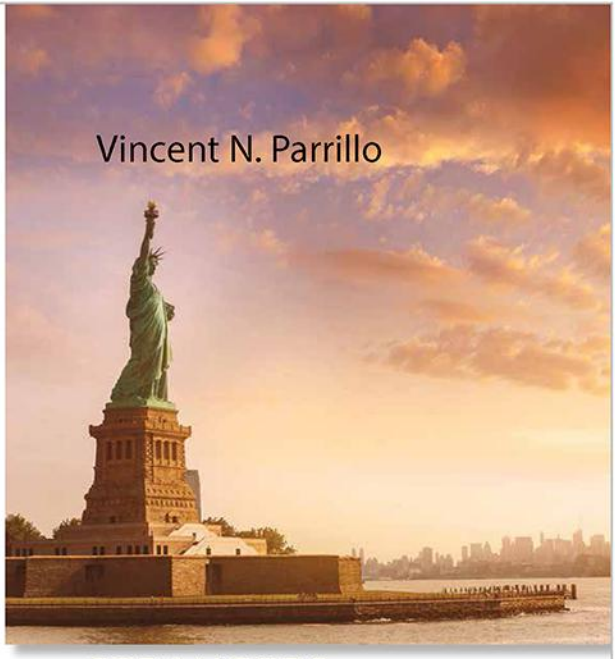

STRANGERS TO THESE SHORES

Twelfth Edition

Pearson

Strangers to These Shores

Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States

TWELFTH EDITION

Vincent N. Parrillo
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Pearson

330 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013

Portfolio Manager: Jeff Marshall
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Program Manager: Erin Bosco
Project Coordination, Text Design, and Electronic Page Makeup: Integra-Chicago
Cover Designer: JayBird Design
Cover Photo: Holbox/Shutterstock
Manufacturing Buyer: Mary Ann Gloriande
Printer/Binder: LSC Communications, Inc.
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color/Hagerstown

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data on file at the Library of Congress.

1 18

www.pearsonhighered.com

Rental Edition:
ISBN 10: 0-134-73286-3
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-73286-2

Revel Access Code Card:
ISBN 10: 0-134-73764-4
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-73764-5

Books á la Carte Edition
ISBN 10: 0-134-73755-5
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-73755-3

Instructor's Review Copy:
ISBN 10: 0-134-73751-2
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-73751-5

To my Italian American father and to my Irish/German American mother

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Foreword

Any grasp of the U.S. present and future requires knowledge about the manifold aspects of the subject of race and ethnicity. The United States is in the midst of a far-reaching transformation of its population and fundamental social patterns. The ethno-racial complexion of the country is changing rapidly and profoundly as a result of trends such as increasing immigration and declining fertility among native whites.

A half-century ago, in 1970, the United States was a country largely divided between whites and blacks, with whites by themselves nearly 85 percent of Americans and blacks 11 percent, while Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, and all others together amounted to a mere 6 percent. As of 2015, whites who are not Hispanic have declined to just 62 percent of the population, while the proportionate share of blacks has remained almost stable at 13 percent. Some groups that represented just a sliver of Americans in 1970 have virtually exploded in size, mainly because of immigration: Hispanics are 18 percent, Asians and Pacific Islanders 6 percent. And religions that had previously seemed "exotic" have now become a part of the U.S. landscape: mosques have appeared in many parts of the country, as have Sikh gurdwaras and Buddhist temples, for example.

In short, it has become virtually impossible to imagine the U.S. mainstream as essentially white and Christian, though a century ago the great majority of Americans would have confidently identified their nation in this way. "Diversity" has become the mantra to express these changes, and many Americans believe that we are on our way to becoming a majority-minority society, in which no group, not even whites, can claim to be more than 50 percent. The Census Bureau has in fact projected this outcome by the 2040s (though census data and population projections are distorted by classifying the growing group of Americans from mixed white–minority family backgrounds as "non-white"). Total population figures in a sense understate the changes because of their relationship to age: older Americans are disproportionately white, and young Americans disproportionately non-white or Hispanic.

The impact of growing ethno-racial diversity on the nation's public culture is visible everywhere, from the Obama White House's recognition of Muslim holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, the end of the Ramadan fast; to the common sounds of Spanish and other immigrant languages on the streets, public transportation, and the airwaves; and to the celebration of Chinese New Year in a number of cities. What will U.S. culture look like in a decade or two, when non-white minorities will probably draw equal to whites among youthful Americans?

In light of the complexity of these changes, Americans need a guide to help them understand how their country is being altered. For this purpose, there is no better single volume than Vincent N. Parrillo's *Strangers to These Shores*. Two features set this book apart from all others that aim to fill the same need. First, Parrillo fully develops the theoretical foundation required for an understanding of the chameleon-like qualities of many ethno-racial phenomena, which vary in their expression from group to group and from one historical era to another. These ideas allow the reader to consider, for example, the questions: what is one to make of the apelike stereotype of the Irish in the nineteenth century (see the cartoon, "Mutual: Both Are Glad There Are Bars Between Them?" on p. 51), which seems unrecognizable today? What does it indicate about the capacity for ethno-racial change and the conditions that bring it about?

Second, Parrillo delves deeply into the historical record of the conquest of Native Americans, the enslavement of African Americans, and the immigration of European, Asian, and Latin Americans. An appreciation of the past is an essential prelude to clear thinking about the present and future. This is especially true because much that many Americans currently think is new in fact has analogues in the past. For example, all too many believe that immigrants in the past rapidly learned English and that the persistence of Spanish among the children of Latin-American immigrants today represents a new resistance to assimilation. However, this view of the past is incorrect, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of groups found ways to preserve their mother tongues. This took place either in parochial schools where instruction was bilingual or even dominated by the mother tongue, as was true for the French Canadians in New England, or in bilingual public schools, which were established in many Midwestern cities and towns for the benefit of German speakers (see pp. 121–122). But over time, English won out, as it appears to be doing across generations among Latinos today.

Broadly speaking, two perspectives structure the ways scholars and ordinary Americans understand ethno-racial history and contemporary patterns, and the reader will find much in this volume to support each of them. One sees the essential U.S. story as about whites' dominance of other groups, despite the many transformations along the way. To boil many complexities down to a single word, *race*, then is the key to understanding U.S. society. According to this view, there is a fundamental continuity between whites' dominance in the early years of European conquest and colonization of the new continent, when they killed many Native Americans and drove away others while importing

African slaves to provide labor, and their position at the top of an ethno-racial hierarchy today.

Critical race theory (discussed on p. 310) argues that this continuity is maintained by the basic institutional arrangements of U.S. society, which continue to favor whites and which they therefore defend against challenge. For instance, African Americans are greatly handicapped by the operation of the criminal-justice system, which since 1980 has imposed felony convictions and prison terms on a startling proportion of young black men, leaving them disadvantaged for life even after they have served their sentences. Many Latino immigrant families suffer from an immigration system that tolerates their undocumented status because they provide necessary labor in agriculture and services but refuses to grant them a legal position no matter how long they reside and work here.

A very different perspective emphasizes the ways that over time the United States has tried to ameliorate ethno-racial inequalities. One high point was the Civil Rights movement and the ensuing legislation of the 1960s, which though they failed to create full equality between blacks and whites prepared the way for the emergence of a sizable black middle class and the very gradual decline of residential segregation. This perspective is perhaps epitomized in ideas about assimilation, which see their proof in a growing fluidity of ethnic and racial identifications. In a pattern that echoes the post–World War II rise of marriage across ethnic lines among whites, this fluidity is associated with a sharp rise in marriage and other unions that span the major ethno-racial divisions. In any recent year, about 15 percent of weddings unite individuals from different racial groups or a Hispanic with a non-Hispanic partner (compared to 7 percent in 1980, according to Wendy Wang of the Pew Research Center). Most of these marriages involve a non-Hispanic white partner and a minority one and thus cross the majority-minority divide. Needless to say, rising mixed unions are having a pronounced impact on the child population, as a significant fraction of infants now have parents from different ethno-racial groups. From what we can see, identities and social affiliations for these individuals are more fluid compared to those from families that are not mixed. They are gradually changing the rigidity of ethno-racial categories, in other words.

Neither of these two perspectives illuminates the whole truth about ethnicity and race in U.S. society. But both help us to understand their powerful role in the past, present, and future, as the reader of this volume will come to see.

Richard D. Alba
The Graduate Center,
City University of New York

Preface

In this book you will be reading and learning about one of the most interesting, ever-changing, and personally relevant subjects in your academic career, because the area of race and ethnic relations is an exciting, challenging, and dynamic field of study. It touches all of us, directly and indirectly in many ways, and on personal, regional, national, even global levels. Each generation thinks it lives through a unique situation, as shaped by the times or the "peculiarities" of a group's characteristics. In truth, each generation is part of a larger process that includes behavioral patterns inherited from past generations, who also thought their situation was unique.

Intergroup relations change continually, through alternating periods of quiet and turmoil, of entry of new groups of immigrants or refugees, and of problems sporadically arising between native-born racial or ethnic groups within the country. Often we can best understand these changes within the context of detectable, recurring patterns that are influenced by economic, political, psychological, and sociological factors. This is partly what C. Wright Mills meant when he spoke of the intricate connection between the patterns of individual lives and the larger historical context of society, a concept we discuss in Chapter 1.

To understand both the interpersonal dynamics and the larger context of changing intergroup relations—particularly the reality of historical repetitions of behavior—we must use social science theory, research, and analysis. Moreover, we can only truly appreciate a diverse society like the United States, as well as the broader applications of social science, by examining many groups, rather than focusing only on a few groups.

I am gratified by the continued widespread adoptions of *Strangers to These Shores* and the favorable response from colleagues and students throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. Their helpful comments and suggestions have been incorporated into this 12th edition to make an even better book.

What's New in the 12th Edition

First, and most important, this new edition continues our policy to provide a thorough updating to supply the most recent data and information throughout the book and the inclusion of the most current and relevant studies not only in sociology but in many other related fields as well. Of more than 1,100 reference citations in this edition, 47 percent are either new or updated since the previous edition. In the Notes section in the back of the book, these new references appear in blue for easy identification.

Second, this book—often imitated by competitors—has always been the content leader and the most comprehensive in the field and the leader in including new focus areas, and we continue that proud tradition. For example, in this edition you will find a special boxed feature, "Students Speak," appearing 52 times and offering reactive comments from recent readers.

Third, a new foreword written by Richard D. Alba—a distinguished sociologist, highly esteemed expert on assimilation, and member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—offers timely and insightful commentary on changes in U.S. society.

Fourth, more unified and comprehensive sections on assimilation have been created in Chapters 7 through 11 that deal with contemporary minorities.

Changes in Each Chapter

As always, each chapter in this new edition contains the latest data and research findings. In addition, here is a detailed list of additions and updates:

Chapter 1: The Study of Minorities

- New Students Speak: Social distance and race
- New Reality Check: Cross-racial social interactions in college

Chapter 2: Culture and Social Structure

- New Students Speak: Portuguese community in Newark
- Commentary on Syrian refugees and their class status affecting acceptance
- New discussion of internal colonialism applied to Appalachia

Chapter 3: Prejudice and Discrimination

- New Students Speak: Stereotyping of girls
- Recent affirmative action rulings
- New section on the influence of social media

Chapter 4: Intergroup Relations

- New Students Speak: Koreans selling black beauty products
- New Students Speak: Two school cafeterias for different races
- Updated International Scene box on minority (Islamic) violence in France
- Updated map of hate groups in the United States (Figure 4.2)
- New Students Speak: Hate groups using the Internet
- Updated figures for bias/hate crimes in 2015 (Table 4.1.)
- Updated Reality Check: Hate crimes on campuses

Chapter 5: North and West Europeans

- Coverage limited to major groups only
- New Students Speak: Creole culture
- New Reality Check: Why is the experience of north and west Europeans relevant today?

Chapter 6: South, Central, and East Europeans

- Coverage limited to major groups only
- New Students Speak: Prejudice against Poles
- New Reality Check: Why is the experience of south, central, and east Europeans relevant today?

Chapter 7: American Indians

- New discussion: Standing Rock Sioux pipeline issue
- Updated figures: census population data, social indicators of progress, employment
- Updates on legal cases, demographic data

Chapter 8: East Asians

- Asian Indians moved to Chapter 9
- Coverage limited to major groups only
- New commentary on religious affiliations of Vietnamese Americans
- Updated and more detailed graphics on population, education, occupation, income, poverty, unemployment, and home ownership

Chapter 9: Middle Eastern and Asian Indian Americans

- Coverage limited to major groups only
- Depiction of Arabs in post-9/11 films
- Updated graphics and data throughout the chapter
- Updates on Syrian refugees and travel bans
- New Reality Check: What danger do Muslim refugees present to Americans?

