. The innocent questions about black hair also bring up a number of asymmetries between the black and white experience. Because blacks tend to have more knowledge about whites than vice versa, there is not an even exchange going on; the black freshman is likely to have fewer basic questions about his white roommate than his white roommate has about him. Because of the differences historically in the group experiences of blacks and whites there are some connotations to black hair that don't exist about white hair. (For instance, is straightening your hair a form of assimilation, do some people distinguish between women having "good hair" and "bad hair" in terms of beauty and how is that related to looking "white"?). Finally, even a black freshman who cheerfully disregards or is unaware that there are these asymmetries will soon slam into another asymmetry if she willingly answers every innocent question asked of her. In a situation where blacks make up only 10 per cent of the student body, if every non-black needs to be educated about hair, she will have to explain it to nine other students. As one black student explained to me, after you've been asked a couple of times about something so personal you begin to feel like you are an attraction in a zoo, that you are at the university for the education of the white students. . . .

The implications of symbolic ethnicities for thinking about race relations are subtle but consequential. If your understanding of your own ethnicity and its relationship to society and politics is one of individual choice, it becomes harder to understand the need for programs like affirmative action, which recognize the ongoing need for group struggle and group recognition, in order to bring about social change. It also is hard for a white college student to understand the need that racialized students feel to band together against discrimination. It also is easy, on the individual level, to expect everyone else to be able to turn their ethnicity on and off at will, the way you are able to, without understanding that ongoing discrimination and societal attention to minority status makes that impossible for individuals from minority groups to do. The paradox of symbolic ethnicity is that it depends upon the ultimate goal of a pluralist society, and at the same time makes it more difficult to achieve that ultimate goal. It is dependent upon the concept that all ethnicities mean the same thing, that enjoying the traditions of one's heritage is an option available to a group or an individual, but that such a heritage should not have any social costs associated with it.

As the Asian Americans who wrote to *Dear Abby* make clear, there are many societal issues and involuntary ascriptions associated with non-white identities. The developments necessary for this to change are not individual but societal in nature. Social mobility and declining racial and ethnic sensitivity are closely associated. The legacy and the present reality of discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity must be overcome before the ideal of a pluralist society, where all heritages are treated equally and are equally available for individuals to choose or discard at will, is realized.

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Reading Questions

1. To what extent does Waters argue that we have a degree of choice over our ethnicity? Who has this choice and who does not? Why?

2. What is a symbolic ethnicity? Who has this type of identity?

3. What is the potential conflict between people who have symbolic ethnicities and those who do not?

Credit: Waters, Mary C. 1996. "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America*, edited by Sylvia Pedraza and Ruben Rumbaut, 444–454. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

The theory of social construction highlights the ways that the social categories we consider natural and unchanging, such as race and ethnicity, are in fact socially created. It helps us to understand how the norms, rules, and categories of our society begin and how they can change. Although social constructionists argue that race is not a real thing—that there is no biological basis for racial categories and that they change over time—our social construction of race has real consequences for individuals

Romy Arroyo Fernandez/NurPhoto/Getty Images

How does understanding this Oktoberfest parade through the lens of symbolic ethnicities change how you see this event and others like it? What problems, if any, exist with these displays?

in society. Being defined as one race or another can shape the type of neighborhood you live in, the job that you are likely to get, and the perceptions that others may have of you.

The idea that social constructions have real consequences is called the **Thomas principle**. According to W. I. Thomas and D. S. Thomas (a husband and wife team of sociologists), "If [people] define situations as real, then they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, 52). A humorous example of how our perceptions can be more real than reality is the famous toilet paper crisis of 1973. At that time, there was a lot of anxiety over oil shortages. When people heard of possible shortages, they would often stock up on gas or other commodities. On an episode of *The Tonight Show*, host Johnny Carson started his monologue by saying, "You know what's disappearing from the supermarket shelves? Toilet paper. There's an acute shortage of toilet paper in the United States." After the show aired, 20 million people immediately went to the grocery store and bought large quantities of toilet paper (Crockett, 2014). By the next day, most stores were sold out. The situation was so dire that Carson was forced to explain that the story was a joke. This clarification did little to help; once shoppers saw the empty shelves, they felt compelled to buy more. Even though there was no real shortage, seeing the low quantities of toilet paper at the store made people anxious and want to stock up. The perception that the story was real was more important than the fact that toilet paper was in abundant supply. The shortage lasted 3 weeks, until the shelves could be resupplied.

Racism

Racism is a real consequence of our socially constructed ideas about race. It does not matter that race is not based in biology: Our racial categories have important social consequences. **Racism** is an organized system of race-based group privilege that operates at every level of society and is held together by a sophisticated ideology of race supremacy (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999, 42). Racism leads to both privileges and sanctions. Privileges include the White privilege discussed later in this chapter. Sanctions include restrictions and limitations on people in certain racial categories.

Racism against Black Americans has a long history in the United States, including the history of slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and police violence. Other groups have also faced racism in the United States. For example, in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for a period of 10 years. It also required every Chinese person traveling in or out of the country to carry a certificate identifying his or her status as a laborer, scholar,

diplomat, or merchant. This act was the first in U.S. history to place such broad restriction on immigration and it was entirely targeted to one ethnic group. The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943, and then only in the interest of aiding the morale of an ally in World War II (U.S. Department of State, 2018).

