

Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination

Third Edition

Mary E. Kite and Bernard E. Whitley, Jr.



Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination

Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination provides a comprehensive and compelling overview of what psychological theory and research have to say about the nature, causes, and reduction of prejudice and discrimination. It balances a detailed discussion of theories and selected research with applied examples that ensure the material is relevant to students. Newly revised and updated, this edition addresses several interlocking themes, such as research methods, the development of prejudice in children, the relationship between prejudice and discrimination, and discrimination in the workplace, which are developed in greater detail than in other textbooks.

The first theme introduced is the nature of prejudice and discrimination, which is followed by a discussion of research methods. Next comes the psychological underpinnings of prejudice: the nature of stereotypes, the conditions under which stereotypes influence responses to other people, contemporary theories of prejudice, and how values and belief systems are related to prejudice. Explored next are the development of prejudice in children and the social context of prejudice. The theme of discrimination is developed via discussions of the nature of discrimination, the experience of discrimination, and specific forms of discrimination, including gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, and appearance. The concluding theme is the reduction of prejudice.

An ideal core text for junior and senior college students who have had a course in introductory psychology, it is written in a style that is accessible to students in other fields, including education, social work, business, communication studies, ethnic studies, and other disciplines. In addition to courses on prejudice and discrimination, this book can be adapted for courses that cover topics in racism and diversity.

Mary E. Kite is Professor of Psychological Science at Ball State University. Her research focuses on stereotyping and prejudice toward women, gays, lesbians, and older adults. In 2014, she received the Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award from the American Psychological Foundation.

Bernard E. Whitley, Jr. is Professor Emeritus of Psychological Science at Ball State University. His research focus is on the role of ideological variables in prejudice.

Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination is a truly exceptional textbook. Writing in a lucid and engaging style, Mary Kite and Bernard Whitley present relevant theories, research findings, and methods of investigation. Now in its 3rd edition, this book provides a balanced and intelligent overview of an area of research that engages a wide range of contemporary social issues.

–Alice Eagly, James Padilla Chair of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Psychology,
Faculty Fellow of Institute for Policy Research, and Professor of
Management & Organizations, Northwestern University, USA

There is no better resource on the social psychology of prejudice for its comprehensiveness and accessibility. My copies of *Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination* are among the most worn books on my shelf.

–PJ Henry, Associate Professor of Psychology, NYU Abu Dhabi, UAE

Few topics are more important in today's world than understanding prejudice and discrimination. This book is probably the best I've read on the subject. The authors have succeeded in bringing together the main scientific evidence in a coherent and fruitful manner. By reading *Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*, students young and old will immediately connect with all the important theories and applications.

–Serge Guimond, Professor of Psychology and Research Director, Laboratoire
CNRS de Psychologie Sociale et Cognitive (LAPSCO),
Université Blaise Pascal, France

This is a comprehensive and engaging text for students in psychology and other disciplines who are interested in understanding the roots and consequences of prejudice and discrimination, and how we might go about combatting them. The authors strike a perfect balance between theory and application, with salient, up-to-date examples. It is altogether an informative and enjoyable read.

–Victoria M. Esses, Professor of Psychology, University of Western Ontario; Director,
Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations; Principal Investigator,
Pathways to Prosperity Partnership, Canada

This excellent book provides both an integrative overview and plenty of historical and contemporary evidence for every sphere of prejudice and discrimination. It offers a comprehensive grounding in the

area as a whole, together with detailed reviews and summaries of the latest thinking in each area of prejudice—a book to keep by my desk that my students and I will consult regularly.

–Dominic Abrams, Professor of Social Psychology and Director of the
Centre for the Study of Group Processes, University of Kent, UK

Kite and Whitley are the perfect duo to write an accessible and well-grounded text on the psychology of prejudice and discrimination because they are accomplished experts on the topic and outstanding teachers and scholars. A must-read for anyone interested in reducing prejudice and discrimination (which should be all of us).

–Janice D. Yoder, Research Professor, College of Public Health, Kent State University, USA

This is an admirably comprehensive text that would be an excellent choice for an undergraduate course in the social psychology of prejudice and discrimination. It is clearly written and well-illustrated with examples and cases, and has excellent instructor resources.

