SIXTH EDITION

Understanding Human Differences

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR A DIVERSE AMERICA

KENT L. KOPPELMAN
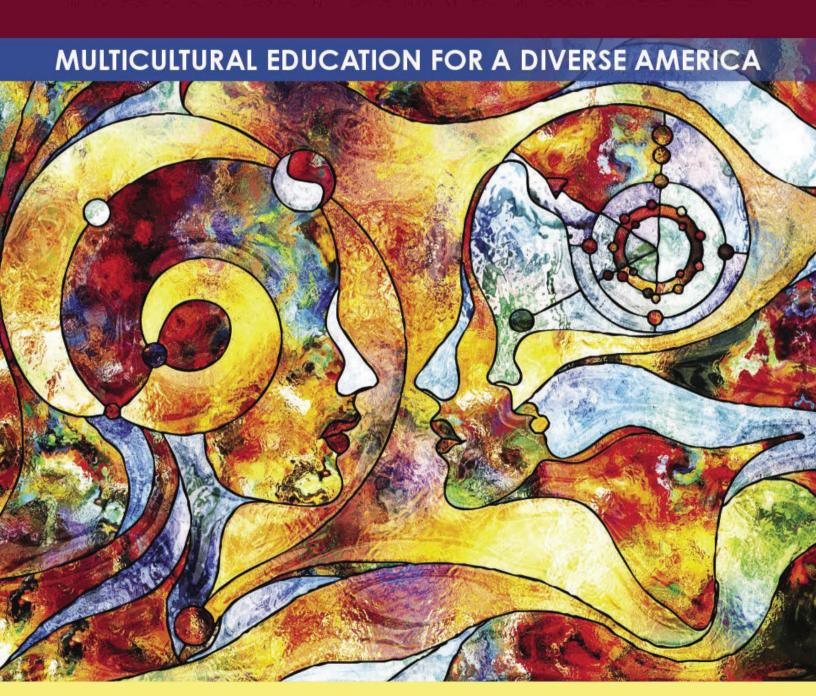
Understanding Human Differences

Multicultural Education for a Diverse America

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P Pearson

Dedicated to
Burt Altman and Dick Rasmussen,
who demonstrated the meaning of the word good
to precede the nouns colleague, mentor, friend,
and human being.

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Preface

Why Do We Need to Understand Diversity?

Americans live in the most racially, ethnically, and socially diverse country on earth. Yet too often we live, work, and play as if our own social, gender, or religious group is the only one that matters. To enjoy the advantages of our national diversity, it is necessary that Americans seek as many facts and consider as many issues as possible to enhance their ability to interact effectively with individuals from diverse groups. This text is not a collection of essays providing multiple perspectives on diversity—there are many books that already do that; instead, this text uses research to examine problems, perceptions, misperceptions, and the potential benefits of the diversity that exists in the United States. Understanding diversity is obviously a prerequisite for becoming an individual who values the diversity in American society.

If we are to value and respect the diversity represented by different groups in the United States, we can begin by learning how to value and respect opinions that differ from our own. It is not necessary to agree with everything a person might say, but it is necessary that when we disagree, we are able to express disagreement based upon a consideration of all available information and within a context of mutual respect.

The issues this text addresses are not new: Human beings have struggled with them in one form or another for centuries, as illustrated by the quotations from individuals of different eras that appear in each chapter. The quotations are not placed randomly in the text, but near a section of text that relates to each one. For example, near the section in Chapter 2 addressing the confusion about positive prejudices and explaining why prejudices are always negative, the quotation by Charles Lamb suggests that prejudices involve "likings and dislikings." Because Lamb was a respected writer of his era, his confusion about some prejudices being positive was not based on a lack of education or intellectual ability but instead illustrates how ancient this misperception is.

Since the first edition of *Understanding Human Differences* was published, the rights of various minority groups in the United States have become common topics for debate. The issue of *transgender soldiers* being able to serve openly in the U.S. military has become a controversy affecting the military, the president, and members of Congress. Students used to come to diversity classes oblivious of the issues, but that is less likely now, even though many diversity topics are still misunderstood.