Another example of racism is Islamophobia. **Islamophobia** is the intense fear or hatred of Islam or Muslims. Islamophobia has become an increasingly important issue in the United States. Hate crimes against Muslims have seen a sharp rise and are now at their all-time highest rate. There were 127 assaults against Muslims reported to the FBI in 2016, compared with the past high of 93 in 2001 (see Figure 5.1). Beyond assaults, Islamophobia also causes feelings of exclusion among Muslims. Half of Muslims, in a survey by Pew Research Center, reported that they believe it is more difficult to be a Muslim in the United States today than in the past. A quarter of Muslims see discrimination, prejudice, and racism as the most important problem facing American Muslims today (Pew Research Center, 2017). Both hate crimes and feelings of exclusion are real consequences of racial and ethnic discrimination.

To understand the racial and ethnic inequality that occurs in the United States, we can examine how groups vary in terms of education and income. Table 5.1 compares income and education for several ethnic groups (based on how people self-identify on the census). We can see that Asian Americans have the highest incomes, followed by White Americans. Black Americans have the lowest income, making less than half of what Asian Americans make per year and about 60% of what Whites earn, on average.

Most people believe that the United States is a meritocracy and, as a result, expect that ethnic groups with high levels of education should have relatively high incomes. This correlation is certainly true for some groups in the table. Asian Americans, for example, have both the highest incomes and highest high-school graduation rate. However, Black Americans have relatively high education levels, the third highest after Asian and White Americans. However, Black Americans have the lowest average income.

Figure 5.1 /// Anti-Muslim Assaults Over Time, United States
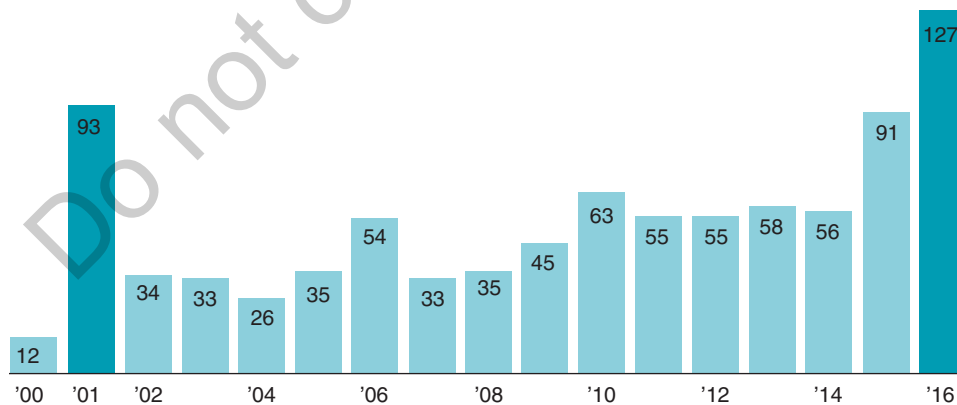
Note: Includes simple and aggravated assaults.

Source: "Assaults against Muslims in U.S. surpass 2001 level." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (15 November 2017) https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/.

Table 5.1 /// Household income and education by ethnic group, United States, 2016

Ethnic Group	Average Income ($)	Bachelor's or Higher Education (percentage)
Asian	80,720	65.6
White	62,349	36.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	57,112	20.4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	46,882	18.7
Other race	44,798	n/a
American Indian	39,719	10.2
Black or African American	38,555	22.7
Average	57,617	36.1

Note: n/a = no number reported.

Sources: Adapted from Income Data from American Community Survey, 2016: https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2016/ and Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_104.20.asp.

There are a variety of explanations for this discrepancy. Some might argue that different ethnic groups are selecting into different types of jobs, with higher or lower pay. However, racism and discrimination are also clearly part of the story. See, for example, the average wage of workers in the same job by race. We can see that, even within the same job, there is a wide discrepancy in average wages depending on one's ethnic origin. This is particularly pronounced among higher paid workers. For example, managers who are White make, on average, about $95,096, Black managers make $71,252, and Asian managers make $105,016. This is a wide range with Asian Americans making, on average $33,764 more than Black Americans doing similar jobs. Among cashiers, the lowest paying job on this figure, there is still a difference of almost $5,000 in pay across ethnic groups. However, this difference is smaller among these lower paid jobs.

Methods in Depth: Racial Stereotypes and Voting

Research consistently shows that we all have sets of preconceived notions about different groups of people. This does not mean that everyone is a racist or sexist—it just means that we all have some unconscious biases. Knowing this, and understanding how these biases might work, is important because it can help us to better understand our own thinking and, hopefully, help to reduce the ways in

which we may, even unintentionally, discriminate or disadvantage certain groups or people.

Seth Stephens-Davidowitz (2014) is interested in racial bias. In particular, he is interested in the impact of racial stereotypes and prejudice on human behavior. However, this is a massive topic. So, to get a handle on this issue, he narrowed the scope of his study and focused on how people's ideas about race affected their vote for a presidential candidate, in this case Barack Obama.

One of the major challenges of this research is that it is quite difficult to study underlying racial attitudes. First, sometimes people do not even realize that they hold racially biased views. (See the Implicit Bias test in the gender chapter for more information on this issue.) This makes it very difficult to ask questions about racial attitudes. Second, most people tend to withhold socially unacceptable attitudes, such as negative feelings toward certain racial groups. The phenomenon in which people who are the subject of research tend to behave or answer in ways that make them appear favorably to researchers is called the **social desirability bias**. This bias could come, for example, in the form of reporting more open attitudes toward LGBTQ peoples, racial minorities, or women. Or it could be saying that you engage in activities that you think are more socially acceptable— reporting that you make more money than you actually earn or that you do not smoke even if you do. With these issues in mind, how do we know what people's attitudes really are when they may simply be reporting attitudes that they think are more socially acceptable, such as less prejudicial attitudes toward certain racial groups?