Chapter 10: Black and African Americans

- New Students Speak: Seven students discuss how they prefer to identify themselves
- Black Lives Matter and recent police incidents and unrest
- Updated graphics and data throughout the chapter
- New social indicators graphic comparing native American-born, Afro-Caribbean, and African-born Blacks

Chapter 11: Hispanic Americans

- Reasons for high numbers of Salvadoran immigrants
- Cuban immigration post-normalization
- Updated graphics and data throughout the chapter
- New graphic on Hispanic group by generational status

Chapter 12: Religious Minorities

- Updated graphics and data throughout the chapter
- New graphic on religious groups by generational status
- Updated discussion on religious tolerance and Muslim assimilation

Chapter 13: Women as a Minority Group

- Updated graphics and data throughout the chapter
- Updated discussion on sexual harassment in the news

Chapter 14: LGBTs, People with Disabilities, and Older Adults

- Updated tables and graphics throughout the chapter
- Updated studies and polls on public opinion about homosexuality
- Updates on the legal status of same-sex marriage and gay parenting
- New discussion on transgender rights

Chapter 15: The Ever-Changing U.S. Mosaic

- Updated tables and graphics throughout the chapter
- Expanded discussion on symbolic ethnicity
- Terrorism fear similarities of Muslims, French, Irish, Germans, and Russians
- Updated discussion on immigrant costs and contributions
- Updated discussion on public opinion on unauthorized immigrants and federal actions
- New graphic on English-speaking ability by regional origin

The Organization of This Book

The first four chapters present a conceptual and theoretical overview of the subject area, giving students a basis for examining the experiences of the different minority groups discussed in subsequent chapters. Major sociological perspectives (functionalist, conflict, and interactionist), as well as some middle-range theories, are applied throughout the book, though overall its treatment of topics remains eclectic. Instructors can either follow this approach or emphasize their own theoretical viewpoint because the book's structure allows for varying applications.

Following a presentation of some introductory concepts in the first chapter—particularly that of the stranger as a social phenomenon and the concept of the Dillingham Flaw—the first group of chapters examines differences in culture, reality perceptions, social class, and power as reasons for intergroup conflict. They also look at the dominant group's varying expectations about how minorities should "fit" into its society. Chapters 1 and 2 include coverage of some middle-range conflict and interactionist theories. Chapter 3 explores the dimensions and interrelationships of prejudice and discrimination, and Chapter 4 covers the

dominant–minority response patterns so common across different groups and time periods.

Chapters 5 through 14 offer the reader insights into the experiences of a wide array of minority groups. In-depth studies of the cultural orientations and degree of assimilation of each group are not possible, because the intent is to provide a broad comparative scope rather than extensive coverage of only a few groups. Not every racial and ethnic group is discussed, though more than 50 groups are included to illustrate the diversity of U.S. society. For a more comprehensive examination of any subject or group discussed in this book, the reader should consult the sources listed in the chapter notes and the Internet activities.

Chapter 15 returns to holistic sociological concepts in discussing ethnic consciousness; ethnicity as a social process; current racial and ethnic issues, fears, and reactions; and the various indicators of U.S. diversity now and two generations from now.

Special Features in This Book

As in the past, this edition incorporates several features to enhance understanding of the topics.

- As the first text in its field to begin chapters with a **sociohistorical perspective** for the study of specific groups, and to close each chapter with a **sociological analysis** of the groups' experiences using the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives, we again do so in this edition.
- Sociological concepts of the stranger, the Dillingham Flaw, and the interrelationship of personal and societal issues (Mills) offer students insights into the study of race and ethnic relations.
- In examining intergroup relations among more than 50 minority groups, this book remains the most comprehensive one in its sociological coverage of U.S. diversity.
- Tables, graphics, and text on social indicators provide clear insights into the socioeconomic status of contemporary minority groups.
- The **Ethnic Experience** boxed features give firsthand accounts by immigrants of their experiences.
- The **International Scene** boxes offer cross-cultural parallels and include critical-thinking questions.
- The **Reality Check** boxes provide applications to everyday life or geo-political profiles. In Chapters 7, 10, and 11, "What's in a Name?" explain changes over the years in accepted terms to identify American Indians, black and Hispanic Americans.
- The **Students Speak** boxes provide comments from recent readers of this book about some aspect in that chapter provoking their reaction.
- An extensive, up-to-date array of photo, map, and line-art illustrations give an appealing visual complement to the text material.
- Discussion questions and Internet activities appear at the end of each chapter, along with a list of key terms.
- At the end of the book, students will find all chapter research notes, a glossary, and an appendix giving immigration statistics for the period 1820–2015.

Helpful Features for Students

- **Learning objectives** at the beginning of the chapter enable students to focus on themes and key topics.
- Use of **endnotes** instead of parenthetical citations enhances readability as words and thoughts flow smoothly from one sentence or paragraph to the next.
- The closing **Retrospect** section in each chapter provides an opportunity for students to review and retain the main points covered.
- **Key terms** appear in bold type and are page-numbered in the summary list at the end of the chapter and are explained in the end-of-book glossary.
- **Discussion questions** stimulate reflection and critical thinking.
- **Internet activities** offer opportunities for exploring other dimensions of the subject matter.
- The **Students Speak** boxes reveal how other student readers reacted to parts of the book.
- The **Reality Check** boxes—many of them about student behavior—offer a recognizable example that relates to material in the chapter.
- The **International Scene** boxes help students develop a wider perspective.
- The **Ethnic Experience** and **Gender Experience** boxes help to humanize the text content.
- Numerous photos, historical political cartoons, graphs, and maps enrich the text material by bringing appealing visual components to the pages.

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Supplementary Materials for Instructors

- **Instructor's Manual/Test Bank.** This combined manual/test bank contains chapter summaries, learning objectives, suggestions for class activities and media materials, and a variety of test questions (multiple choice, true/false, fill-in, short answer, and essay). The Instructor's Manual/Test Bank is available to adopters from www.pearsonhighered.com/irc.
- **MyTest.** This software allows instructors to create their own personalized exams, to edit any or all of the existing test questions, and to add new questions. Other special features of this program include random generation of test questions, creation of alternate versions of the same test, scrambling question sequence, and test preview before printing. For easy access, this software is available from www.pearsonhighered.com/irc.
- **PowerPoint® Presentations.** The PowerPoint presentations are informed by instructional and design theory. Lecture PowerPoint slides follow the chapter outline and feature images from the textbook integrated with the text. Additionally, all of the PowerPoints are uniquely designed to present concepts in a clear and succinct way. They are available to adopters from www.pearsonhighered.com/irc.

Acknowledgments

Many people helped in the writing of this book. A number of students completed exceptional immigrant tape projects; excerpts of their projects appear in Chapters 5 through 14: Eunice Adjei, Bruce Bisciotti, Doris Brown, Michael Carosone, Hermione Cox, Milly Gottlieb, Daniel Kazan, Doreen LaGuardia, David Lenox, Sarah Martinez, Chairath Phaladiganon, Terrence Royful, Michelle Schwartz, Geri Squire, Luba Tkatchov, Leo Uebelein, and Yu-Jie Zeng. Dozens of my students from recent years kindly contributed comments about parts of the book in the Students Speak boxes, where their names appear. Their contributions bring a very human touch to the study of minority peoples.

I would like to thank the following reviewers for their helpful suggestions for this edition: Emily Cabaniss, Sam Houston State University; Caron Cates, Sam Houston State University; Helen Mudd, Campbellsville University; Jason Nwankwo, Fitchburg State University; Efren Padilla, California State University–East Bay; Mark Swiencicki, Berkeley City College; and Jacquelyn Troup, Cerritos College. I also want to acknowledge my deep appreciation to colleagues who reviewed previous editions and offered useful comments.

I have also had the good fortune to work with a team at Pearson whose competence, cooperation, and dedication have made the production of this edition a most satisfying project. My special thanks go to Karen Hanson, former Publisher, for her many years of support and encouragement, and to Billy Grieco, Senior Acquisitions Editor, for helping to get this revision underway. I am deeply indebted to Marion Castellucci, whose excellence in editing and content development helped shape this book in many important ways, and to Marita Sermolins Bley, Managing Editor, and Erin Bosco, Program Manager, at Ohlinger Publishing Services, for shepherding the book through its production phase. I also thank all the other members of the Pearson team for their collective efforts in developing, publishing, and distributing this book.

I am especially grateful to my friend and colleague, Richard D. Alba, for writing the foreword to this edition. My thanks also go to other friends and colleagues: Philip Kasinitz, for writing the forewords for the tenth and eleventh editions; Charles V. Willie for those in the eighth and ninth editions; Rubén Rumbaut, for those in the sixth and seventh editions; Peter I. Rose, for those in the fourth and fifth editions; and the late Stanford M. Lyman, for those in the second and third editions, as well as for his guidance in the development of the first edition.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my gratitude to my children Chrysti, Cara, Beverley, and Elizabeth for their support, as well as my grandchildren for the joy they bring to my life.

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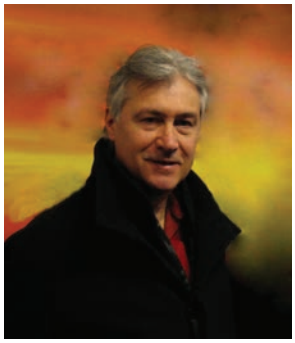
About the Author



Born and raised in Paterson, New Jersey, Vincent N. Parrillo experienced multiculturalism early as the son of a second-generation Italian American father and Irish/German American mother. He grew up in an ethnically diverse neighborhood, developing friendships and teenage romances with second- and third-generation Dutch, German, Italian, and Polish Americans. As he grew older, he developed other friendships that frequently crossed racial and religious lines.

Professor Parrillo came to the field of sociology after first completing a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in English. After teaching high school English and then serving as a college administrator, he took his first sociology course when he began doctoral studies at Rutgers University. Inspired by a discipline that scientifically investigates social issues, he changed his major and completed his degree in sociology.

Leaving his administrative post but staying at William Paterson University, Parrillo has since taught sociology for more than 40 years. He has lectured throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia, and often conducted diversity leadership programs for the military and large corporations. His keynote address at a bilingual educators' conference was published in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, which normally contains only speeches by national political leaders and heads of corporations and organizations.

Parrillo was a Fulbright Scholar in the Czech Republic and Scholar-in-Residence at both the University of Pisa and the University of Liege. Currently a Fulbright Senior Specialist, he has been a keynote speaker at international conferences in Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Korea, Poland, and Sweden. He has met with government leaders, nongovernment agency leaders, law enforcement officials, and educators in more than a dozen countries as a consultant on immigration policy, hate crimes, and multicultural education. He has done on-air interviews with *Radio Free Europe* and *Voice of America*, appeared on national Asian, Canadian, and European television programs, and often has been interviewed by numerous Asian, Canadian, and European reporters.

Parrillo's ventures into U.S. media include writing, narrating, and producing five award-winning PBS documentaries: *Ellis Island: Gateway to America; Smokestacks and Steeples: A Portrait of Paterson; Gaetano Federici: The Sculptor Laureate of Paterson; Paterson and Its People;* and *Silk City Artists and Musicians.* Contacted by reporters across the nation for his views on race and ethnic relations, he has been quoted in dozens of newspapers, including the *Chicago Sun-Times, Cincinnati Inquirer, Houston Chronicle, Hartford Courant, Omaha World-Herald, Orlando Sentinel*, and *Virginian Pilot.* He has also appeared on numerous U.S. radio and television programs.

Parrillo is also the author of other Pearson books: *Understanding Race and Ethnic Relations*, Fifth Edition; *Contemporary Social Problems*, Sixth Edition;, *Cities and Urban Life*, Seventh Edition (with John Macionis); as well as *Diversity in America*, Fourth Edition, and *Rethinking Today's Minorities.* His articles and book reviews have appeared in journals such as *Sociological Forum, Social Forces, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Journal of American Ethnic History, The Social Science Journal, Encyclopedia of American Immigration*, and the *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society.* He was General Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Social Problems* for Sage Publications. Several of his books and articles have been translated into other languages, including Chinese, Czech, Danish, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Romanian, and Swedish.

An active participant in various capacities throughout the years in the American Sociological Association and Eastern Sociological Society, Parrillo has been listed in *Who's Who in International Education, Outstanding Educators of America, American Men and Women of Science*, and *Who's Who in the East.* Recipient in 2013 of the Faculty Achievement Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Expression from William Paterson University, he was Robin M. Williams, Jr. Distinguished Lecturer (2005–2006) and vice president (2008–2009) of the Eastern Sociological Society.

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Chapter 1
The Study of Minorities

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Ever-increasing diversity in our communities, schools, and the workplace is the reality that all of us face. Such a mixture of peoples can produce cultural misunderstandings but to open-minded individuals it presents innumerable enrichment opportunities. This book is an effort to help you lessen the problems and enjoy the benefits of a pluralist society.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

1.1 Explain how the concept of the stranger helps us understand others.

1.2 Identify the characteristics of a minority group.

1.3 Distinguish the complex differences between a racial and ethnic group.

1.4 Describe how ethnocentrism affects our acceptance of others.

1.5 Explain the importance of objectivity in sociological research.

1.6 Explain the Dillingham Flaw and why it is important in studying diversity.

1.7 Identify the connection between personal troubles and public issues.

1.8 Discuss the dynamics of intergroup relations.

1.9 Evaluate what sociological perspectives tell us about minority groups.

Americans pride themselves as being part of a nation of immigrants. Many still call the United States a great melting pot where people of all races, religions, and nationalities come to be free and to improve their lives. Certainly, a great number of immigrants offer living testimony to that ideal. Their enthusiasm for their adopted country is evident in countless interviews, some of which you will read in this book. As college students, regardless of how recently or long ago your family immigrated to the United States, most of you also provide evidence of the American Dream of freedom of choice, economic opportunity, and upward mobility.