–John Duckitt, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Auckland, New Zealand

It is a great pleasure to see an updated 3rd edition of *Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*! That the text covers so much and is engaging, readable, and memorable for students makes this the standard against which others must be judged. The attention to research findings and research methods makes this both an advanced text and a text that will result in advanced students. This is a likeable book, clear, precise, broad in coverage, and wise in its conclusions.

–Chris Crandall, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Kansas, USA

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Third Edition

Mary E. Kite
Bernard E. Whitley, Jr.

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PREFACE

Throughout our academic careers, we have had a keen interest in the study of stereotyping and prejudice. It seemed natural, then, that we should teach our department's course on prejudice and discrimination. When we set out to do so for the first time, however, we ran into a surprise: Although there is a vast literature on the topic, there were very few textbooks. In addition, we found that none of those books struck the balance between empirical rigor and readability that we were looking for. Therefore, as so many before us have done, we decided to write our own book; the result is before you. Our goal in writing this book is to provide students with an overview of what psychological theory and research have to say about the nature, causes, and amelioration of prejudice and discrimination. As a result, the book includes somewhat more detailed discussions of theories and selected research studies than do most other textbooks on the topic. At the same time, we have tried to keep our presentation at a level that is accessible to students whose only previous exposure to psychological theory and research has been in an introductory-level course. Feedback from our reviewers and from students in our courses suggests that we have achieved that aim.

WHAT'S OUR BOOK LIKE?

Although our book covers the standard topics included in textbooks on prejudice, we also set the goal of covering what we thought were important topics that are not included in most other textbooks on this topic. Thus, because of our emphasis on theory and research, we have included a chapter on the research methods psychologists use to study prejudice and discrimination and how research methodology influences the conclusions drawn about the issues studied. Similarly, we believe it is important to address how prejudice develops in children; therefore, we have included a chapter on that topic. Finally, because psychologists have long understood that attitudes are poor predictors of behavior, we included a chapter that discusses the nature of discrimination and its relation to prejudice. Other topics distinctive to our book include hate group membership, hate crime perpetrators, and prejudice and discrimination in organizations.

Although we have not formally divided the book into parts, the sequence of the chapters represents a progression across several themes. First, we introduce the nature of prejudice and discrimination (including a brief history of research on the topic), followed by our chapter on research methods. The next several chapters address the psychological underpinnings of prejudice: the nature of stereotypes; the conditions under which stereotypes influence responses to other people; contemporary theories of prejudice; individual difference variables related to prejudice, such as values and emotions; the development of prejudice

in children; and the social context of prejudice. The following two chapters focus on the nature of discrimination and its effects on those who experience it. Two chapters examine specific forms of prejudice and discrimination: Chapter 11 covers gender and sexual orientation and Chapter 12 covers age, ability, and appearance. We conclude with a chapter on prejudice reduction. We realize that every instructor has her or his own outline for how a course should be organized, so we have tried to make each chapter as independent of the others as possible to allow instructors to assign them in the order that best fits their personal goals for the course.

We have written the book for use by junior and senior college students who have had a course in introductory psychology. Although the book takes a psychological approach to the issues of prejudice and discrimination, we have intentionally written in a style that is accessible to students in other fields as well. We did so because we believe that an important educational goal for all students is the understanding of prejudice and discrimination and the processes by which they operate. Therefore, the book is appropriate for courses in psychology but also for courses in areas such as education, social work, business, communication studies, ethnic studies, and other disciplines. Also, in addition to courses on prejudice and discrimination, the book could be used in courses that cover topics such as racism and diversity.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE THIRD EDITION?

The research and theoretical literatures on prejudice and discrimination have advanced dramatically even in the few years that have passed since the second edition of this book was published. Those advances have led us to make revisions throughout the book; however, to keep the book a manageable size, we have also reorganized and trimmed material throughout. For example, we integrated the material that was formerly in the motivation and emotions chapter into the chapters on individual differences (which now includes emotions) and discrimination (which now includes motivation to control prejudice). We have also made other minor adjustments in the placement of material; for example, by consolidating some of the information in the chapters on stereotyping to reduce redundancy and by moving information on reducing prejudice in children to the chapter on children. We have also incorporated new research on all the topics covered in the book, adding at least ten new references per chapter. Although most of the research on this topic is conducted in North America and Western Europe, we have redoubled our efforts to include research on international populations and research that addresses the cross-cultural implications of prejudice and discrimination. We also include material on topics that have recently been brought to the forefront, such as anti-immigrant discrimination, privilege and equality framing, microaggressions, and transgender issues. Overall, the number of pages remains about the same as previous editions.