Stephens-Davidowitz uses a novel approach to studying racial attitudes that could get around both of these methodological issues. He measures the racial attitudes of an area through the percent of Google search queries that include racially charged language (such as racial slurs). He compares the percentage of searches with racially charged language with Barack Obama's vote shares, controlling for the vote share of the last Democratic candidate (John Kerry in 2004). Google data are unlikely to suffer from the issue of social desirability—we are online mostly alone at home, which makes it easier to express socially taboo thoughts. In addition, Google is a giant search engine and we can combine information from millions of searches.

This research found that the percentage of searches using racially charged language was a significant negative predictor of vote share for Obama, meaning that areas with more of these searches also had a lower percentage of people who voted for Obama. Taking into account the number of people who voted Democrat in the previous election, the researcher argues that the overall effect of racial prejudice cost Obama 4% of the national vote in 2008 and 2012. This estimate is 1.5 to 3 times larger than the estimate from surveys examining the same issue. By using this novel form of data, the researcher can navigate one of the most challenging aspects of the research process: how to deal with respondents' tendency to give socially desirable answers. Through better understanding the role of racial attitudes on behavior (such as voting; see Table 5.2), we can begin to address the ways in which prejudicial attitudes of all kinds (including those based on gender, sexuality, religion, disability, and other characteristics) have real and important implications for society.

Table 5.2 /// Race and voting in the United States	
Date	Milestone
1790	The Naturalization Act allowed White men born outside the United States to become U.S. citizens and to vote.
1869	Congress passed the 15th Amendment giving African American men the right to vote.
1887	The Dawes Act granted citizenship to Native Americans who were willing to disassociate themselves from their tribes, making them technically eligible to vote.
1896	Louisiana passed the grandfather clause to keep former slaves and their descendants from voting.
1920	Women were granted the right to vote.
1924	All Native Americans were granted citizenship and the right to vote, regardless of tribal affiliation.
1940	Only 3% of African Americans in the South were registered to vote because of Jim Crow laws (such as literacy tests and poll taxes) designed to keep Blacks from voting.
1943	Chinese immigrants were given the right to citizenship and to vote by the Magnuson Act.
1965	President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, barring barriers to political participation by racial or ethnic minorities.

Source: Adapted from the American Civil Liberties Union. https://www.aclu.org/voting-rights-act-major-dates-history.

WHERE DOES PREJUDICE COME FROM?

Prejudice and Discrimination

One of the important consequences of racial and ethnic distinctions is the rise of prejudice and discrimination. **Prejudice** is a negative attitude toward someone based solely on his membership in a group. If I do not like a person because I think he has an irritating personality, that is not prejudice. However, if I dislike someone because she is Chinese, female, or poor, that is prejudice. Prejudice can lead to **discrimination**, the negative or positive treatment of someone as a result of his belonging (or being perceived as belonging) in a particular group.

Academic interest in prejudice increased after the atrocities of World War II against certain groups, including Jewish people, people with physical disabilities, and homosexuals. In particular, the extreme implications of anti-Semitism made people around the world ask themselves, "How do people develop prejudice?" and "Who is most likely to develop prejudicial attitudes?" Theodore W. Adorno and his colleagues (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) wrote some of the earliest research on prejudice. They argued that individuals with a certain personality type, called an **authoritarian personality**, are more likely to develop prejudicial attitudes. People with this personality tend to use strict or oppressive

behavior toward subordinates. They tend to see the world in terms of good and evil and strictly follow rules and orders. Such behavior existed in the concentration camps, where many Nazi officers treated prisoners horrifically. When asked how they could commit such barbaric acts, many stated that they were simply following orders and adhering to the Nazi party's rules. Adorno and his colleagues claim that the authoritarian personality was simply more prevalent among the German population than elsewhere, such as in France or Belgium, which is why the Holocaust was centrally located in Germany.

The idea that someone's personality makes her more likely or less likely to be prejudiced is very appealing. But most sociologists would question how some countries happen to have more (or less) of a certain personality type and how the number of people with this personality trait can rise and fall over time. The World Values Survey is a large international survey that asks citizens of various countries about their lives, values, and political participation. This information allows us to compare the attitudes and behaviors of citizens around the world. Figure 5.2 lists, by country, people's responses to one question in the survey: How would you feel about having someone of a different race as a neighbor? Of the countries surveyed, Americans are relatively tolerant of diversity.

If prejudice comes from an inherent personality trait, do nearly seven times as many South Koreans as Americans have this trait? Or does something in South Korean society that does not exist in American society lead to the development of prejudice? Most sociologists would argue that prejudice, and other attitudes, arise from our social context and socialization.