Yet beneath the Fourth of July speeches, the nation's absorption of diverse peoples throughout the years, and the numerous success stories lies a disquieting truth. Native-born Americans have not always welcomed newcomers with open arms. Indeed, they often have responded with overt acts of discrimination, ranging from avoidance to violence and murder. In 2017, for example, fear and uncertainty have prevailed among Hispanics with raids in their neighborhoods by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agents and among Muslims with federal government insistence on travel bans from certain Muslim countries where there families live. And, for many minority peoples of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, poverty and lack of social acceptance are everyday realities. For some, the American Dream becomes a reality, but for others, their situation results in an American nightmare.

Interethnic tensions and hostilities within a nation's borders have been a worldwide phenomenon for thousands of years. In recent years, we have witnessed the horror of terrorist killings in Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Pakistan, the Philippines, Spain, Syria, Turkey, and the United States. Religious factions in India and the Middle East still harbor such animosity toward one another that violence continues to erupt sporadically. A decade ago, more than 5.4 million died in the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and more than 300,000 in Darfur, a vast region in the west of Sudan. In the 1990s, Orthodox Christian Serbians killed an estimated 60,000 Bosnian Muslims in the name of "ethnic cleansing," and Serbians killed thousands of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, prompting military action by NATO. Elsewhere, immigrants in Britain and France, as well as Turks born in Germany, Roma (Gypsies) in Eastern Europe, and Palestinians in Israel, have encountered prejudice, discrimination, and physical attacks. Within many societies, groupings of people by race, religion, tribe, culture, or lifestyle can generate prejudices, tensions, and sporadic outbursts of violence.

Individuals of the mainstream group usually absolve themselves of blame for a minority group's low status and problems, attributing these instead to supposed flaws within the group itself (for example, slowness in learning the language or lack of a work ethic). Sociologists, however, note that interaction patterns among different groups transcend national boundaries, specific periods, or group idiosyncrasies. Opinions may vary as to the causes of these patterns of behavior, but a consensus does exist about their presence, and we will examine these.

The Stranger as a Social Phenomenon

1.1 Explain how the concept of the stranger helps us understand others.

Typically, group differences cause both sides to view the other as strangers, as people who are unknown and perhaps dissimilar to one's own group. Among isolated peoples, the arrival of a stranger has always been a momentous occasion, often eliciting

ESB Basic/Shutterstock

Because a health club attracts people who share similar interests in health, exercise, and weight control, new social interactions in that environment are likely, especially among those going regularly. Strangers feel comfortable in striking up casual conversations with one another and it is not uncommon for friendships, even romances, to develop.

strong emotional responses. Reactions might range from warm hospitality, or conciliatory or protective ceremonies, to hostile acts. From the Tiwi of northern Australia, who consistently killed intruders, to the nativists of any country today who strive to keep out "undesirable elements," the underlying premise is the same: The outsiders are not good enough to share the land and resources with the "chosen people" already there.

Similarity and Attraction

At least since Aristotle commented that we like "those like ourselves … of our own race or country or age or family, and generally those who are on our own level," social observers have been aware of the similarity–attraction relationship.[1] Numerous studies have explored this common practice in which a person likes others because of similar attitudes, values, beliefs, social status, or physical appearance. Examining how attraction occurs among people who are initially strangers to one another, many studies have found a positive relationship between the cultural or visible similarity of two people and their liking for each other. Most significantly, the findings show that than *actual* similarity.[2] Cross-cultural studies also support this conclusion.[3] A significant amount of evidence thus exists showing greater human receptivity to strangers considered as more similar than to those who are viewed as different.

Social Distance

One excellent technique for evaluating how perceptions of similarity attract closer interaction patterns consists of ranking **social distance**, the degree of closeness or remoteness individuals prefer in interaction with members of other groups. In 1926, Emory Bogardus created a measurement device that is still in use.[4] In seven comparable studies spanning nine decades, researchers obtained responses from college students to enable them to identify what changes and continuities in attitudes about minorities occurred over the generations. To measure the level of social acceptance, the social distance studies offered respondents seven choices for each group.

1. Would accept marrying into my family (1 point)
2. Would accept as a personal friend in my social circle (2 points)
3. Would accept as a neighbor on my street (3 points)
4. Would work in the same office (4 points)
5. Would only have as speaking acquaintances (5 points)
6. Would only have as visitors to my country (6 points)
7. Would bar from entering my country (7 points)

In the twenty-first-century studies (Table 1.1), non-ethnic whites still remained in the top position as the most accepted, with many of the other top 10 slots filled by Canadians, British, Irish, French, and Germans, essentially continuing an 85-year pattern. Particularly striking, though, was the dramatic rise of African Americans. Now ranking fifth, they first broke the racial barrier by entering the top-third tier in 2001 and placing ahead of most other white ethnic groups in 2012. Other significant changes were the rise of Italians into the second position—ahead of the previously dominating

Table 1.1 Mean Social Distance Rankings in 2012 and Comparisons to 2001

Rank in 2012	Group	Mean	(SD)	+/– VS. 2001	Rank in 2001
1.	Americans	1.15	(.57)	.08	1
2.	Italians	1.32	(.80)	+ .17	2
3.	Canadians	1.35	(.89)	+ .15	3
4.	British	1.36	(.91)	+ .13	4
5.	African Americans	1.42	(.78)	+ .09	9
6.	Irish	1.46	(.94)	+ .23	5
7.	French	1.50	(1.03)	+ .22	6
8.	Germans	1.51	(1.01)	+ .18	8
9.	Greeks	1.52	(1.01)	+ .19	7
10.	Indians (American)	1.57	(.94)	+ .17	12
11.	Africans	1.61	(.93)	+ .18	13
12.	Dutch	1.62	(1.09)	+ .27	10
13.	Polish	1.64	(1.08)	+ .19	14
14.	Puerto Ricans	1.64	(1.09)	+ .17	18
15.	Filipinos	1.68	(1.08)	+ .22	16
16.	Dominicans	1.71	(1.14)	+ .20	21
17.	Chinese	1.72	(1.04)	+ .25	17
18.	Other Hispanics/Latinos	1.72	(1.14)	+ .27	15
19.	Russians	1.73	(1.17)	+ .23	20
20.	Cubans	1.74	(1.20)	+ .21	23
21.	Jews	1.74	(1.11)	+ .36	11
22.	Jamaicans	1.74	(1.08)	+ .25	19
23.	Japanese	1.80	(1.14)	+ .28	22
24.	Mexicans	1.80	(1.29)	+ .25	25
25.	Vietnamese	1.85	(1.11)	+ .16	28
26.	Koreans	1.87	(1.24)	+ .33	24
27.	Indians (India)	1.89	(1.22)	+ .29	26
28.	Haitians	1.91	(1.27)	+ .28	27
29.	Arabs	2.16	(1.55)	+ .22	30
30.	Muslims	2.23	(1.52)	+ .35	29
All Groups		1.68	**(.80)**		

SOURCE: Vincent N. Parrillo and Christopher Donoghue, "The National Social Distance Study: Ten Years Later," *Sociological Forum* 28:3 (September 2013); and "Updating the Bogardus Social Distance Studies: A New National Study," *The Social Science Journal* 42 (2005): 257–71.

English, Canadians, and French. Generally though, the distribution showed non-ethnic white Americans, Canadians, and northern and western Europeans in the top third, with southern, central, and eastern Europeans in the middle third, and racial minorities in the bottom third. However, the researchers cautioned that the exact placement of a group in relation to those near it should not be given much importance because, due to the close scores, these rankings may be the result of sampling variability.

However, the upward movement of African Americans over many white ethnic groups is particularly noteworthy. First, it reveals their strong social acceptance level and may therefore reflect students' ease in racial interactions on their more diverse campuses. Making this strong level of social acceptance even more striking is the underrepresentation of blacks among respondents. In the 2012 study, only 6.9 percent of the sample was black, lower than in all previous national studies, yet African Americans attained the best-ever social distance ranking. This finding suggests that it is not the greater presence of people of color among respondents that explains the strong showing of blacks, but rather a much greater receptivity among white college students. Another intriguing finding, clearly worthy of further investigation as to why, is that Asians and Hispanics expressed greater social distance toward African Americans than did whites.

Students Speak "I asked my uncle, a Hispanic factory worker, about his job and coworkers. His coworkers are predominantly black or Hispanic, and he openly praised both groups' work ethics. He was highly accepting of blacks as coworkers, and even referred to many of them as close friends of his. I found this interesting, as he has expressed wide disapproval in the past about his daughter's engagement to a black man. His social acceptance of this group goes only as far as workplace and friendly interactions, but the degree of preferred closeness ends there."

—Alexis Hernandez

A slight increase in social distance occurred between 2001 and 2012, but that may be due to the passage of time. The 2001 study occurred just 2 months after the terrorist attacks, causing what the researchers called a "unity syndrome," the reactive coalescing of diverse respondents into a shared group identity of "Americans" united against

Reality Check

Cross-Racial College Social Interactions

Are you more likely to have social interactions outside your own racial or ethnic group if you attend a college with a diverse student body? A recent study offers some insight into that question.

Two researchers studied the 4-year progress in developing cross-racial interactions and interracial friendships of nearly 3,000 undergraduates at 28 academically selective institutions. Among the approximately equal numbers of Asian American/Pacific Islander, black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and white/Caucasian students, the white students had far fewer such interactions and friendships than any of the other student groupings.

Interestingly, students who were female, or were more religious, or more involved in ethnic student organizations were more likely to have cross-racial interactions. This pattern was truer for social science majors than it was for students in other majors. That organizational participation was a bigger positive factor among blacks and Hispanics than among whites. Moreover, Hispanic students majoring in the arts/humanities had significantly more cross-racial interactions than the social science majors. Another motivating factor was that those who spent more time socializing on campus reported higher cross-racial social interactions than those who didn't.

Perceived closeness to other races upon entering college was a positive factor for these interactions with outgroup members among Asian Americans, blacks, and whites. If they had significant high school diversity exposure, white students were more likely to have cross-racial interactions at the college level.

Critical Thinking Question

How limited or extensive are your social interactions with those who are not part of your own racial or ethnic group? Why do you think it is that way?

Source: Summary of Nicholas Bowman and Julie Park, "Not All Diversity Interactions Are Created Equal: Cross-Racial Interaction, Close Interracial Friendship, and College Student Outcomes." *Research in Higher Education* 56:6 (September 2015): 601–21.

a common enemy.[5] If so, then the 2012 data is perhaps an adjustment in attitudes a bit less tempered by the immediacy of that tragic and traumatic event. Generally speaking, college students of the twenty-first century are more receptive to outgroups than their twentieth-century counterparts, but their level of social acceptance of others still appears dependent on the similarity–attraction bond (see the Reality Check box).

Perceptions

By definition, the stranger is not only an outsider but also someone different and personally unknown. People perceive strangers primarily through **categoric knowing**—the classification of others on the basis of limited information obtained visually and perhaps verbally.[6] People make judgments and generalizations on the basis of scanty information, confusing an individual's characteristics with typical group-member characteristics. For instance, if a visiting Swede asks for tea rather than coffee, the host may conclude incorrectly that all Swedes dislike coffee.

Native-born Americans usually have viewed immigrants—first-generation Americans of different racial and ethnic groups—as a particular kind of stranger: one who intended to stay. A common reaction pattern is an initial curiosity about the presence of immigrants replaced by fear, suspicion, and distrust as their numbers increase. As a result, the strangers remain strangers as each group prefers its own kind for personal interaction.

The status of a stranger is consistent, whether we speak of the past, present, or future. German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918) explained that strangers represent both *nearness*, because they are physically close, and *remoteness*, because they react differently to the immediate situation and have different values and ways of doing things.[7] The stranger is both inside and outside: physically present and participating but also mentally outside the situation with a mind-set influenced by a different culture.

Through categoric knowing, natives perceive the stranger in generalities and so the individual becomes the *totality*, or stereotype, of the entire group. In other words, because it is someone unknown or unfamiliar, someone not understood, they see the stranger as a representative member of a "different" group.

In contrast, said Simmel, the stranger perceives the natives not in general but in specific, individual terms. Strangers are more objective about the natives because the strangers' geographic mobility enhances their mental mobility as well. The stranger—not caught up in taken-for-granted assumptions, habits, and traditions, and not yet participating fully in society—has a certain mental detachment and so observes each situation more acutely.

Michael P. Gadomski/Science Source

Perception and reality are often not the same thing, whether it is an observation about the characteristics of a minority group or an optical illusion like this one. Because light travels at different speeds in and out of such different optical mediums as air and water, it creates the impression that the straw in the water is in a different place than its true position.