CONTINUING FEATURES

As in the earlier editions, each chapter begins with a brief outline to provide students with a cognitive map of its contents, and ends with a summary to provide closure. Within each chapter, key terms are shown in **bold** face; these terms are included in the glossary. Each chapter also includes boxes that provide supplemental information, additional examples, or other perspectives on issues. A set of questions concludes

each chapter. Each set includes factual review questions, designed to integrate topics within the chapter; reflective questions, designed to encourage students to think about how the chapter's contents are relevant to their lives; and more philosophical questions designed to highlight controversies and help students clarify their positions on those issues. Each chapter also has a set of suggested readings that delve further into the topics covered in the chapter.

To assist instructors in course development, we have written an Instructor's Manual (available on our book's website) that provides a list of resources, including websites and handbooks of course-related activities. For each individual chapter, we provide suggested classroom activities and assignments. We also have created a test bank that includes at least 50 multiple-choice questions for each chapter and have provided at least 20 short-answer/essay questions for each chapter. Please contact your local Taylor & Francis representative to obtain access to the electronic Instructor's Manual and Test Bank.

We welcome any suggestions you have for improving this book. Please send electronic mail to Mary Kite at mkite@bsu.edu or Bernard Whitley at bwhitley@bsu.edu.

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A number of people were kind enough to read draft chapters and suggest improvement on the first and second editions, including: Jonathan Amsbary, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Bettina Cassad, University of Missouri-St. Louis; Patricia Cutspec, East Tennessee State University; Jennifer Dale, Community College Aurora; Michael Demson, SUNY Broome Community College; Paula Haug, Folsom Lake College; Gina Hoover, Ohio State University; Michael Hulsizer, Webster University; Jonathan Iuzzini, Hobart and William Smith Colleges; Alisha Janowsky, University of Central Florida; Deana Julka, University of Portland; Butch Owens, Navarro College; Gayle Pesavento, John A. Logan College; Valerie Roberts, College of the Siskiyous; Diana Sims, Brown College; Aaron Wichman, Western Kentucky University; and William Wooten, University of Central Florida.

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Introducing the Concepts of Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

—Martin Luther King Jr. (August 28, 1963)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Race and Culture
- Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
- The Relationships Among Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination
- Theories of Prejudice and Discrimination
- Where Do We Go From Here?
- Summary
- Suggested Readings
- Key Terms
- Questions for Review and Discussion

Looking back over the more than 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his classic “I Have a Dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, it is easy to see the extent to which race relations have improved in the United States. The Jim Crow laws that limited the rights of minority groups have been dismantled and overt racial segregation, such as in restaurants and on public transportation, is a thing of the past, and today, it is difficult to believe there was a time when White lynching of Blacks took place without serious investigation, let alone punishment. Yet, in this new millennium, vivid examples demonstrate that Martin Luther King’s dream has not been fully realized.

Evidence that racial tensions persist in the United States are illustrated by what has come to be called the “Jena 6” case. The case began with a question asked at a school assembly at Jena High School in Louisiana: Could Black students sit under an oak tree then known as the “white tree” (Coll, 2007)? The principal said yes but, showing stark disagreement, White students hung nooses from the tree’s branches. To them, the tree was, indeed, off limits to Blacks. The school board deemed hanging nooses “a prank” and suspended the White students from school; no criminal charges were brought. Months

of high emotions led to a series of fights between Black and White students. At least one incident led to battery charges against a White youth who beat a Black youth at a party; the White student received probation. The violence culminated with six Black students assaulting a White student to the point of his being knocked unconscious (Witt, 2007). Within hours, all six Blacks were charged with attempted murder—a felony. To many, the authorities’ responses to the separate incidents represented typical race-based inequities, a belief supported by national data. In Box 1.1, we describe social science research on these inequities and discuss recent protests held in response to them.