Lawrence Bobo (1983) was one of the first social scientists to examine how social context shapes people's attitudes, particularly prejudice. He argues that prejudice stems from social groups' competition for valued resources or opportunities. This **realistic conflict theory** makes intuitive sense. It states that when groups want access to the same things, they compete with one another and can have increasingly negative

Figure 5.2 /// Prejudice by Country, 2010–2014[1]
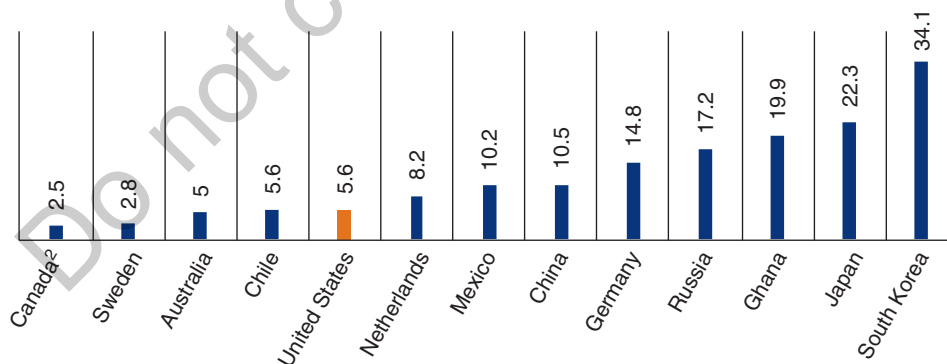
Notes: 1. Percentage of people who did not mind having a neighbor from another racial or ethnic group.

2. Canadian data are from the 2006 wave, as information was not collected in the 2010–2014 wave.

Source: Data compiled from World Values Survey data analysis tool, 2010–2014 wave. www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp.

attitudes toward one another. For example, if there are a limited number of good jobs, spaces in universities, or safe neighborhoods in which to live, groups will compete for access to them. Over time, these groups in competition see the others who are vying for similar resources in increasingly negative terms, see clearer boundaries between their own group and other groups, and view their own group as superior.

To test these ideas, Muzafer Sherif and colleagues (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) conducted the Robbers Cave experiment, which involved sending twenty-two 11- to 12-year-old boys to summer camp for 3 weeks. The boys were very similar—they were all healthy, socially well-adjusted, intelligent, White, Protestant, and middle class. One would expect these boys to get along well, since their similarities meant that there was no obvious basis for prejudicial attitudes.

In the first week of camp, the boys were randomly divided into two groups—the Rattlers and the Eagles. The groups lived in cabins far apart and did not interact with each other. Each group lived and played together for the week and did regular, fun camp activities: The boys swam and hiked and generally enjoyed their camp experience. Just like any summer camp, the kids in each group formed friendships with one another and developed a group identity.

The second week, the Rattlers and Eagles were introduced to one another. The boys from each group were set to participate in a series of competitions, including tug-of-war and capture-the-flag, to receive a trophy and prizes that the boys strongly desired. These competitions led to severe tensions between the groups. First, the groups exchanged verbal taunts (calling boys in the other group stinkers and braggers—some pretty serious taunts for 1961!). Then, the boys became more aggressive: The Eagles ransacked the Rattlers' cabin; the Rattlers responded by burning the Eagles' flag. The boys developed increasingly negative attitudes toward those in the other group. Within a week two groups of boys who were almost the same on most dimensions—gender, race, religion, class—and who had never previously met had developed intense animosity and prejudice toward one another. Just as Bobo (1983) had predicted, competition over resources led them to develop prejudice.

After Sherif had created these tensions, he wanted to see how prejudice could be reduced. One popular theory at the time was **contact theory** (Allport, 1954). This theory argues that increasing contact between antagonistic groups will lead to a growing recognition of similarities and will alter stereotypes about the other group, thereby reducing prejudice. To test this theory, Sherif created situations where both groups would encounter one another. For example, the Rattlers and the Eagles started eating in the cafeteria at the same time. However, instead of leading to more positive attitudes between the groups, this change was just an opportunity for each group to express dislike for the other group. The groups sat separately (think of cliques in your high school cafeteria) and started a food fight. More contact between the groups was obviously not enough to reduce the conflict.

Sherif then tried to encourage cooperation between the groups. He created situations where the two groups needed to work together for what he called superordinate goals, things that both groups desired but neither could accomplish alone. For example, the boys all wanted a movie night but had to pool their money to rent the movie. Sherif also intentionally broke the pipe that pumped water into the camp, and all the boys had to cooperate in order to fix it. It was only when the boys worked together to achieve these shared goals that their conflict and prejudice diminished. Look at Figures 5.3 and 5.4 to see how cooperation created more positive attitudes and ties between the groups.

Figure 5.3 /// Percent of Boys Who Had Negative Perceptions of All Members of the Other Group
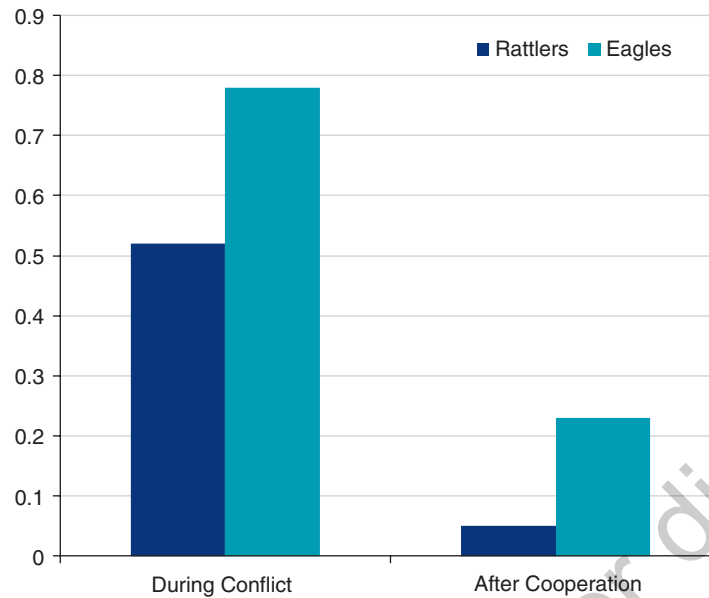
Source: Sherif, M., O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. Hood, and C. W. Sherif. 1961. *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment.* Norman, OK: University Book Exchange.