Interactions

Simmel approached the role of the stranger through an analysis of the formal structures of life. In contrast, Alfred Schutz—himself an immigrant from Austria to the United States—analyzed the stranger as lacking "intersubjective understanding."[8] By this, he meant that people from the same social world mutually "know" the language (including slang), customs, beliefs, symbols, and everyday behavior patterns that the stranger usually does not.

For the native then, every social situation is a coming together not only of roles and identities but also of shared realities—the intersubjective structure of consciousness. What is taken for granted by the native is problematic to the stranger. In a familiar world, people live through the day by

The International Scene

Enhancing German Interaction with Americans

U.S. International, an organization that runs exchange programs, distributed a pamphlet, "An Information Guide for Germans on American Culture," to Germans working as interns in U.S. companies. The pamphlet was based on previous German interns' experiences and on their interviews with other colleagues; its intent was to provide insights into U.S. culture to ease German interactions with Americans. Here are some examples:

- Americans say "Hello" or "How are you?" when they see each other. "How are you?" is like "Hello." A long answer is not expected; just answer, "Thank you, fine. How are you?"
- Using deodorant is a must.
- American women usually shave their legs and under their arms. Women who don't like to do this should consider wearing clothes that cover these areas.
- Expect to be treated like all other Americans. You won't receive special treatment because you are a German. Try not to talk with other Germans in German if Americans are around; this could make them feel uncomfortable.
- Please consider the differences in verbal communication styles between Americans and Germans. The typical German speaking style sounds abrupt and rude to Americans. Keep this in mind when talking to Americans.
- Be polite. Use words like *please* and *thank you*. It is better to use these too often than not enough. Also, be conscious of your voice and the expression on your face. Your voice should be friendly, and you should wear a smile. Don't be confused by the friendliness and easygoing, non-excitable nature of the people. They are deliberate, think independently, and do things their own way. Americans are proud of their independence.
- Keep yourself out of any discussions at work about race, sex, religion, or politics. Be open-minded; don't make judgments based on past experiences in Germany.
- Be aware that there are a lot of different cultures in the United States. There also are many different churches, which mean a great deal to their members. Don't be quick to judge these cultures; this could hurt people's feelings.
- Do it the American way, and try to intermingle with the Americans. Think positive.

Critical Thinking Question

What guidelines for overcoming ethnocentrism should Americans follow when traveling to or working in other countries?

responding to the daily routine without questions or reflection. To strangers, however, every situation is new and is therefore experienced as a crisis (see the accompanying International Scene box).

Strangers experience a "lack of historicity"—a lack of the shared memory of those with whom they live. Human beings who interact together over a period of time "grow old together." Strangers, however, are "young" so as newcomers they experience at least an approximation of the freshness of childhood. They are aware of things that go unnoticed by the natives, such as the natives' customs, social institutions, appearance, and lifestyle. Also existing within the natives' taken-for-granted world are social constructions of race and ethnicity that, to the stranger, are new realities. Race as a social construct can be illustrated by the case of Barack Obama. To many whites, he is a black man. With a longstanding, rigid, racial classification system in the United States of white or non-white, perhaps this perception is understandable. Obama, however, had a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, so he is actually biracial. This, however, led some blacks to question whether he was "black enough" to be their "authentic" representative when he sought his party's nomination for the presidency.[9] Within the racial divide, both blacks and whites are often strangers to each other, perceiving reality through different social constructs.

In time, however, strangers take on the natives' perspective; the strangers' consciousness decreases because the freshness of their perceptions is lost. At the same time, the natives' generalizations about the strangers become more concrete through social interaction. As Schutz said, "The vacant frames become occupied by vivid experiences." As acculturation takes place, the native begins to view the stranger more concretely, and the stranger becomes less questioning about daily activities. Use of the term *naturalized citizen* takes on a curious connotation when examined from this perspective, because it implies that people are, in some way, odd or unnatural until they have acquired the characteristics of the natives.

As its title suggests, this book is about strangers—whether they be those who came—and still are coming—to the United States in search of a better life or those who are strangers in their native land because of their minority status. In our sociological examination of the experiences of these groups of people, we will be continually telling the story of how the stranger perceives the society and how society receives that stranger. The adjustment from stranger to neighbor is a movement along a familiar continuum, but this continuum may not be frictionless, and assimilation is not inevitable. Rather, it is a process of varying social interactions among different groups of people.

Before we proceed further, let us clarify three terms used extensively in this book. **Migration** is the general term that refers to the movement of people into and out of a specified area, which could either be within a country or from one country to another. Examples are the migration of people from one continent to another or the migration of U.S. blacks from the South to the North. **Emigration** is a narrower term that refers to the movement of people *out of* a country to settle in another, while **immigration** refers to the movement of people *into* a new country to become permanent residents. So we could speak, for example, of the *emigration* of people from Peru and their *immigration* into the United States. To the sending country, they are emigrants and to the receiving country, they are immigrants.

Minority Groups

1.2 Identify the characteristics of a minority group.

Sociologists use the term **minority group** not to designate a group's numerical representation but to indicate its relative power and status in a society. Although first used in World War I peace treaties to protect approximately 22 million of 110 million people in east central Europe, the term's most frequent use has been as a description of biological features or national traits because people do make distinctions among people according to race and national origin. In time, social scientists broadened the definition of *minority group* to encompass any physical or cultural trait, not just race or national origin, thereby also including the aged, people with disabilities, members of various religions or sects, and groups with unconventional lifestyles.[10]

As researchers studied the social consequences of minority status, their emphasis became centered on prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. Others found this "victimological" tactic too limiting, instead preferring to analyze the similarities and differences among groups, as well as relationships between majority and minority groups.[11]

A third approach in defining minority groups rests on the relationships between groups in terms of each group's position in the social hierarchy.[12] This approach stresses a group's social power, which may vary from one country to another as, for example, does that of the Jews in Russia and in Israel. The emphasis on stratification instead of population size explains situations in which a relatively small group subjugates a larger number of people, such as the European colonization of African and Asian populations.

Minority-Group Characteristics

As social scientists refined their approaches to studying minority groups, a consensus evolved on the five characteristics shared by minorities worldwide:

1. The group receives unequal treatment from the larger society.
2. The group is easily identifiable because of distinguishing physical or cultural characteristics that are held in low esteem.
3. The group feels a sense of group identity, that each of them shares something in common with other members.
4. Membership in the minority group has **ascribed status**: One is born into it.
5. Group members practice **endogamy**: They tend to marry within their group, either by choice or by necessity, because of their social isolation.[13]

Jim WestAlamy Stock photo

These young women working at a frozen yogert franchise in Dearborn, Michigan, illustrate how even one distinctive characteristic helps define a minority group. Easily identifiable by their hijabs, they display to other Arab Muslims in their neighborhood their shared faith and sense of peoplehood in an affirmation of their cultural identity.

Although these five features provide helpful guidelines when discussing racial and ethnic minorities, the last two characteristics do not apply to such minority groups as the aged, disabled, gays, or women. One is not born old, and people with disabilities are not always born that way. Only a small percentage of gays are easily identifiable by physical characteristics. Most women do not marry other women, nor do most of the aged or people with disabilities marry their own kind.

What all minority groups do have in common is their subordinate status to a more powerful, although not necessarily, larger group. Women outnumber men in U.S. society, for example, but as we will discuss in Chapter 13, numerous social indicators reveal they have not yet achieved full equality with men.

Therefore, we will use the term **dominant group** when referring to a minority group's relationships with the rest of society. A complication is that a person may be a member of both dominant and minority groups in different categories. For example, a white Roman Catholic belongs to a prominent religious minority group but also is a member of the U.S. racially dominant group.

Racial and Ethnic Groups

1.3 Distinguish the complex differences between a racial and ethnic group.

Race is a categorization in which people sharing visible biological characteristics regard themselves or are regarded by others as a single group on that basis. At first glance, race may seem an easy way to group people, but it is not. The 7.4 billion humans inhabiting this planet exhibit a wide range of physical differences in body build, hair texture, facial features, and skin color. Centuries of migration, conquest, intermarriage, and evolutionary physical adaptation to the environment have caused these varieties. Anthropologists have attempted racial categorizations ranging from three to more than a hundred. Some, such as Ashley Montagu, even argue that only one race exists—the human race.[14] Just as anthropologists apply different interpretations to biological groupings, so do most people, but theirs are social interpretations, something sociologists attempt to analyze to explain racial prejudice.

The social construction of race varies by culture and in history. The United States, for example, has long had a rigid racial classification ("white" and "non-white"), unlike Latin America, which acknowledges various gradations of race, reflecting that region's

multiracial heritage. U.S. purists have even subscribed to the "one-drop theory," that someone with even a tiny portion of non-white ancestry should be classified as black. However, it is not only outsider classifications. Sometimes people will identify as, say, black or Native American, when their DNA reveals a higher percentage of a different race. Racial classifications thus are often arbitrary, with individuals or society placing undue emphasis on race. Indeed, some geneticists argue that race is a meaningless concept, that far more genetic variation exists within races than between them, and that many racial traits overlap without distinct boundaries.[15] Furthermore, with perhaps more than 27 million people of mixed racial parentage living in the United States, many social scientists have called for the "deconstruction of race," arguing against the artificial boundaries that promote racial prejudice.[16]

Racism is the linking of biological conditions with alleged abilities and behavior to assert the superiority of one race. When people believe that one race is superior to another because of innate abilities or specific achievements, racist thinking prevails. The subordinate group experiences prejudice and discrimination, which the dominant group justifies by reference to such undesirable perceptions. In this book, we will discuss how not only blacks but also Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and even white southern Europeans have encountered hostility because of such social categorizations based simply on physical appearance.

Racism is a human invention, a good example of the social construction of reality. It slowly evolved out of efforts to sort humans into distinctive categories based on skin color and facial features. These developments included philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) offering biological distinctions of the "races of mankind" and nineteenth-century Social Darwinists seeing human society as a "survival of the fittest" in which the naturally superior will win out. Some physical anthropologists suggested that physically distinctive groups fell into a hierarchy, with white Europeans (like themselves) at the top and blacks at the bottom, as rationalized by their dark color, their supposedly primitive culture, and especially because Europeans then knew of blacks as slaves. It was in this pseudo-scientific context that racism emerged as an ideology. Although most modern scientists and social scientists have debunked the "scientific" claims of racism, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 10, racist ideologies still attract many followers.[17]

While *race* deals with visible physical characteristics, **ethnicity** goes beyond a simple racial similarity to encompass shared cultural traits or national origin. People may be of the same race but different in language and cultural practices, such as Africans, Haitians, and Jamaicans. Conversely, people may be of different races but members of the same ethnic group, such as Hispanics. The complexities of social groups by ethnicity do not stop there. People may be members of the same race and ethnic group, such as the Belgians, but speak different languages (Dutch, Flemish, or French) and so also be members of different subcultural ethnic groups. Moreover, if we add the element of social class, we will find even more differences within these subcultural ethnic groups.

Religion is another determinant of ethnic group composition. Sometimes religion and national origin seem like dual attributes of ethnicity, such as Irish and Italian Catholics (although not all Irish or Italians are Catholic). Sometimes, too, what appear to be these dual attributes—Arab Muslims, for example—are not so; for example, the majority of Arabs in the United States are Christians.[18] Religion most commonly links with other elements of ethnicity—national origin, culture, and language—among immigrant groups. Even here, though, we should refrain from generalizing about all members of any national origin group (or any racial group) because of the extensive differences within such groups.

Some people have used incorrectly the word *race* as a social rather than as a biological concept. Thus, the British and Japanese have often been classified as races, as have Hindus, Aryans, Gypsies, Arabs, Basques, and Jews.[19] Many people—even sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists—have used *race* in a general sense that includes racial and ethnic groups, thereby giving the term both a biological and a social meaning. Since the 1960s, *ethnic group* has been used more frequently to include the three elements of race,

religion, and national origin.[20] Such varied use of these terms results in endless confusion because racial distinctions are socially defined categories based on physical distinctions.

Some groups, such as African Americans, cannot simply be defined on racial grounds, for their diversity as native-born Americans or African or Caribbean immigrants places them in ethnocultural groups as well. Similarly, Asians and Native Americans incorrectly get lumped together in broad racial categories despite their significant ethnic differences.

In this book, the word *race* refers to the common social distinctions made on the basis of physical appearance. The term *ethnic group* refers only to social groupings that are unique because of religious, linguistic, or cultural characteristics. We will use both terms in discussing groups whose racial and ethnic characteristics overlap.

Ethnocentrism

1.4 Describe how ethnocentrism affects our acceptance of others.

Understanding the concept of the stranger is important to understanding **ethnocentrism**—a "view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it."[21] *Ethnocentrism* thus refers to people's tendency to identify with their own ethnic or national group as a means of fulfilling their needs for group belongingness and security. (The word derives from two Greek words: *ethnos* meaning "nation" and *kentron* meaning "center.") As a result of ethnocentrism, people usually view their own cultural values as somehow more real, and therefore superior to, those of other groups, and so they prefer their own way of doing things. Unfortunately for human relations, such ethnocentric thought often negatively affects attitudes toward, and emotions about, those perceived as different.