Following the charges against the “Jena 6” Black students, thousands of people participated in protests across the United States to express their outrage over this inequity in the administration of justice. A few people, apparently supporting the Whites’ “right” to segregate “their” tree, carried out a spate of copy-cat incidents, many involving nooses being left at schools and workplaces (Duster, 2007). From a psychological perspective, this case provides one of many possible illustrations of how racial and ethnic tensions can result in bias against stigmatized groups, not only in the United States but in any part of the world. As a first step toward understanding those psychological processes, we provide an overview of the intersection between race and culture, including a discussion of group privilege. We then review the terminology used in the study of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination and distinguish between several “isms,” such as racism, classism, and heterosexism. In the next section of the chapter, we examine the history of research on prejudice and discrimination and consider the theoretical frameworks that guide researchers. The chapter concludes with an overview of the rest of the book.

Box 1.1

Responding to Racial Injustice: Black Lives Matter

On May 4, 1970, four students engaged in a nonviolent protest against the war in Vietnam were killed by National Guardsmen on the campus of Kent State University. Ten days later, police killed two students and wounded 12 others on another college campus. The first event is well known, as is the iconic photograph of a woman leaning over the body of a fellow student moments after he had been shot. The second event, which occurred on the campus of Jackson State University, received far less media coverage and far fewer people today have heard of that event. Why? Was it because Jackson State was and is a predominantly Black university, whereas Kent State was and is predominantly White (Banks, 2015)? Although this question is difficult to answer, it is certain that recent events surrounding the deaths of young Black men at the hands of the police have *not* gone unnoticed. As Leonard Pitts (2015), a columnist for the *Miami Herald*, noted:

It has reached a point where you can’t keep the atrocities straight without a score card. Besides [Freddie] Gray [a 25-year-old African American man who suffered fatal injuries while in police custody], we’ve got Eric Harris, an unarmed black man shot in Tulsa, who cried that he was losing his breath . . . We’ve got Levar Jones, a black man shot by a state trooper in South Carolina while complying with the trooper’s commands. We’ve got Oscar Grant [fatally shot by police on the Bay Area

Transit System in San Francisco], Sean Bell [who, along with two friends who were wounded but did not die, was shot 50 times by police in Queens, New York], Eric Garner [who died from a chokehold administered by four New York City police]. We've got video of a black man named Walter Scott, wanted for a traffic violation and back child support, running from a police officer and being shot to death. We've got video of a white man named Michael Wilcox, wanted for murder, running toward a police officer, threatening him, daring him to shoot, refusing to remove his hands from his pockets, yet somehow not being shot.

These events and others, including the August 9, 2014, shooting of Michael Brown, an African American man, by a White police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, have led to nationwide protests and to the Black Lives Matter movement, which addresses what its organizers see as police brutality against African Americans in the United States. Journalist Jay Kang (2015) calls it "the most formidable American protest movement of the 21st century to date," stating that the movement marries:

the strengths of social media—the swift, morally blunt consensus that can be created by hashtags; the personal connection that a charismatic online persona can make with followers; the broad networks that allow for the easy distribution of documentary photos and videos—with an effort to quickly mobilize protests in each new city where a police shooting occurs.

(para. 7)

Social science research clearly documents that African Americans perceive a high level of injustice in their interactions with police. For example, Black drivers (67 percent) are less likely than White drivers (84 percent) to report that there was a legitimate reason for their being pulled over (Langton & Durose, 2013). Moreover, when asked about their general experiences with the police, African Americans report greater feelings of threat than Whites do (Najdowski, Bottoms, & Goff, 2015, Study 1) and when asked to imagine they were in a specific situation where a police officer was carefully watching them, Black men were more likely than White men to anticipate being anxious and to expect that the officer would accuse them of wrongdoing (Najdowski et al., 2015, Study 2). These feelings may be justified: Researchers also have uncovered clear evidence of racial disparities in law enforcement. For example, Blacks comprise about 13 percent of the U.S. population, but account for 38 percent of arrests for violent crime and 35 percent of arrests for drug violations (Newman, 2007). In addition, punishments are harsher for Blacks than for Whites and a higher percentage of the African American population is in jail (Free, 2002).