Figure 5.4 /// Percent of Boys Who Listed a Boy in the Other Cabin as Their Best Friend
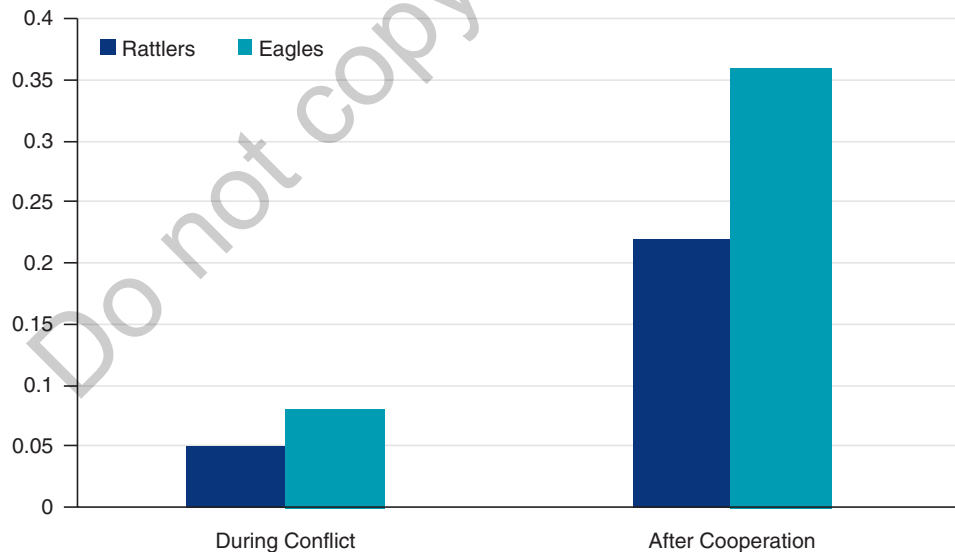
Source: Sherif, M., O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. Hood, and C. W. Sherif. 1961. *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment.* Norman, OK: University Book Exchange.

What does this experiment tell us about how prejudice arises between groups and how we can reduce it? How can we apply these lessons to the real world? First, we see that the social context is very important for creating and reducing prejudice. It was not simply that some boys were more likely to be prejudiced than others, but rather that all boys were more likely to develop prejudicial attitudes in situations of conflict and to reduce those attitudes in situations that required cooperation. This finding sheds light on prejudice in the real world—it can be increased or reduced by changing elements of the social context.

Second, this study lends some support for the realistic conflict theory. When the boys were competing for something that both groups wanted, there were more conflicts and prejudicial attitudes between the groups. This situation is similar to the real world, where ethnic, religious, gender, or other groups often compete for jobs, access to education, or other benefits.

Third, contact between groups is often not enough to reduce conflict or prejudice. Later research indicates that contact between groups reduces prejudice only when the groups are roughly equal in status, the contact is informal, and the contact permits the disconfirmation of stereotypes. It is also important that the contact involve cooperation, which is the final lesson of this study. Cooperating for the achievement of superordinate goals can lead to increased tolerance and positive attitudes among different groups in society. Think about how these lessons could apply to real-world conflicts between groups such as the Israelis and Palestinians. Can we use experiments such as Sherif's to understand, and potentially alleviate, conflict between groups? If so, how?

W. E. B. Du Bois

W. E. B. Du Bois was a critical figure in the founding of sociology, particularly in the United States. He was born in Massachusetts and was a sociologist, civil rights activist, and author. He attended the University of Berlin and then Harvard University, where he was the first African American to earn a doctorate from the university. He then went on to be a professor of history, sociology, and economics at Atlanta University. Du Bois was prolific over his career and wrote 23 nonfiction books, three autobiographies, and five novels, and edited *The Crisis* (the NAACP's magazine) from 1910 to 1933.

One of Du Bois's most influential books was *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903), which is a collection of 14 essays. This book opens with the following line: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (1903, 1). This central thesis was the basis of much of his life's work, which highlighted the way that racial inequality and injustice prevail in American social and political life. This book also highlights what Du Bois referred to as a double consciousness. A double consciousness is when a person has an identity that feels divided into many parts, which makes it difficult for them to feel that they have a unified sense of self. Du Bois argued that this was a problem for many African Americans when trying to unify the identities of being Black and American. Du Bois argues that this unique identity could be either a handicap, as it had been in the past, or a strength, as it could be in the future. In fact, his work introduces the concept of a hyphenated identity— something that is much discussed in the modern and diverse era, particularly in relation to ideas about **multiculturalism.** Du Bois argues, "Henceforth, the destiny

of the race could be conceived as leading neither to assimilation nor separatism but to proud, enduring hyphenation" (in Lewis, 1993, pp. 194–195).

One of Du Bois's major contributions was to highlight the importance of studying and understanding the lives and experiences of Blacks in the United States. This was the core of *The Philadelphia Negro* (Du Bois, 1899), an in-depth sociological study of the African American community in Philadelphia based on fieldwork he conducted in 1986–1987. This book was the first scientific study of African Americans and a major early work of American sociology. He also published *The Negro* (1915), a general history of Black Americans, the first of its kind in English. Both books shed light on the experiences of Blacks in the United States and highlight the importance of studying racial inequality.