Fortunately, social scientists are making increasing numbers of people aware of a more enlightened and positive alternative to ethnocentrism. **Cultural relativism** evaluates beliefs and behavior in the context of that culture. The more widespread this perspective becomes known and applied, the more intergroup understanding and mutual acceptance grows.

> **Students Speak** "When I began reading the textbook and learning about ethnocentrism, one of my favorite movies came to mind: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Gus is a sweet man who is living in a country that is not his 'home' and he relentlessly makes sure that everyone he reaches out to understand the significance and importance of the Greek culture and its influence on the world. Gus truly believes that Greek culture is the best culture, and has a hard time understanding the differences found in American culture. When I watch movies like this, I am reminded that families with strong traditions and beliefs stemming from their culture exist and I think it is interesting observing the differences."
>
> —*Courtney Hall*

Sociologists define an **ingroup** as a group to which individuals belong and feel loyal; thus, everyone—whether a member of a majority group or a minority group—is part of some ingroup. An **outgroup** consists of all people who are not members of one's ingroup. Studying majority groups as ingroups helps us understand their reactions to strangers of another race or culture entering their society. On the other hand, considering minority groups as ingroups enables us to understand their efforts to maintain their ethnic identity and solidarity in the midst of the dominant culture.

From European social psychologists comes one of the more helpful explanations for ingroup favoritism. **Social identity theory** holds that ingroup members almost automatically consider their group as better than outgroups because such thinking enhances their own social status or social identity and thus raises the value of their personal identity or self-image.[22]

Ample evidence exists about people from past civilizations who regarded other cultures as inferior, incorrect, or immoral. This assumption that *we* are better than *they*

generally results in outgroups becoming objects of ridicule, contempt, or hatred. Such attitudes may lead to stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and even violence. What actually occurs depends on many factors, including structural and economic conditions, to be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Despite its ethnocentric beliefs, the ingroup does not always view an outgroup as inferior. An outgroup may become a positive **reference group**—that is, it may serve as an exemplary model—if members of the ingroup think it has a conspicuous advantage over them. A good example would be immigrants who try to shed their ethnic identity and Americanize themselves as quickly as possible. Ethnocentrism is an important factor in determining minority-group status in society, but because of many variations in intergroup relations, it alone cannot explain the causes of prejudice. For example, majority-group members may view minority groups with suspicion, but not all minority groups become the targets of prejudice and discrimination.

> **Students Speak** "All over the campus—in the student center, dining hall, and outside walking from class to class—mostly everywhere you look, a group of students of one ethnic group is sitting together separate from other ethnic groups that are sitting with their own as well. I don't think people do this intentionally because they dislike people of other ethnic groups. I just think it is something based on interests. People make friends with others who have the same interests and values, so they enjoy hanging out with each other."
>
> —*German Decena*

Some social-conflict theorists argue that ethnocentrism leads to negative consequences when the ingroup feels threatened by the outgroup competing with them for scarce resources. Then the ingroup reacts with increased solidarity and exhibits prejudice, discrimination, and hostility toward the outgroup.[23] The severity of this hostility depends on various economic and geographic considerations. One counterargument to this view is that ethnocentric attitudes—thinking that because others are different, they are thus a threat—initially *caused* the problem. The primary difficulty with this approach, however, is that it does not explain variations in the frequency, type, or intensity of intergroup conflict from one society to the next or between different immigrant groups and the ingroup.

In The United States

Often, an ethnocentric attitude is not deliberate but rather an outgrowth of growing up and living within a familiar environment. Even so, if recognized for the bias it is, ethnocentrism can be overcome. Consider, for example, that Americans have labeled their major league baseball championship games a *World Series*, even though just one Canadian team participates in an otherwise exclusively U.S. professional sports program. *American* is another word we use—even in this book—to identify ourselves to the exclusion of people in other parts of North and South America. The Organization of American States (OAS), which consists of countries in both North and Latin America, should remind us by its title that others are equally entitled to call themselves Americans.

At one point in this country's history, many state and national leaders identified their expansionist goals as *Manifest Destiny*, as if divine providence had ordained specific boundaries for the United States. Indeed, many members of the clergy throughout the years preached fiery sermons regarding God's special plans for this country, and all presidents have invoked the deity in their inaugural addresses for special assistance to this country.

In Other Times and Lands

Throughout history, people of many cultures have demonstrated an ethnocentric view of the world. For example, British Victorians, believing their way of life superior to all others, concluded they were obliged to carry the "white man's burden" of cultural and

intellectual superiority in colonizing and "civilizing" the non-Western world. Yet 2,000 years earlier, the Romans had thought natives of Britain were an especially inferior people, as indicated in this excerpt from a letter written by the orator Cicero to his friend Atticus: "Do not obtain your slaves from Britain because they are so stupid and so utterly incapable of being taught that they are not fit to form a part of the household of Athens."

The Greeks, whose civilization predated the Roman Empire, considered all those around them—Persians, Egyptians, Macedonians, and others—distinctly inferior and called them barbarians. (*Barbarikos*, a Greek word, described those who did not speak Greek as making noises that sounded like "bar-bar.")

Religious chauvinism blended with ethnocentrism in the Middle Ages when the Crusaders, spurred on by their beliefs, considered it their duty to free the Holy Land from the control of the "infidels." They traveled a great distance by land and sea, taking with them horses, armor, and armaments, to wrest control from the native inhabitants because those "infidels" had the audacity to follow the teachings of Muhammad rather than Jesus. On their journey across Europe, the Crusaders slaughtered Jews (whom they falsely labeled "Christ-killers"), regardless of whether they were men, women, or children, all in the name of the Prince of Peace. The Crusaders saw both Muslims and Jews not only as inferior peoples but also as enemies. Here are a few more examples of ethnocentric thinking in past times:

> The Roman, Vitruvius, maintained that those who live in southern climates have the keener intelligence, due to the rarity of the atmosphere, whereas "northern nations, being enveloped in a dense atmosphere, and chilled by moisture from the obstructing air, have a sluggish intelligence."... Ibn Khaldun argued that the Arabians were the superior people, because their country, although in a warm zone, was surrounded by water, which exerted a cooling effect. Bodin, in the sixteenth century, found an astrological explanation for ethnic group differences. The planets, he thought, exerted their combined and best influence upon that section of the globe occupied by France, and the French, accordingly, were destined by nature to be the masters of the world. Needless to say, Ibn Khaldun was an Arab, and Bodin, a Frenchman.[24]

Anthropologists examining the cultures of other peoples have identified countless instances of ethnocentric attitudes. One frequent practice has been in geographic reference and mapmaking. For example, some commercially prepared Australian or Japanese world maps depicted that continent at the center in relation to the rest of the world (see Figure 1.1). Throughout world history, we can find many examples of such nationalistic ethnocentrism. European mapmakers drew world maps with Europe at the center and North Americans put their continent in the center. In Asia, the Chinese called their country the "Middle Kingdom," on the assumption their country was the center of the world.

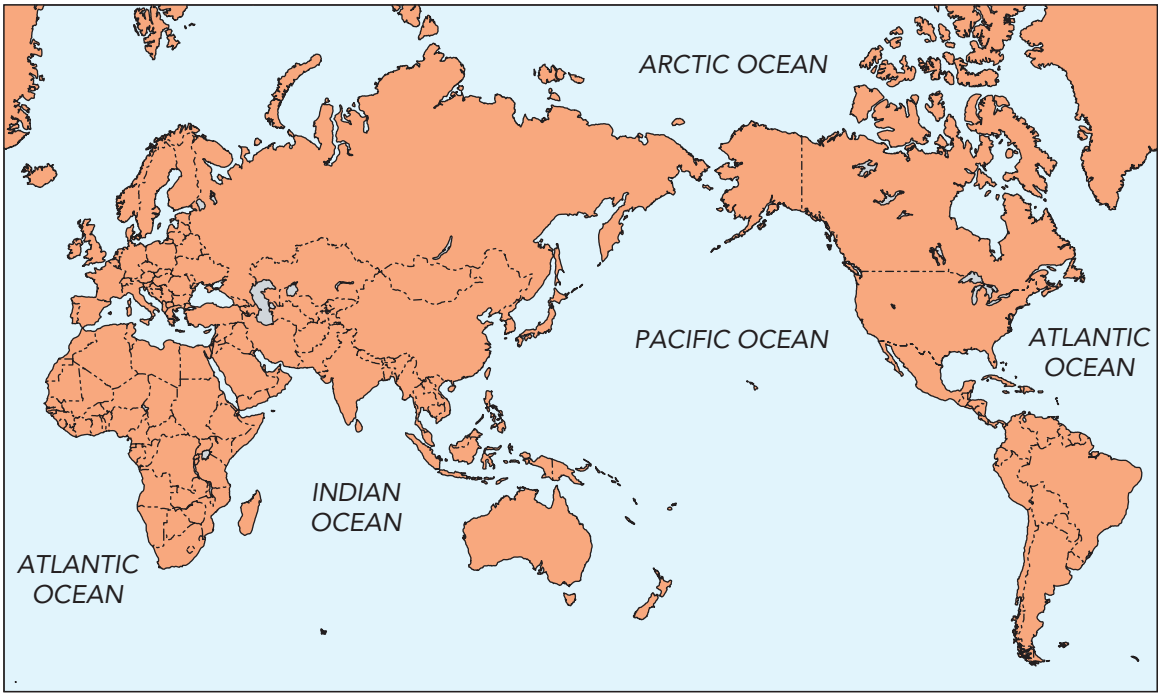
But beyond providing a group-centered approach to living, ethnocentrism is of utmost significance in understanding motivation, attitudes, and behavior when members of racially or ethnically distinct groups interact, for it often helps explain misunderstandings, prejudice, and discrimination.

Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism

Several decades ago, many scholars and minority leaders began criticizing the underrepresentation of non-European curriculum materials in the schools and colleges, calling this practice Eurocentric. **Eurocentrism** is a variation of ethnocentrism in which the content, emphasis, or both, in history, literature, and other humanities primarily, if not exclusively, focus on Western culture. Critics argue that this approach, ranging from the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome to the writings of Shakespeare, Dickens, and other English poets and authors, ignores the accomplishments and importance of other cultures.

One counterforce to Eurocentrism is **Afrocentrism**, a viewpoint that emphasizes African culture and its influence on Western civilization and the behavior of

Figure 1.1 Unlike most U.S. maps of the world showing the American continents on the left side, this map—a common one in many Asian countries—puts the Americas on the right. The effect is to place these countries (such as Japan) in the center and not the edge, thus emphasizing the Pacific Rim rather than the Atlantic. Such repositioning is a form of ethnocentrism, shaping perceptions of the rest of the world.



American blacks. In its moderate form, Afrocentrism is an effort to enhance black self-esteem and teach about African influence in American culture.[25] In its bolder form, Afrocentrism becomes another variation of ethnocentrism. For example, a few decades ago a New York professor of African American studies advanced his now-ignored claim about the superiority of African "sun people" over European "ice people." In addition, those who argue that Western civilization merely reflects the black

Chicago Tribune/Tribune News Service/Getty Images

Music programs are one part of the curriculum in Afrocentric schools, such as this one in Evanston, Illinois. African themes are typically infused in all subjects—English, history, math, science, and the arts. Advocates say such schools enhance educational achievement, motivation, and self-esteem.

African influence on Egyptian civilization find critics who charge them with excessively distorting history.[26]

For most advocates of pluralism, however, ethnocentrism in any form produces erroneous views. What is needed is a balanced approach that is inclusive, not exclusive, of the cultures, civilizations, and contributions of all peoples, both in the school curriculum and in our thinking.

Objectivity

1.5 Explain the importance of objectivity in sociological research.

When we talk about people who differ from us, we commonly offer our own assumptions and opinions more readily than when we are discussing some other area, such as astronomy or biology. But if we are to undertake a sociological study of race and ethnicity, we must question our assumptions and opinions—everything we have always believed without question. How can we scientifically investigate a problem if we already have reached a conclusion?

Sociologists study many aspects of minority groups, race, class, and gender through the **scientific method**. This involves repeated objective observation, precise measurement, careful description, the formulation of theories based on the best possible explanations, and the gathering of additional information about the questions that followed from those theories. Although sociologists attempt to examine group relationships objectively, it is impossible to exclude their own subjectivity altogether. All human beings have **values**—socially shared conceptions of what is good, desirable, and proper or bad, undesirable, and improper. Because we are human, we cannot be completely objective as these values influence our orientations, actions, reactions, and interpretations. For example, selecting intergroup relations as an area of interest and concern, emphasizing the sociological perspective of this subject, and organizing the material in this book thematically all represent value judgments regarding priorities.

Trying to be *objective* about race and ethnic relations presents a strong challenge. People tend to use selective perception, accepting only information that agrees with their values or interpreting data in a way that confirms their attitudes about other groups. Some views may be based on personal or emotional considerations or even on false premises. Sometimes, however, reasonable and responsible people disagree on the matter in an unemotional way. Whatever the situation, the study of minority-group relations poses a challenge for objective examination.