However, as Phillip Goff and Kimberly Kahn (2012) note, answering the question of whether these disparities stem from police discrimination is surprisingly difficult given the available data. That is, racial disparities in the criminal justice system may be due to police officer bias, but may also emerge because other social factors disproportionately affect minorities, such as high unemployment rates and a lack of affordable housing. People who experience these inequalities may see criminal activity as the only way to get the money they need for food and shelter. Hence, "it

(continued)

(continued)

would be naïve to imagine that officers and departmental policies play no role in the creation of racial disparities [but these inequities may also be] a symptom of racial discrimination in other domains" (Goff & Kahn, 2012, p. 184). The good news is research is under way that attempts to distinguish between these two possibilities.

As we will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, there is strong evidence that cultural stereotypes, including beliefs linking Blacks to criminality, result in both conscious and unconscious bias against Black men (Najdowski, 2014). The Black Lives Matter movement has ignited a national conversation about these issues and this conversation has been and will continue to be informed by social science research on the oppression of ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system.

RACE AND CULTURE

Psychological research shows that race, gender, and age are primary categories for organizing information about other people and that these characteristics are likely to be the first pieces of information people notice about others (Schneider, 2004). People do this automatically (that is, without thinking about it) and often subsequently make assumptions on the basis of that quick reading. Historian Ronald Takaki (1993) provides one story of how this process works, writing:

I had flown from San Francisco to Norfolk [Virginia] and was riding in a taxi to my hotel . . . The rearview mirror reflected [the driver,] a white man in his forties. "How long have you been in this country?" he asked. "All my life," I replied, wincing. "I was born in the United States." . . . He remarked, "I was wondering because your English is excellent!" Then, as I had many times before, I explained: "My grandfather came here from Japan in the 1880s. My family has been here, in America, for over a hundred years." He glanced at me in the mirror. Somehow I did not look "American" to him; my eyes and complexion looked foreign.

(p. 1)

Takaki's experience illustrates how our snap judgments can lead to stereotypic assumptions. However, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, people can and do think past such initial stereotypic judgments under some circumstances. Unfortunately, this does not always happen; consequently, prejudice and discrimination based solely on group membership are alive and well:

In 1988, in Indianapolis [Indiana], state authorities established a residential treatment center for convicted child molesters in an all-white neighborhood. From the center's opening until mid-1991—a period during which all of the residents of the center were white—neighbors voiced no objection. In June, 1991, however, authorities converted the center into a shelter for approximately forty homeless veterans, twenty-five of whom were black. Soon thereafter trouble erupted as a group of

whites . . . loudly proclaimed their opposition to the encroachment of “niggers” and burned a cross and vandalized a car to express their feelings. An all-white cadre of child molesters was evidently acceptable [in the neighborhood], but the presence of blacks made a racially integrated group of homeless *veterans* intolerable!

(Kennedy, 2002, p. 27; emphasis in original)

Clearly, in some situations at least, people view others through the lens of race, gender, and age; doing so affects their beliefs about and actions toward others. As we will see in this book, the more relevant question may not be whether people are prejudiced but whether and under what circumstances people try to override their prejudices and, instead, step back to measure each person as an individual.

Historical Views of Ethnic Groups

Historical events, both recent and more distant, demonstrate how quickly views of other social groups can change. Although, in the United States, attitudes toward Middle Easterners were not necessarily positive prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, negative reactions toward individuals from those countries definitely increased after that terrible day. Human Rights Watch (2002), for example, reported a tenfold increase in the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes and dramatic increases in violence against mosques after 9/11. Moreover, the Gallup Organization (2002) reported that the majority of Americans polled agreed there are too many immigrants from Arab countries in the United States and 60 percent of respondents favored reducing the number of Arabs granted admission.

Looking further back to the early 1900s, when the immigration of Irish and Italians reached its high point in the United States, evidence abounds that members of those ethnic groups were the targets of ridicule. Remnants of those strongly held beliefs remain: Most people today can still readily identify the ethnic stereotypes associated with these groups (Krueger, 1996; Terracciano et al., 2005). These days, however, individuals of Western European descent who reside in the United States generally do not find that their ethnic background significantly disadvantages them.