W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the founders of sociology, used sociological tools to show how society works and to fight racism.

Du Bois's work was not appreciated at the time by the White sociological or larger academic community. According to Arthur Spingarn, a White scholar who was Du Bois's contemporary, Du Bois spent his time "battering his life out against ignorance, bigotry, intolerance, and slothfulness, projecting ideas nobody but he understands, and raising hopes for change which may be comprehended in a hundred years" (Spingarn, quoted by Lewis, 1993, 645). Du Bois is now recognized for his critical importance to the rise of sociology in the United States (Morris, 2015). In fact, the highest award given out by the American Sociological Association is now called the W. E. B. Du Bois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award.

Du Bois was a pioneer both within and outside academia. He engaged in the sociological study of Blacks in the United States and the major social issues of racism and discrimination, but he also focused his work on creating social change outside of the academy, through social movements and politics. He was a critical figure in the civil rights movement and one of the founders of the NAACP. He was actively involved in the antiwar movement, in support of women's rights, and in labor issues.

White Privilege

One of the interesting challenges in studying inequality—be it racial, ethnic, class, gender, or other—is that it requires us to examine the disadvantages of various groups in society. This task is difficult because it goes against our society's dominant ideology that we live in a meritocracy, where the smartest and hardest-working people are those who get ahead. How do we reconcile this view with the reality that, based on characteristics individuals do not control (social class, race, gender), some groups have more advantages than others?

Another reason that it is challenging to think about inequality is that it forces us to consider not only the disadvantages that some groups face but also the advantages that accrue to other groups. For example, we cannot think about the disadvantages to the poor without thinking of the advantages our society gives to the rich, the disadvantages to racialized people without thinking of the advantages given to Whites, or the disadvantages given to gays and lesbians without thinking of the advantages given to heterosexuals.

Peggy McIntosh (1988) wrote a fascinating article in which she challenged herself to not only think about the disadvantages that racialized minorities face but also to enumerate the advantages that she, as a White American, experiences in her daily life. She talks about these advantages of White privilege as an **invisible knapsack**—"an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1). Here are some examples of the privileges she experiences:

- I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

- I can be pretty sure that my neighbors will be neutral or pleasant to me.

- I can turn on the TV or open a paper and see people of my race widely represented.

- When I am told about our national heritage or about civilization, I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

- I can go to a shop and find the music of my race, into a supermarket and find my staple foods, into a salon and find someone who can cut my hair.

- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

- I am never asked to speak for all people of my race.

- I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, cards, dolls, and toys featuring people of my race.

- I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers suspect I got it because of my race.

- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh tone and have them more or less match my skin (2–3).

With this list in mind, what are the potential problems of ignoring White privilege? How is White privilege similar to male privilege, heterosexual privilege, or middle-class privilege? How is it different?

puhhha/Shutterstock.com

ColorPop cosmetics was recently criticized for releasing a line of makeup where the lighter shades are named "illuminati" and "castle" while the darker shades have names such as "yikes" and "typo." After the outcry from consumers, the company did change the names of the darker shades. However, this naming highlights the often-unexamined messages about the desirability of different racial and ethnic traits in our society.
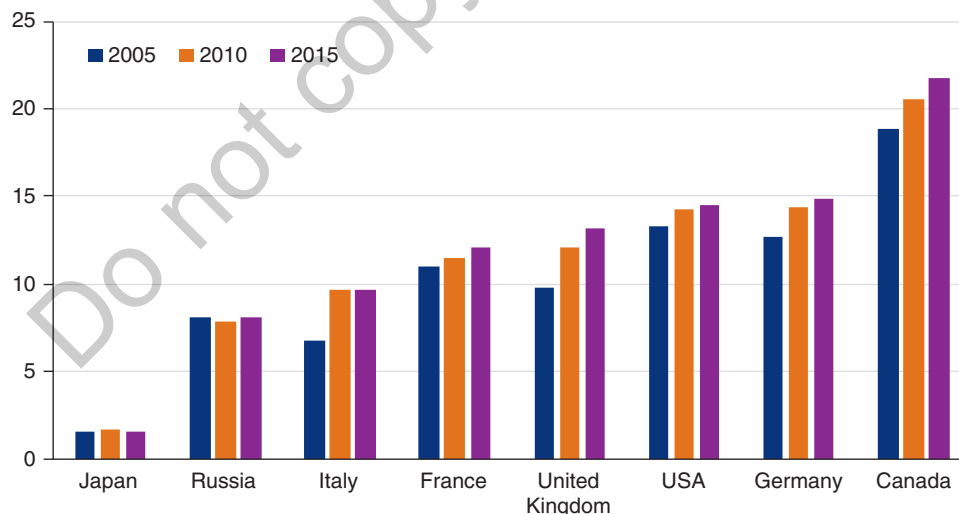
IMMIGRATION

The movement of people around the world is central to the process of globalization (see Chapter 12). Although such movement has occurred throughout history, long-distance human migration for permanent settlement has become increasingly common over the past century. The result is a growing intermingling of the world's people, although not all countries receive or welcome migrants to the same degree.

The United States has one of the highest per capita **immigration** rates in the world, which makes our population very ethnically and culturally diverse. More than 13% of the United States' population, or 43.2 million people, were born outside the United States in 2015 (see Figure 5.5). In contrast, some countries have extremely low foreign-born populations. Only 1.6% of the population of Japan, for example, was born outside that country. The Immigration and Naturalization Act governs immigration policy in the United States. It bases immigration decisions on four main principles: reuniting families, admitting immigrants with skills that are valuable to the U.S. economy, protecting refugees, and promoting diversity.