The subject of race and ethnic relations is complex and touches our lives in many ways. As members of the groups we are studying, all readers of this book come to this subject with preconceived notions. Because many individuals have a strong tendency to tune out disagreeable information, you must make a continual effort to remain open-minded and receptive to new data.

The Dillingham Flaw

1.6 Explain the Dillingham Flaw and why it is important in studying diversity.

Complaints about today's foreign-born presence in the United States often flow from the critics' mistaken belief that they are reaching their judgments objectively. In comparing today's supposedly non-assimilating newcomers to past immigrants, many detractors fall victim to a false logic known as the **Dillingham Flaw**.[27]

Senator William P. Dillingham chaired a congressional commission on immigration that conducted extensive hearings between 1907 and 1911 on the massive immigration then occurring. In issuing its 41-volume report, the commission erred

"Looking Backward"

"They desire to ban the newest arrivals at the bridge over which they and theirs arrived." Five wealthy men—from left to right, an Englishman, a German Jew, an Irishman, a German, and a Scandinavian—prevent the new immigrants from coming ashore and enjoying the same privileges they now enjoy. The shadows of the five wealthy men are representations of their social status before immigration. The Englishman's shadow is a stableman, the German Jew's is a notions peddler, and the others' are peasant farm workers. (This cartoon by Joseph Keppler appeared in Puck on January 11, 1893.)

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

in its interpretation of the data by using simplistic categories and unfair comparisons of past and present immigrants and by ignoring three important factors: differences of technological evolution in the immigrants' countries of origin; the longer interval during which past immigrants had time to acculturate; and changed structural conditions in the United States wrought by industrialization and urbanization.[28]

The *Dillingham Flaw* thus refers to any inaccurate comparison based on simplistic categorizations and judgments mistakenly placed in a time where they do not belong. It is thus faulty logic in making *incorrect assumptions about the past* and *applying those stereotypes to the present to compare two groups*. The older group probably went through the same acculturation process over time. It's an apples-and-oranges approach, trying to compare two groups that are not comparable because of the time factor. To avoid the Dillingham Flaw, we must resist the temptation to use modern perceptions to explain a past that the people back then viewed differently.

Students Speak "My uncle's parents came here from Italy and worked super hard to become Americanized and make a great life for themselves and their family. My uncle is constantly making negative comparisons of present-day immigrants to the ones of the past. He believes that if people come to America, then they should be eager to learn the American way of living and pick up all of our customs and traditions, and he doesn't think that they do."

—Joseph Cordato

Here is an illustration of this concept. Anyone who criticizes today's immigrants as being slower to Americanize, learn English, and become a cohesive part of U.S. society than did past immigrants is overlooking the reality of the past. Previous immigrant groups went through the same gradual acculturation process and encountered the same complaints. Ethnic groups held up as role models in contrast to today's immigrants were themselves once the objects of scorn and condemnation for the same reasons.

To understand what is happening today, we need to view the present in a larger context—from a sociohistorical perspective. That is, in part, the approach taken in this book. By understanding past patterns in intergroup relations, we will better comprehend what is occurring in our times, and we will avoid becoming judgmental perpetrators of the Dillingham Flaw.

Personal Troubles and Public Issues

1.7 Identify the connection between personal troubles and public issues.

Both ethnocentrism and subjectivity are commonplace in problems involving intergroup relations. In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills explained that an intricate connection exists between the patterns of individual lives and the larger historical context of society. Ordinary people do not realize this, however, and so view their personal troubles as private matters. Their awareness is limited to their "immediate relations with others" and "the social setting that is directly open to personal experience and to some extent [their] willful activity."[29] Personal troubles occur when individuals believe their values are threatened.

However, said Mills, what we experience in diverse social settings often results from structural changes and institutional contradictions. The individual's local environment merely reflects the public issues of the larger social structure of life. An issue is a public matter concerning segments of the public who believe that one of their cherished values is threatened.

To illustrate: If a handful of undocumented aliens are smuggled into the United States and placed in a sweatshop in virtual slavery, that is their personal trouble, and we look for a resolution of that particular problem. But if large-scale smuggling of undocumented aliens into the country occurs, resulting in an underground economy of illegal sweatshops in many locales (as indeed happens), we need "to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, not just the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals."[30]

Similarly, if a few urban African American or Hispanic American youths drop out of school, the personal problems leading to their quitting and the means by which they secure economic stability in their lives become the focus of our attention. But if their dropout rate in most U.S. cities is consistently far greater than the national average (and it is), we must examine the economic, educational, and political issues that confront our urban institutions. These are larger issues, and we cannot resolve them simply by improving motivation, discipline, and opportunities for a few individuals.

Throughout this book, and particularly in the next chapter, we will examine this interplay of culture and social structure, ethnicity, and social class. What often passes for assumed group characteristics—or for individual character flaws or troubles—needs to be understood within the larger context of public issues involving the social structure and interaction patterns.

Mills also said, "All sociology worthy of the name is 'historical' sociology."[31] Agreeing with that point, I will place all groups we study within a sociohistorical perspective so that we can understand both historical and contemporary social structures that affect intergroup relations.

The Dynamics of Intergroup Relations

1.8 Discuss the dynamics of intergroup relations.

The study of intergroup relations is both fascinating and challenging because relationships continually change. The patterns of relating may change for many reasons: industrialization, urbanization, shifts in migration patterns, social movements, upward or downward economic trends, and so on. However, sometimes the changing relationships also reflect changing attitudes, as, for example, in the interaction between whites and Native Americans. Whites continually changed the emphasis: exploitation, extermination, isolation, segregation, paternalism, forced assimilation, and more recently, tolerance for pluralism and restoration of many Native American ways of life. Similarly, African Americans, Asian Americans, Jews, Catholics, and other minority groups all have had varying relations with the host society.

Some recent world events also illustrate changing dominant-group orientations toward minority groups. The large migrations of refugees and undocumented immgrants into Europe have triggered a backlash there. Strict law enforcement has resulted in a marked increase in deportations. Closed borders have placed many foreigners in limbo and violence has sometimes erupted.

Elsewhere, intergroup relations fluctuate, whethers between Hindus and Muslims in India, Muslims and Christians in Africa, Arabs and Jews in the Middle East, and Sunni and Shiite Muslims in Iraq and Syria. All go through varying periods of tumult and calm in their dealings with one another.

The field of race and ethnic relations has many theoreticians and investigators examining changing events and migration patterns. Each year, a vast outpouring of new research and information adds to our knowledge. New insights, new concepts, and new interpretations of old knowledge inundate the interested observer. What both the sociologist and the student must attempt to understand, therefore, is not a fixed and static phenomenon but a dynamic, ever-changing one about which we learn more all the time.

Sociological Perspectives

1.9 Evaluate what sociological perspectives tell us about minority groups.

Through scientific investigation, sociologists seek to determine the social forces that influence behavior as well as to identify recurring patterns to help them better understand that behavior. Using historical documents, reports, surveys, ethnographies, journalistic materials, and direct observation, they systematically gather empirical evidence about such intergroup relations. Sociologists then analyze these data to discover and describe the causes, functions, relationships, meanings, and consequences of intergroup harmony or tension. Not all sociologists agree when interpreting the data, however. Different theories, ideas, concepts, and even ideologies and prejudices may influence a sociologist's conclusions.

Disagreement among sociologists is no more unusual than in other areas of scientific investigation, such as physics debates about the creation of the universe, psychiatric debates on what constitutes a mental disorder, or genetic and social science debates on whether heredity or environment is more important in shaping behavior. Nonetheless, differing sociological theories play an important role in the focus of analysis and conclusions. In sociological investigation, three major perspectives shape the study of minorities: functionalist theory, conflict theory, and interactionist theory. The first two are **macrosocial theories** that focus on society itself, while the third one is a **microsocial theory** because it examines only one aspect within society. All three have a contribution to make because each acts as a different lens that provides a distinct focus on the subject. In this book, each will serve as a basis for sociological analysis at the end of every chapter.

Functionalist Theory

Proponents of **functionalist theory** emphasize that the various parts of society have functions, or positive effects, that promote solidarity and maintain the stability of the whole. Sometimes called *structural-functionalism*, it represents the core tradition of sociology, inspired by the writings of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), Herbert Spencer (1829–1905), and Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) in Europe, and developed further in the United States by Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) and Robert Merton (1910–2003).

Functionalists maintain that all the elements of a society should function together to maintain order and stability. Under ideal conditions, a society would be in a state of balance, with all its parts interacting harmoniously. Problems arise when parts of the social system become dysfunctional, upsetting the society's equilibrium. This system disorganization can occur for many reasons, but the most frequent cause is rapid social

Tony Dejak/AP Images

The 2008-2010 recession put millions of Americans out of work and desperate to find new jobs, like these individuals waiting in line to enter a job fair at the Cleveland Convention Center in 2009. Functionalist theorists would analyze the reasons for this societal dysfunction and what adjustments may be necessary to restore equilibrium.

change. Changes in one part of the system necessitate compensatory adjustments elsewhere, but these usually do not occur fast enough, resulting in tension and conflict.

Some components of the social structure have **manifest functions** (obvious and intended results), but they often have **latent functions** (hidden and unexpected results). For example, the obvious functions of the tourist visa program are to attract foreign visitors to build goodwill and to stimulate local economies at places they visit, thereby increasing the gross domestic product (GDP). One unintended result is thousands of visitors not returning after their visas expire and remaining here as illegal aliens.

Functionalists view dysfunctions as temporary maladjustments to an otherwise interdependent and relatively harmonious society. Because this perspective focuses on societal stability, the key issue in this analysis of social disorganization is whether to restore the equilibrium to its predisturbed state or to seek a new and different equilibrium. For example, how do we overcome the problem of undocumented aliens? Do we expel them to eliminate their exploitation, their alleged depression of regional wage scales, and their high costs to taxpayers in the form of health, education, and welfare benefits? Or do we grant them amnesty, help them enter the economic mainstream, and seal our borders against further undocumented entries? Whatever the solution—and these two suggestions do not exhaust the possibilities—functionalists emphasize that all problems regarding minorities can be resolved through adjustments to the social system that restore it to a state of equilibrium. Instead of major changes in the society, they prefer smaller corrections in the already functioning society.

Critics argue that because this theoretical viewpoint focuses on order and stability, it thus ignores the inequalities of gender, race, and social class that often generate tension and conflict. Those who see structural-functionalism as too conservative often favor the conflict perspective.

Conflict Theory

Proponents of **conflict theory**, influenced by Karl Marx's socioeconomic view of an elite exploiting the masses, see society as being continually engaged in a series of disagreements, tensions, and clashes as different groups compete for limited resources. They argue that the social structure fails to promote the society as a whole, as evidenced by existing social patterns benefiting some people while depriving others.

ANDREW HOLBROOKE/Corbis Historical/Getty Images

Conflict theorists examine inequality in society and how existing social patterns benefit some people while depriving others. That contrast is evident in this photo of homeless men living on the streets of New York City keeping warm by lying on top of a warm air vent, while the store window behind them displays warm coats they so badly need.

Rejecting the functionalist model of societal parts that usually work harmoniously, conflict theorists see disequilibrium and change as the norm. They examine the ongoing conflict between the dominant and subordinate groups in society—such as between whites and people of color, or men and women, or native born and foreign born. Regardless of the category studied, say conflict analysts, the pattern is usually that of those with power seeking to protect their privileges and those lower on the socioeconomic level struggling to gain a greater share than they have.

Conflict theorists focus on the inequalities that generate racial and ethnic antagonisms between groups. To explain why discrimination persists, they ask this question: Who benefits? Those already in power—employers and holders of wealth and property—exploit the powerless, seeking additional profits at the expense of unassimilated minorities. Because lower wages allow higher profits, ethnic discrimination serves the interests of investors and owners by weakening workers' bargaining power.

By emphasizing economics, Marxist analysis offers penetrating insight into intergroup relations and contemporary racism and problems associated with it. Conflict theorists insist that racism has much to do with maintaining power and controlling resources. In fact, racism is an **ideology**—a set of generalized beliefs used to explain and justify the interests of those who hold them.

In this sense, **false consciousness**—holding attitudes that do not accurately reflect the objective facts of the situation—might impel workers to adopt attitudes that run counter to their own real interests. If workers believe that the economic gains by workers of other groups would adversely affect their own living standards, they may not support actions to end discriminatory practices. If workers struggling to improve their situation believe other groups entrenched in better job positions are holding them back, they could view their own gains as possible only at the expense of the better established groups. In both cases, the wealthy and powerful benefit by pitting exploited workers of different racial and ethnic groups against each other, causing each to have strong negative feelings about the other. This distorted view stirs up conflict and occasional outbursts of violence between groups, preventing workers from recognizing their common bond of joint oppression and uniting to overcome it.[32]

Critics contend that this theoretical viewpoint focuses too much on inequality and thus ignores the achieved unity of a society through the social cement of shared values and mutual interdependence among its members. Those who see conflict theory as too

radical often favor the functionalist perspective. Still other critics reject both of these macrosocial theories as too broad and favor instead an entirely different approach, as explained in the next section.