A century ago, the Irish were considered non-White in the United States (Ignatiev, 1995). How could that be? If, as most people believe, race and ethnicity are biological categories, marked by differences in skin color, it is not logical that the definitions of who fits a category would change. In fact, there are very few true biological distinctions between what scientists define as racial groups, as explained in Box 1.2. Moreover, the categories “White” and “non-White” shift with social conventions that, themselves, change over time. Lillian Rubin (1998), writing about the errors in historical memory of immigration in the United States, noted that:

being white didn’t make “a big difference” for many [early] immigrants. The dark-skinned Italians and the eastern European Jews who came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries didn’t look very white to the fair-skinned Americans who were here then. Indeed, the same people [Americans] now call white—Italians, Jews, Irish—were seen as another race at that time.

(p. 93)

*Box 1.2**What Is a "Race"?*

Morning (2011) defines race as "a system for classifying human beings that is grounded in the belief that they embody inherited and fixed biological characteristics that identify them as members of racial groups" (p. 21) and, as we will see throughout this book, psychological research shows that people use visible cues such as skin color and facial features to categorize themselves and others into groups. Morning also notes that the contexts in which people are asked to report their race are many, including medical visits, applying for college or jobs, or getting a marriage license. If you ask people how they know what race a person is, they will usually tell you that the determining factor is skin color. But why skin color rather than some other physical characteristic, such as hair color or eye color? One answer is provided by anthropologist Audrey Smedley and psychologist Brian Smedley (2011) in their book *Race in North America*.

Smedley and Smedley (2011) note that the word "race" was not used in English to refer to groups of people until the 1600s and, at that time, the meaning was very broad, referring to any group of people with common characteristics. For example, one writer referred to "a race of bishops." The meaning of the word race slowly narrowed until, in the late 1700s, it took on its present meaning to indicate groups of people sharing common physical characteristics, especially skin color. This narrowing of meaning took place at the same time as Europeans were beginning to colonize and dominate Africa, Asia, and the Americas, areas whose native inhabitants differed in skin color from Europeans. Over time, racial categories based on skin color became a means of differentiating "superior" Europeans from "inferior" others. These categories then became the focus of stereotypes "proving" the inferiority of non-Europeans and justifying European dominance and race laws limiting the freedom of non-Europeans.

It is important to bear in mind that race is a social category, not a biological one. For example, genetic studies find more differences within traditionally defined racial groups than between them (Zuckerman, 1990). People notice visible differences between groups, such as skin color or the thickness of the nose and lips, but such differences are superficial and do not, in fact, represent reliable ways of distinguishing between groups of people. In statistical terms, the differences that do exist between groups defined as races are trivial relative to the genetic factors, such as blood group, serum proteins, and enzymes, that are common to all people. As Steven Pinker (2002) notes,

the differences in skin color and hair that are so obvious when we look at people of other races are really a trick played on our intuition. Racial differences are largely adaptations to climate. Skin pigment was a sunscreen for the tropics, eyelid folds were goggles for the tundra. The parts of the body that face the elements are also the parts that face the eyes of other people, which fools them into thinking that racial differences run deeper than they really do.

(p. 143)

In addition, during the period in U.S. history when racial segregation was legal, race was defined by law and people could petition a court to change their racial classification (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998).