In 2016 the United States admitted 1.18 million legal immigrants. Of this group, 20% were family sponsored, 47% were the immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, 12% were employment-based preferences, 4% were part of the Diversity Immigrant Visa program, and 13% were refugees and asylum seekers (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016). The remaining 4% came with various additional specialized programs. Employment-based immigration is based on more than 20 types of visas that are issued for temporary nonimmigrant workers, for example those with extraordinary ability, those who are highly skilled, or diplomatic employees. The Diversity Visa program was created by the Immigration Act of 1990 and works to channel immigrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United

Figure 5.5 /// Percent Foreign Born by Country, 2005–2015

Source: "Mapped: Which country has the most immigrants?" *The Guardian*.

States: Each year 55,000 visas are allocated randomly to nations from countries that have sent fewer than 50,000 immigrants to the United States in the previous 5 years. Each of these different channels of immigration brings different kinds of people with diverse sets of skills and ties to the United States. The decisions made about who to admit and under what conditions are political and have important implications for shaping the character and diversity of the United States. These decisions are related to larger questions about the identity of the United States as a nation and what principles Americans value.

READING: FROM IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF NATIONALISM

By Benedict Anderson

A **nation** is a group of people united by a common fate and with a shared national character. Nations are often based on a shared language, ethnicity, and history (Bauer, 1907 in Davis, 1967, 150). A **nation-state** is a group of people who share a physical territory and government, although they may not share an ethnicity, language, or history. The United Sates is a nation-state. It has a common territory made up of a diverse set of peoples from a variety of language, cultural, and ethnic groups. Benedict Anderson argues that nations are based on **imagined communities** because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." This idea highlights the socially constructed aspect of nations.

> In an anthropological spirit, . . . I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.
>
> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.[1] Renan referred to this imagining in his suavely back-handed way when he wrote that "Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses."[2] With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist."[3] The drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretenses that he assimilates "invention" to "fabrication" and "falsity," rather than to "imagining" and "creation." In this way he implies that "true" communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen, but these ties were

once imagined particularistically—as indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship. Until quite recently, the Javanese language had no word meaning the abstraction "society." We may today think of the French aristocracy of the *ancien régime* as a class; but surely it was imagined this way only very late.[4] To the question "Who is the Comte de X?" the normal answer would have been, not "a member of the aristocracy," but "the lord of X," "the uncle of the Baronne de Y," or "a client of the Duc de Z."

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.

It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living *pluralism* of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.

Finally, it is imagined as a *community,* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism.

Notes

1. Cf. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States,* p. 5: "All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one." We may translate "consider themselves" as "imagine themselves."

2. Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" in *Oeuvres Completes,* 1, p. 892. He adds: "tout citoyen français doit avoir oublié la Saint-Barthelemy,

les massacres du Midi an XIIIe siècle. Il n'y a pas en France dix familles qui puissent fournir la preuve d'une origine franque . . . "

3. Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change,* p. 169. Emphasis added.

4. Hobsbawm, for example, "fixes" it by saying that in 1789 it numbered about 400,000 in a population of 23,000,000. (See his *The Age of Revolution,* p. 78). But would this statistical picture of the noblesse have been imaginable under the *ancien régime?*

Reading Questions

1. What four features does Anderson use to describe nations?

2. How are nations imagined? Who imagines them? How does the idea of imagined communities relate to the theory of social construction?

3. Anderson quotes Ernest Gellner's statement that nationalism "invents nations where they do not exist." What is nationalism and how does it invent nations?
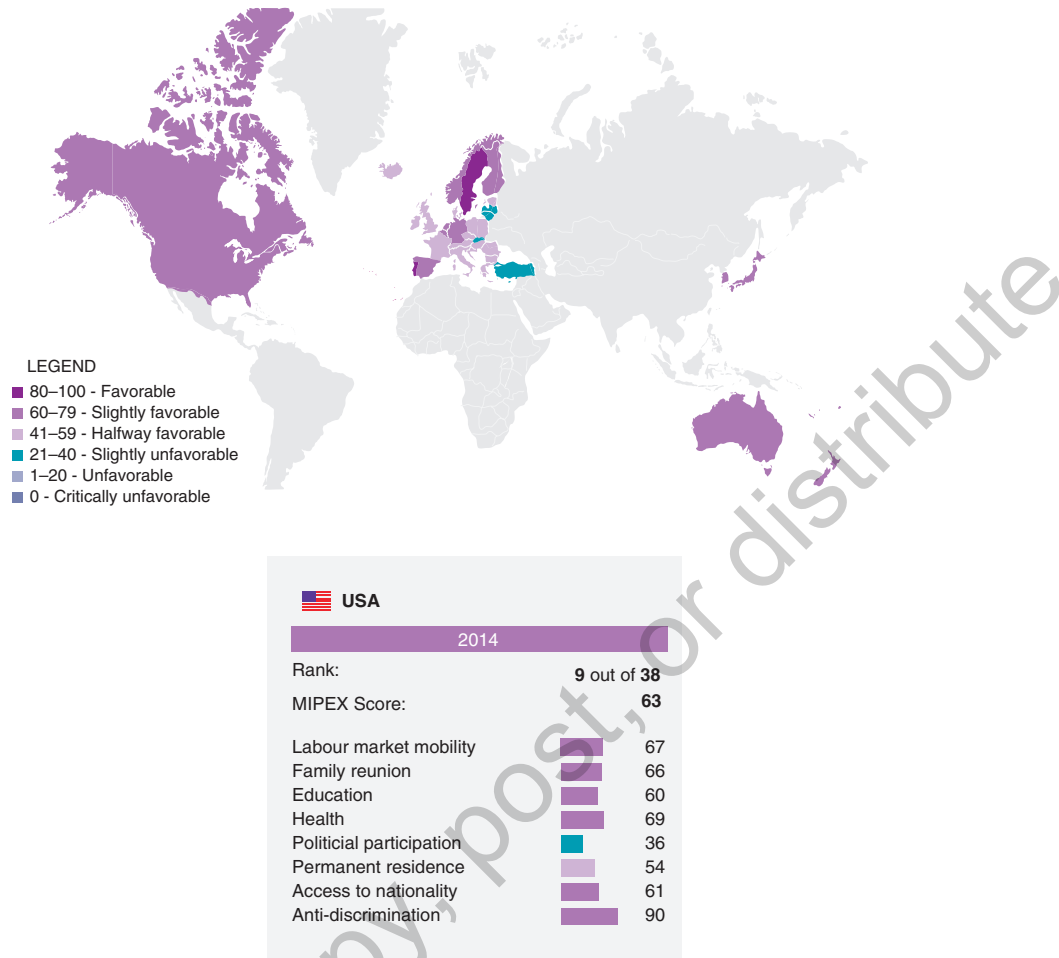
How Well Does the United States Integrate Immigrants?