Interactionist Theory

A third theoretical approach, **interactionist theory**, examines the microsocial world of personal interaction patterns in everyday life rather than the macrosocial aspects of social institutions and their harmony or conflict. **Symbolic interaction**—the shared symbols and definitions people use when communicating with one another—provides the focus for understanding how individuals create and interpret the life situations they experience. Symbols—our spoken language, expressions, body language, tone of voice, appearance, and images in films, on television or social media—are part of our social worlds.[33] Through these symbols we communicate, create impressions, and develop understandings of the surrounding world. Symbolic interaction theories are useful in understanding race and ethnic relations because they assume that minority groups are responsive and creative rather than passive.[34]

Essential to this perspective is how people define their reality through a process called the **social construction of reality**.[35] Individuals create a background against which to understand their separate actions and interactions with others. Taken-for-granted routines emerge on the basis of shared expectations. Participants see this socially constructed world as legitimate by virtue of its "objective" existence. In other words, people create cultural products: material artifacts, social institutions, ideologies, and so on (*externalization*). Over time, they lose awareness of having created their own social and cultural environment (*objectification*), and subsequently, they learn these supposedly objective facts of reality through the socialization process (*internalization*).

The interactionist perspective can be particularly helpful in understanding some of the false perceptions that occur in dominant–minority relations. As we will discuss shortly, racism is a good example of the social construction of reality. In addition to its focus on shared understandings among members of the same group, this viewpoint also provides insight into misunderstandings about different groups. One example is the oft-heard complaint that today's immigrants do not want to learn English or assimilate. Those who so believe offer as evidence the presence of foreign-language media programs or signs in stores and other public places, they cite overheard conversations in languages other than English or differences in dress, or they point to residential ethnic clusters where "non-American" customs and practices, along with language, seemingly prevent assimilation. Critics often link such complaints with a comparison to previous immigrants, typically European, who were not like this and who chose to assimilate rather than remain apart from the rest of society (the Dillingham Flaw argument).

In reality, such people fail to realize that they simply are witnessing a new version of a common pattern among all immigrants who come to the United States. They create in their minds a reality about the newcomers' subculture as being permanent instead of temporary, whereas their positive role model of past immigrant groups assimilating was actually seen by other nativists back then as also not assimilating, for the same reasons cited today. Interactionists would thus examine this reality that people create, the meaning they attach to that subjective reality, and how it affects their interactions with one another.

Critics complain that this focus on everyday interactions neglects the important roles played by culture and

A 2009 photo showing President Obama bowing to Japanese Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo led critics to complain about a U.S. president bowing to a foreign leader (he was not the first to do so). In Japanese culture though, this is an act of respect. Interactionists often study misunderstandings arising from cultural differences.

Charles Dharapak/AP Images

Table 1.2 Sociological Perspectives

	Functionalist	Conflict	Interactionist
Emphasis	**Macrosocial View**	**Macrosocial View**	**Microsocial View**
View of Society	Focus on a cooperative social system of interrelated parts that is relatively stable.	Focus on society as continually engaged in a series of disagreements, tensions, and clashes.	Focus on the microsocial world of personal interaction patterns in everyday life.
Interaction Processes	Societal elements function together to maintain order, stability, and equilibrium.	Conflict is inevitable because there is always a societal elite and an oppressed group.	Shared symbols and definitions provide the basis for interpreting life experiences.
Interaction Results	Societal dysfunctions result from temporary disorganization or maladjustment.	Disequilibrium and change are the norm because of societal inequalities.	An internalized social construction of reality makes it seem to be objective fact.
Reason for Problems	Rapid social change is the most frequent cause of loss of societal equilibrium.	False consciousness allows the ruling elite to maintain power and benefit from exploitation.	Shared expectations and understandings, or their absence, explain intergroup relations.
How to Improve Society	Necessary adjustments will restore the social system to equilibrium.	Group struggle against oppression is necessary to effect social change.	Better intercultural awareness will improve interaction patterns.

social structure and the critical elements of class, gender, and race. Interactionists say they do not ignore the macro-elements of society but that, by definition, a society is a structure in which people interact, and why and how they do that needs investigation and explanation.

Perhaps it would be most helpful if you viewed all three theoretical perspectives as different camera lenses looking at the same reality. Whether a wide-angle lens (a macrosocial view) or a telephoto lens (a microsocial view), each has something to reveal, and together, they offer a more complete understanding of society. Table 1.2 summarizes the three sociological perspectives just discussed.

Retrospect

Human beings follow certain patterns when responding to strangers. Their perceptions of newcomers reflect categoric knowing. If they perceive that the newcomers are similar, people are more receptive to their presence. What makes interaction with strangers difficult is the varying perceptions of each to the other, occasioned by a lack of shared understandings and perceptions of reality. Social distance is one means of determining the level of a group's social acceptance.

By definition, minority groups—regardless of their size—receive unequal treatment, possess identifying physical or cultural characteristics held in low esteem, are conscious of their shared ascribed status, and tend to practice endogamy. Racial groups are biologically similar groups, and ethnic groups are groups that share a learned cultural heritage. Intergroup relations are dynamic and continually changing.

Ethnocentrism—the tendency to identify with one's own group—is a universal human condition that contributes to potential problems in relating to outgroups. Examples of ethnocentric thinking and actions can be found in all countries throughout history. Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism are views emphasizing one culture or civilization over others.

The study of minorities presents a difficult challenge because our value orientations and life experiences can impair our objectivity. Even trained sociologists, being human, encounter difficulty in maintaining value neutrality. Indeed, some people argue that sociologists should take sides and not attempt a sterile approach to the subject. The Dillingham Flaw—using an inaccurate comparison based on simplistic categorizations and historically inaccurate judgments—seriously undermines the scientific worth of supposedly objective evaluations. Both ethnocentrism and subjectivity

are commonplace in problems involving intergroup relations. Clearer understanding occurs by examining the larger context of how so-called personal troubles connect with public issues.

In the sociological investigation of minorities, three perspectives shape analysis. Functionalist theory stresses the orderly interdependence of a society and the adjustments needed to restore equilibrium when dysfunctions occur. Conflict theory emphasizes the tensions and conflicts that result from exploitation and competition for limited resources. Interactionist theory concentrates on everyday interaction patterns operating within a socially constructed perception of reality.

Key Terms

Afrocentrism, p. 13
Ascribed status, p. 8
Categoric knowing, p. 6
Conflict theory, p. 19
Cultural relativism, p. 11
Dillingham Flaw, p. 15
Dominant group, p. 9
Emigration, p. 8
Endogamy, p. 8
Ethnicity, p. 10
Ethnocentrism, p. 11
Eurocentrism, p. 13
False consciousness, p. 20
Functionalist theory, p. 18
Ideology, p. 20
Immigration, p. 8
Ingroup, p. 11
Interactionist theory, p. 21
Latent functions, p. 19
Macrosocial theory, p. 18
Manifest functions, p. 19
Microsocial theory, p. 18
Migration, p. 8
Minority group, p. 8
Outgroup, p. 11
Race, p. 9
Racism, p. 10
Reference group, p. 12
Scientific method, p. 15
Social construction of reality, p. 21
Social distance, p. 3
Social identity theory, p. 11
Symbolic interaction, p. 21
Values, p. 15

Discussion Questions

1. How does the similarity–attraction concept help us to understand intergroup relations?
2. How does a minority group differ from an ethnic group? How does a race differ from an ethnic group?
3. What is ethnocentrism? Why is it important in relations between dominant and minority groups?
4. Why is objective study of racial and ethnic minorities difficult?
5. What is the Dillingham Flaw? Have you ever heard comments from anyone about other minorities that would illustrate this flawed thinking?
6. What are the main points of the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist theories?
7. What examples of social distance or ethnocentrism can you provide from your own experiences or observations with family, friends, or neighbors, on campus or at work?

Internet Activities

1. To learn more about the social construction of race, go to "Confusion about Human Races" for a forum on the subject sponsored by the Social Science Research Council (http://raceandgenomics.ssrc.org/Lewontin). What are two important things you learned from this source?
2. In the world community, through the United Nations, the rights and liberties that all should enjoy have been formalized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html). Read this important document. What similarities do you find between the Universal Declaration and the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution? Can you identify specific violations of the Universal Declaration in the situation of minorities in the United States?

Chapter 2
Culture and Social Structure

Steve Skjold/Alamy Stock Photo

Ethnic celebrations, whether festivals or parades, typically provide a colorful display of native costumes, music, dance, and other traditions, as illustrated by these participants in the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta in St. Paul, Minnesota. Ironically, it is not celebrated in most of Mexico, but in the U.S. it reaffirms ethnic identity, bonding, and pride in one's heritage.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

2.1 Explain how culture influences one's perceptions.

2.2 Examine how culture changes and spreads.

2.3 Explain how structural conditions affect intergroup relations.

2.4 Explain how stratification also affects intergroup relations.

2.5 Evaluate the role of social class in intergroup relations.

2.6 Examine factors that underlie intergroup conflict.

2.7 Explain how sociology helps us understand ethnic stratification.

2.8 Understand the existence of a white culture.

Understanding what makes people receptive to some strangers, but not all of them, requires knowledge of how culture and social structure affect perceptions and response patterns. Culture provides the guidelines for people's interpretations of situations they encounter and for the responses they consider appropriate. **Social structure**—the organized patterns of behavior among the basic components of a social system—establishes relatively predictable social relationships among the different peoples in a society. The distinctions and interplay between culture and social structure are important to the assimilation process as well. For example, cultural orientations of both minority and dominant groups shape expectations about how a minority group should fit into the society.

This chapter first examines the various aspects of culture that affect dominant–minority relations. We then discuss the significance of social class within the social structure. Next, we'll look at cultural differentiation and structural differentiation as bases for conflict, followed by a discussion about white culture.

The Concept of Culture

2.1 Explain how culture influences one's perceptions.

Human beings create their own social worlds and evolve further within them. Adapting to the environment, to new knowledge, and to technology, we learn a way of life within our society. We invent and share rules and patterns of behavior that shape our lives and the way we experience the world about us. The shared products of society that we call *culture*, whether material or nonmaterial, make social life possible and give our lives meaning. **Material culture** consists of all physical objects created by members of a society and the meanings/significance attached to them (for example, cars, cell phones, DVDs, iPods, high-top sneakers, or clothing). **Nonmaterial culture** consists of abstract human creations and their meanings or significance in life (such as attitudes, beliefs, customs, ideas, languages, lifestyles, norms, social institutions, and values). **Culture**, then, consists of all of these elements shared by members of a society and transmitted to the next generation.

These cultural attributes provide a sense of peoplehood and common bonds through which members of a society can relate (see the Reality Check box). Most sociologists therefore emphasize the impact of culture in shaping behavior.[1] Through

Reality Check

Basic U.S. Values

Within the diverse U.S. society of racial, ethnic, and religious groups, each with their own distinctive set of values, are the common core of values that define American culture. Numerous social scientists have created lists of these value orientations. Although some small differences occur among them, a general consensus does exist as to which ones serve as the foundation of American beliefs, behaviors, social goal definitions, and life expectations.

Foremost among these are *freedom* and *independence*, the cherishing of personal rights in contrast to domination by others. Closely aligned to these two values are two others, *equality* and *self-reliance*; we relate to one another informally as equals and believe everyone should work, and that anyone who does not is lazy. Accordingly, we are *competition-oriented*, and place a high value on *achievement* and *success*, in terms of power, prestige, and wealth.

In subscribing to these values, Americans also adopt other cultural orientations to complement them. These include a reliance on *science* and *rationality*, that technology—whether existing or still to be developed—can help us master the environment, create ever-better lifestyles, and solve all problems. Perhaps not surprisingly, we also place importance on *efficiency, practicality*, and *openness*. Both in communication style and approach to problems, Americans tend to be direct, seeking the quickest means to inform others or resolve issues.

Although other societies may subscribe to many of these values as well, this particular combination of values—virtually present from the nation's founding—have had and continue to have enormous impact in shaping U.S. society.

Critical Thinking Questions

Is humanitarianism also a prevalent U.S. value? In what other countries might it be a strong value orientation?

language and other forms of symbolic interaction, the members of a society learn the thought and behavior patterns that constitute their commonality as a people.[2] In this sense, culture is the social cement that binds a society together.

Shared cultural norms encourage solidarity and orient the behavior of members of the ingroup. **Norms** are a culture's rules of conduct—internalized by the members—embodying the society's fundamental expectations. Through norms, ingroup members (majority or minority) know how to react toward the acts of outgroup members that surprise, shock, or annoy them or in any way go against their shared expectations. Anything contrary to this "normal" state is seen as negative or deviant. When minority-group members "act uppity" or "don't know their place," majority-group members often get upset and sometimes act out their anger. Violations of norms usually trigger strong reactions because they appear to threaten the social fabric of a community or society. Eventually, most minority groups adapt their distinctive cultural traits to those of the host society through a process called **acculturation**. Intragroup variations remain, though, because ethnic-group members use different reference groups as role models.