If race were a biological fact, it could hardly be changed by court order. Even so, laws rooted in the belief that race is genetic persist today. In the United States, membership in almost two-thirds of federally recognized Indian tribes is determined by a “blood quantum” criterion, meaning that a person must document that s/he has at least one-quarter Indian ancestry to be eligible for government services (Smedley & Smedley, 2011). Similarly, the belief that a person with even one drop of “Black blood” is Black persists to at least some extent in the American psyche (Ho, Sidanius, Levin, & Banaji, 2011; Morning, 2011). Yet cultural shifts in perceptions of race are evident, as captured in the history of racial classification by the U.S. Census. Over the decades, census categories have shifted from five, mutually exclusive categories (in 1978) to six categories (beginning in 2000) under a system that allows respondents to check that they belong to one or more such categories (Trimble, Helms, & Root, 2003). As Derald Wing Sue (2003) notes, the current system allows for 63 possible racial categories—a decision wholly inconsistent with the notion that race can be biologically identified. The weight of the evidence supports Ashley Montagu’s (1974) conclusion that only one biological race exists—the human race. The concept of race as we now use it developed, then, not as a set of biological categories but rather as a set of social categories. Yet its social nature does not diminish the psychological importance of race. It remains a fundamental basis for how people think about and interact with each other (Morning, 2011). As Phillip Rubio (2001, cited in Rosenblum & Travis, 2012) put it, “race is a biological fiction but a social fact” (p. 25).

Cultural Influences on Perceptions of Race and Ethnicity

The fact that racial categories are arbitrary and fluid does not dilute their power as socially defined categories. Indeed, for as long as psychologists have studied stereotyping and prejudice, there has been little reluctance on the part of individuals to share their knowledge of stereotypes nor has there been a shortage of groups who experience prejudice and discrimination based on their race/ethnicity (Schneider, 2004). Although, as psychologists, we will be focusing on prejudice and discrimination at the individual level, it is important to consider how people’s cultures influence their behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and other psychological characteristics, including those related to prejudice and discrimination (Lott, 2010). As is noted in Box 1.2, race may have a questionable meaning at the biological level, but it has a profound influence at the cultural level. Even a cursory review of history shows that social hierarchies based on race and ethnicity have been supported by society (Jones, 2003; Morning, 2011).

To understand the influence these cultural beliefs have on perceptions of and actions toward social groups, we must first understand the concept of culture. As Jeffrey Mio, Lori Barker, and Jaydee Tumambing (2012) point out, culture can be difficult to define because people use the term in several ways. Culture, for example, sometimes refers to art, music, and dance. Other times it is used in reference to other groups, as when the term “teen culture” is used to signify how adolescent attitudes and behavior differ from that of other age groups. Although there is no one accepted definition of culture, we will follow David Matsumoto and Linda Juang (2013) and define human **culture** as “a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life” (p. 15).

Culture influences stereotyping and prejudice because members of a culture hold sets of beliefs in common, including beliefs about behaviors, values, attitudes, and opinions. An important concept is that people operate within their cultural context, but are often unaware of it. This lack of awareness is like a fish's understanding of the notion of water: Because fish are completely surrounded by water, they are unaware of its importance to their very survival. So it is with culture: Human action is often driven by cultural expectations and experiences and this process typically occurs without conscious awareness. Adam Gopnik (2000), an American journalist, notes that "[a]fter four years [living] in Paris, I have come to realize that [jokes] are where true cultural differences reside" (p. 191). He explains that there is a "zone of kidding overlaid with not kidding" (p. 191) that can only be understood when one is fully integrated into a culture. He offers the example of fathers handing out cigars at the birth of their child. On the one hand, he notes, this is a way to celebrate a major life event—a zone of not kidding. Yet at the same time, the act has an unspoken reference to popular culture, specifically to Desi Arnez of *I Love Lucy* (or other 1950s sitcom characters) handing out cigars, and so includes an element of kidding as well. Americans may not know the origin of the joke, but they are likely to recognize the duality represented by the act. Those raised outside the United States are not likely to grasp this subtlety.

As people grow up in a culture, they tend to be unaware of its influence on them until something happens, such as a stay in another country that draws some aspect of their own culture to their attention (Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996). However, during times of profound social change, cultural influences on attitudes and beliefs come into focus. In the 1950s, when Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian political and social organization in the United States, homosexuality was rarely discussed and was (until 1973) classified as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association (Public Broadcasting Service, 2012). Until relatively recently, public statements supporting gay rights were almost unthinkable (Herek, 2010; Kite, 2011). Today, however, public opinion polls show large shifts toward greater acceptance of gay rights; for example, in 2015, 54 percent of U.S. survey respondents supported legalizing gay marriage, compared to 27 percent in 1996 (Pew Research Center, 2015). The Pew Global Attitudes Project (2015) shows widespread acceptance of homosexuality in Western Europe (87 percent of Germans, 77 percent of French, and 88 percent of Spaniards believe homosexuality should be accepted, for example). In other countries, such as Nigeria, Uganda, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, and El Salvador, the picture is starkly different: Results of the Pew Project showed that over 93 percent of respondents in those countries believe homosexuality is unacceptable. There are generational differences within some countries as well. Opinion polls show that in Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the United States, for example, younger people report greater acceptance of gay rights; in most Western European countries, acceptance is similar across adults of all ages (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2015).