Coming to a new country is challenging. Individuals need to find jobs or enter school, make friends and social connections, learn about how to participate in the political system and how to access social services. The Migrant Integration Policy Index brings together data from countries around the world and measures how well they are doing at integrating newcomers along eight dimensions: labor market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, access to permanent residency, access to citizenship, and protection from discrimination. The United States does fairly well on this index, ranking 9th out of the 38 countries measured (see Figure 5.6). Finland, Portugal, and Sweden are among the countries that score higher than the United States on this index (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

There are some dimensions on which the United States is very successful at integrating newcomers. For example, the United States ranks second among all countries in our antidiscrimination protections for immigrants. People in the United States, particularly those in California, enjoy among the strongest laws in the world protecting them from discrimination. However, the U.S. ranks quite low on political participation for newcomers (22 out of 38). This is, in part, because we do not allow even long-time permanent residents voting rights. In many European countries long-time permanent residents can vote in local or city elections, giving them more access to the political system. We also rank very low on the ability of newcomers to become permanent residents (25 out of 38). Many immigrants have no path to permanent status and some eligible immigrants have second-class status and fewer rights than U.S. citizens.

Immigrants are a vital and important part of American society. These types of indexes highlight the challenges that immigrants face and the many ways that countries can assist immigrants in integrating into a new country.

LEGEND
- ■ 80–100 - Favorable
- ■ 60–79 - Slightly favorable
- ■ 41–59 - Halfway favorable
- ■ 21–40 - Slightly unfavorable
- ■ 1–20 - Unfavorable
- ■ 0 - Critically unfavorable

🇺🇸 **USA**

2014	
Rank:	**9** out of **38**
MIPEX Score:	**63**
Labour market mobility	67
Family reunion	66
Education	60
Health	69
Politicial participation	36
Permanent residence	54
Access to nationality	61
Anti-discrimination	90

Source: Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015. http://www.mipex.eu/canada.

Using Your Sociological Imagination

American Civics Test for Citizenship

One of the last steps when adult immigrants become an American citizen is taking a test called the Civics Test, which is a portion of the overall naturalization test. Applicants answer questions orally in English during an interview with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officer. An applicant must answer six out of the ten questions correctly in order to pass the Civics Test. These questions focus on American government (principles of American democracy, systems of government, rights and responsibilities), American history (the colonial period and independence, the 1800s, recent American history) and integrated civics (geography, symbols, and holidays).

(Continued)

(Continued)

Go to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (https://my.uscis.gov/prep/test/civics) and do a practice test. Remember that if you were really taking this test you would not have multiple choice answers to select from.

After you have completed the test, answer the following questions:

1. How did you do on this test? Where did you learn the information covered?

2. What kinds of questions and topics are included in the test? How do they emphasize certain ways that the American government imagines the nation of the United States of America? What, if any, questions would you remove from the test?

3. What other types of questions might you add to the test if you were creating it? What other things do you think that people should know before becoming an American citizen?

/// SUMMARY

We began this chapter by examining the differences between race and ethnicity. While race is based on perceived physical traits, ethnicity is based on cultural differences between people. The theory of social construction, introduced by Berger and Luckmann, can help us to understand how we create racial and ethnic categories in our society. The Thomas principle shows how these categories, despite being socially constructed, can have real consequences for individuals. Both theories can be applied to many concepts—such as gender, social class, and sexuality—that we will learn about throughout this book. Through Sherif's experiment we examined how prejudice and discrimination arise in society and how they can be reduced. We also talked about immigration to the United States and concluded by examining the idea of the United States of America as an imagined community.

/// KEY TERMS

authoritarian personality 162

census 150

contact theory 164

discrimination 162

essentialism 148

ethnicity 148

imagined communities 170

immigration 169

invisible knapsack 168

Islamophobia 159

multiculturalism 166

nation 170

nation-state 170

prejudice 162

race 148

racism 158

realistic conflict theory 163

social desirability bias 161

symbolic ethnicity 151

Thomas principle 158

/// FOR FURTHER READING

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