An important component of intragroup cultural variations, seldom a part of the acculturation process, is religion. Indeed, not only does religion have strong links to the immigrant experience in the United States, as well as to African American slavery and pacification efforts toward Native Americans, but it also has many other connections to prejudice and social conflict. As subsequent chapters detail, the Catholic and Jewish faiths of past European immigrants often provoked nativist Protestant reactions, some quite violent and vicious. Similarly, recent immigrants who are believers of such religions as Hinduism, Islam, Rastafarianism, or Santería often experience prejudice and conflict because of their faith, as have the Amish, Mormons, Quakers, and many others in the United States in past years. Religious conflict is a sad reality in many parts of the world—the Balkans, India, and the Middle East, to mention just a few.

Professional sports are another part of culture that provides an area for the study of prejudice and racism. Long excluded from major league sports, people of color now are prominent participants in baseball, basketball, boxing, football, and track (see Table 2.1). Nevertheless, the vast majority of owners, managers, and head coaches in all sports are white.[3]

U.S. colleges continue to provide limited opportunities for people of color at the top management level. In 2015, white men held 91 percent of the athletic director positions at Division I schools. Women athletic directors thus comprised 9 percent, an all-time high. The percentage of head coaches of color was 12.9 percent.[4] Lagging

Table 2.1 Racial and Ethnic Demographics in U.S. Professional Sports

	National Basketball Association		National Football League		Major League Baseball	
Players	**2001–2002**	**2015–2016**	**2003**	**2016**	**2002**	**2017**
White	20%	18%	29%	27%	60%	58%
Black	78%	74%	69%	70%	10%	8%
Latino	1%	6%	1%	1%	28%	32%
Asian	<1%	<1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Other	0%	1%	<1%	<1%	0%	1%
Head Coach or Manager	**2001–2002**	**2015–2016**	**2003**	**2016**	**2002**	**2017**
White	52%	70%	91%	81%	68%	90%
Black	48%	27%	9%	16%	26%	3%
Latino	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	3%
Asian	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%

SOURCE: The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, *The Racial and Gender Report Card*, 2017.

Scott A. Miller/ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo

Ron Rivera is of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent. When hired by the Carolina Panthers football team in 2011, he was only the third Hispanic to become a head coach in the NFL. In the 2016 season, he was the only one. That same year 18 out of 2,257 NFL players were Hispanic.

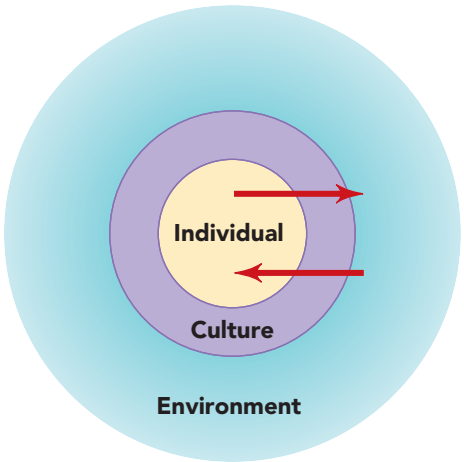
far behind professional sports regarding equal opportunities for the top jobs, college sports still need to do more to overcome embedded cultural biases.

The Reality Construct

Our perception of reality is related to our culture: Through our culture, we learn how to perceive the world about us. Cultural definitions help us interpret the sensory stimuli from our environment and tell us how to respond to them. In other words, culture helps us "make sense" of what we encounter. It is the screen through which we "see" and "understand" (Figure 2.1).

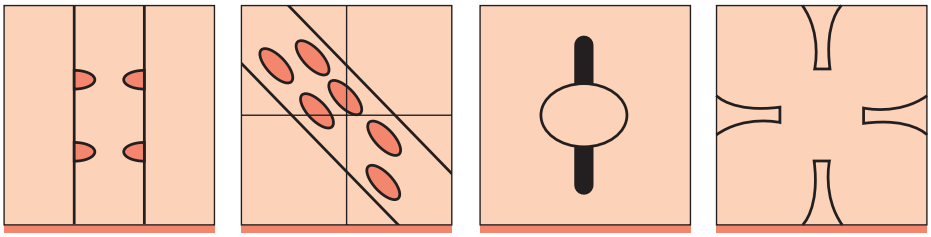
LANGUAGE AND OTHER SYMBOLS Culture is learned behavior, acquired chiefly through verbal communication, or language. A word is nothing more than a symbol—something that stands for something else. Whether it is tangible (*chair*) or intangible (*honesty*), the word represents a mental concept that is based on empirical reality. Words reflect culture, however, and one word may have different meanings in different cultures. If you are *carrying the torch* in England, you are holding a flashlight, not yearning for a lost love; if you could use a *lift*, you want an elevator, not a ride

Figure 2.1 Cultural Reality



Each **Individual** observes the world through **Sense Perceptions**, which are evaluated in terms of **Culture**—values, attitudes, customs, and beliefs.

Figure 2.2 "Droodles"



or a boost to your spirits. Because words symbolically interpret the world to us, the **linguistic relativity** of language may connote both intended and unintended prejudicial meanings. For example, *black* is the symbol for darkness (in the sense of lightlessness) or evil, and *white* symbolizes cleanliness or goodness; and a society may subtly (or not so subtly) transfer these meanings to black and white people.

Walter Lippmann, a prominent political columnist, once remarked, "First we look, then we name, and only then do we see." He meant that until we learn the symbols of our world, we cannot understand the world. A popular pastime in the early 1950s, called "Droodles," illustrates Lippmann's point. The object was to interpret drawings such as those in Figure 2.2. Many people were unable to see the meaning of the drawings until it was explained. They looked but did not see until they knew the "names." Can you guess what these drawings depict?[5]

Interpreting symbols is not merely an amusing game; it is significant in real life. Human beings do not respond to stimuli but to their definitions of those stimuli as mediated by their culture.[6] The definition of beauty is one example. Beyond the realm of personal taste, definitions of beauty have cultural variations. For instance, in different times and places, societies have based their appraisal of a woman's beauty on her having scar markings, tattoos, or beauty marks or on how plump or thin she was.

Nonverbal communication—or body language—is highly important, too. Body movements, gestures, physical proximity, facial expressions (there are as many as 136 facial expressions, each of which conveys a distinct meaning),[7] and **paralinguistic signals** (sounds but not words, such as a sigh, a kiss-puckering sound, or the *m-m-m* sound of tasting something good) all convey information to the observer–listener. Body language is important in intergroup relations, too, whether in conversation, interaction, or perception. Body language may support or belie one's words; it may suggest friendliness, aloofness, or deference.

Although some forms of body language are fairly universal (for example, most facial expressions), many cultural variations exist in body language itself and in the interpretation of its meanings. Body movements such as posture, bearing, and gait vary from culture to culture. The degree of formality in a person's environment (both past and present) and other cultural factors influence such forms of nonverbal communication. Consider the different meanings one could attach to a student's unwillingness to look directly into the eyes of a teacher. In the United States, the teacher may assume that this behavior reflects embarrassment, guilt, shyness, inattention, or even disrespect. Yet if the student is Asian or Hispanic, such demeanor is a mark of respect. The symbol's definition, in this case the teacher's interpretation of what the student's body language means, determines the meaning the observer ascribes to it.

A person who is foreign to a culture must learn both its language and the rest of its symbol system, as the members born into that culture did through socialization. Certain gestures may be signs of friendliness in one culture but obscene or vengeful symbols in another. For example, in the United States, placing thumb and forefinger in a circle with the other fingers upraised indicates that everything is fine, but in Japan, this sign refers to money, and in Greece, it is an insulting anal expression.[8] Kisses, tears, dances, emblems, silence, open displays of emotions, and thousands of other symbols can and often do have divergent meanings in different cultures. Symbols, including

language, help an ingroup construct a reality that may be unknown to or altogether different for an outgroup. Members of one group may then select, reject, ignore, or distort their sensory input regarding the other group because of cultural definitions.

THE THOMAS THEOREM William I. Thomas once observed that if people define situations as real, those situations become real in their consequences.[9] His statement, known as the **Thomas theorem**, relates directly to the *Dillingham Flaw* discussed in the first chapter. Whereas Thomas emphasized how definitions lead to actions that produce consequences to conform to the original, ill-founded definition, the Dillingham Flaw suggests the misguided thought process that may result in that definition in the first place.

The Thomas theorem is thus further testimony to the truth of reality constructs: Human beings respond to their definitions of stimuli rather than to the stimuli themselves. People often associate images (for example, "terrorists" or "illegal aliens") with specific minority groups. They then behave according to the meaning they assign to the situation, and the consequences of their behavior could serve to reaffirm the meaning; the definition becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, when whites define blacks as inferior and then offer them fewer opportunities because of that alleged inferiority, blacks are disadvantaged, which in turn supports the initial definition.

Several variables contribute to the initial definition, but culture is one of the most important of these. Culture establishes the framework through which an individual perceives others, classifies them into groups, and assigns certain general characteristics to them. Because ethnocentrism leads people to consider their way of life as being the best and most natural, their culturally defined perceptions of others often lead to suspicion and differential treatment of other groups. In effect, each group constructs myths about other groups and supports those myths through ingroup solidarity and outgroup hostility. In such instances, people create a culturally determined world of reality, and their actions reinforce their beliefs. Social interaction or social change may counteract such situations, however, leading to their redefinition.

Social scientists have long known how cultural definitions can influence perception. For example, more than 70 years ago, within a two-month period, Gregory Razran twice showed the same set of 30 pictures of unknown young women to the same group of 100 male college students and 50 noncollege men. Using a five-point scale, the subjects rated each woman's beauty, character, intelligence, ambition, and general likeability. At the first presentation, the pictures had no ethnic identification, but at the second presentation, they were labeled with Irish, Italian, Jewish, and old American (English) surnames. All women were rated equally on the first presentation, but when the names were given, the ratings changed. The "Jewish" women received higher ratings in ambition and intelligence. Both "Jewish" and "Italian" women suffered a large decline in general likeability and a slight decline in beauty and character evaluations.[10] This study is one of many illustrating how cultural definitions affect judgments about others.

Through **cultural transmission**, each generation transmits its culture to the next generation, which learns those cultural definitions at an early age. This fact is expressed dramatically in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *South Pacific*. The tragic subplot is the touching romance between Lieutenant Cable and the young Tonkinese woman Liat. Although Cable and Liat are deeply in love, Cable's friends remind him that the couple's life would not be the same in the United States. Their differences in race and culture would work against a happy marriage for them, as would his own acceptance in Philadelphia high society. Miserable because of the choice his cultural values force him to make, he sings "Carefully Taught," a poignant song about how prejudice is taught to children.

Within the cynical lyrics are statements about adults continually teaching children to fear and hate; that from year to year they are conditioning children to be afraid of those with differently shaped eyes or skin colors; and that they must teach children to hate all people that their family members hate. This shaping of children's attitudes must be done before it's "too late." Implied by that last point is that family members

need to teach prejudice to children before they are of school age and begin to develop their own viewpoints through education and social interactions. As contained in the show, the song is a rebuke of this practice even as it explains the process.

These lyrics reinforce the reality construct discussed previously and illustrated in Figure 2.1. From family, friends, school, mass media, and all other sources of informational input, we learn our values, attitudes, and beliefs. Some of our learning reflects the prejudices of others, which we may incorporate in our own attitudes and actions.

Cultural Change

2.2 Examine how culture changes and spreads.

Culture continually changes. Discoveries, inventions, technological advances, innovations, and natural disasters alter the customs, values, attitudes, and beliefs of a society. This section focuses on two common processes of cultural change: cultural diffusion within a whole society and changes within a particular subculture of that society.

Cultural Diffusion

Even if the members of a dominant culture wish to keep their society untainted by contact with foreign elements, cultures are influenced inevitably by other cultures—a phenomenon termed **cultural diffusion**. Ideas, inventions, and practices spread from one culture to another, but they may do so at different rates, depending on societal attitudes, conditions, and the distance between groups. Sometimes material culture objects get modified or reinterpreted, such as when some native Latin American tribes of the early twentieth century showed a unique fondness for automobile tires, using them to make sandals because they neither owned nor drove cars.[11]

BORROWED ELEMENTS U.S. anthropologist Ralph Linton calculated that any given culture contains about 90 percent borrowed elements. To demonstrate both the unrealized enormity and subtlety of cultural diffusion, he offered a classic portrait of the "100 percent American" male:

> Our solid American citizen awakens in a bed built on a pattern which originated in the Near East but which was modified in Northern Europe before it was transmitted to America. He throws back covers made from cotton, domesticated in India, or linen, domesticated in the Near East, or wool, from sheep,

CREATISTA/Shutterstock

An excellent example of culture diffusion and cultural change is mobile phone texting, which only began in the 1990s and was widely used in Europe before it became popular in the United States. Even today, 80 percent of Europeans send text messages compared to about 67 percent in North America, although that gap is rapidly closing.