Culture also influences how immigrants to a nation are viewed. Immigrants bring new values and customs to a host country, which can be enriching. However immigrants can also be viewed as a threat if they are seen as competitors for the host society's limited economic resources or as challenging its core values. In response to such threats, host society members may derogate immigrants and overtly discriminate against them (Esses, Jackson, & Bennett-AbuAyyash, 2010). How people define their national identity influences their attitudes toward immigrants. For example, Samuel Pehrson, Rupert Brown, and Hanna Zagefka (2009) found that English college students who adopted a nativist view—that is, they believed national identity is based on birth and shared ancestry and so is "in the blood"—reported more

hostility toward immigrants than those who did not adopt that view. In contrast, people who believe national identity is based on voluntary commitment to a country's laws and institutions rather than ancestry are more accepting of immigrants (Pakulski & Tranter, 2000). Immigration is on the rise internationally; it is now at its highest point in human history and continued increase is predicted for the future (Esses, Deaux, Lalonde, & Brown, 2010). Hence, tensions stemming from the perceived threats of immigration will likely increase for host countries in the coming years. However, acceptance of immigrants can be fostered; for example, Canadian college students who read an editorial that included statements that emphasized national unity (such as "Today's immigrants are tomorrow's Canadians") reported more positive attitudes toward immigrants than did those who read an editorial describing the demographic characteristics of Canadian immigrants (Esses, Dovidio, Semanya, & Jackson, 2005).

Group Privilege

The cultural aspect of prejudice and discrimination is also expressed through White privilege or the more general concept of group privilege. If you are White, chances are you have not given a lot of thought to your race or ethnicity—because you have had no need to. The question "What does it mean to be White?" actually can be quite puzzling to White people. When Derald Wing Sue (2003) posed this question to a group of White adults in San Francisco, common responses included "Is this a trick question?," "I've never thought about it," and "I don't know what you are talking about"—reactions Sue believes represent "the invisible whiteness of being" (p. 120). Simply put, when individuals are members of the dominant group in a society, their beliefs and actions seem normal and natural and are often taken for granted.

Researchers have captured this fact of life with the concept of White privilege. A host of seemingly simple actions illustrate the idea of group privilege: When buying a house or car, driving in an affluent neighborhood, or making a financial transaction, for example, Whites seldom consider the possibility that their race comes into play at all (Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). Members of minority groups, in contrast, are often well aware that even the smallest everyday action can be affected by their race. Lena Williams (2000) writes about "the look" Black professionals often get from people who do not expect them to be in such roles. Well-educated Blacks, for example, often hear "You went to Harvard?" or "You're the *Wall Street Journal* reporter?" from surprised Whites who simply do not expect Blacks to have those credentials.

Group privilege is an unearned favored state conferred simply because of one's race, gender, social class, or sexual orientation (McIntosh, 1988). The concept of group privilege begins with the recognition that there is a corollary to discrimination or undeserved negative treatment based on one's group membership. The corollary is that advantages are granted to people simply because they belong to a particular group. These advantages are typically invisible to the people who hold them, but they nonetheless have frequent and positive influences on everyday life. An important aspect of these advantages is that they are unearned; that is, they are not based on ability, effort, or past success but rather are granted solely because one is a member of the privileged group (Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1988).

The advantages associated with being a member of a privileged group may, at first glance, seem small and unimportant. However, these seemingly minor advantages accumulate and their overall impact can indeed be significant. Every time a Black professional flying first class is asked to show a boarding pass before being allowed to take her seat or every time a well-dressed Black man in a hotel is assumed to be a bell hop, there is an impact on the individual's sense of self (see L. Williams, 2000).