New to This Edition

Two specific goals for this edition were (1) to include content that had not been addressed in previous editions, such as how American Indians are portrayed in K–12 curricula, research on the positive impact of immigrants on urban economies, the consequences for people with a disability of low wages paid to health care workers, and the reaction to the proposed travel ban against Muslims, and (2) to expand the coverage of critical issues such as new developments affecting income inequality, the incarceration of people of color and the school-to-prison pipeline, the ongoing struggle for civil rights for LGBT people, the economic and social consequences of closing urban schools, and the principles and successful practices of restorative justice programs in K–12 schools. Diversity issues are not static as new factors impact ongoing issues and as new issues emerge. It is important for all of us to try to be as knowledgeable as we can to participate in the discussions and debates on these issues.

As with any new edition, care has been taken to update statistics and sources and to find more current examples of issues, and this edition has expanded the number of examples pertaining to issues in K–12 schools. With regard to specific additions of content, the sixth edition of *Understanding Human Differences* includes the following:
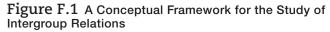
- Update of racial profiling, especially police officers killing unarmed black men (Ch. 2 and 8)

- Impact of the 2016 election on student expressions of prejudice in K-12 schools (Ch. 3)

- Additional content on increased fears of undocumented workers about deportation (Ch. 4)

- New content on need for K-12 schools to prepare immigrant youth for college (Ch. 4)

- Added content on Religious Freedom Restoration Act and arguments for teaching about religion in K-12 public schools (Ch. 6)

- Expanded coverage of economic issues increasingly affecting elderly and young Americans (Ch. 9)

- Expanded coverage of health care issues for low-income families and for people with a disability (Ch. 9 and 12)
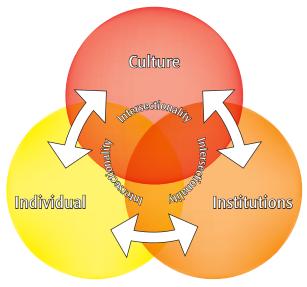
- Expanded information on influence of cultural body images on males (Ch. 10)
- Examination of arguments from opponents of same-sex marriage (Ch. 11)
- Added content on implications for people with a disability of low-wages paid to home care workers (Ch. 12)
- Update on Common Core State Standards and the political opposition (Ch. 13)
- Updated information on corporate efforts to promote diversity (Ch. 14)
- New information on gender issues in the military such as the Marine Corps sexist web site scandal (Ch. 14)

Organization/The Conceptual Framework for this Text

Understanding human differences is an ongoing challenge. Initially, scholars focused on *individual attitudes and behaviors*; later, they described the influence of *cultural expectations* in shaping individual attitudes. Finally, scholars addressed *institutional policies and practices* in which either discrimination was intentional against minority groups or it was an unintentional outcome. Vega (1978) describes a conceptual framework incorporating these three elements to understand human differences and the oppression of minority groups by dominant groups. This conceptual framework provides the basis for the organization of this text as we examine individual attitudes and actions, the evolution of cultural biases, and the establishment of discriminatory institutional practices (see Figure F.1).

To understand human differences, Vega's conceptual framework allows us to analyze American cultural, individual, and institutional behaviors. In exploring culture, the objective is to describe *cultural norms and standards*. What images are associated with the ideal? Any culture

Figure F.1 A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Intergroup Relations

associates particular images with the ideal woman, the ideal man, and the ideal family. For many Americans, those images are primarily White middle-class people living in a nuclear family. Norms and standards are powerful determinants of individual expectations and behaviors, represented by the arrow pointing from culture to individual. Once we understand norms and standards, we can begin to understand what is meant by *cultural biases*. In a multicultural society, cultural biases can be detrimental to minority groups whose norms or standards do not conform to those of the dominant culture.

The influence of culture on individuals is powerful, as can be seen in the analysis of *individual beliefs, attitudes, values, opinions, actions, and inactions*; sometimes what a person chooses *not* to do reveals as much as his or her actions. Although individuals are influenced by their cultural norms and standards, the Vega conceptual framework portrays that arrow as double headed, meaning that when significant numbers of individuals accept cultural norms, express their agreement, and behave in accordance with them, the cultural norms and standards are reinforced. Any analysis of individual behavior must include the influence of prejudice on an individual's choices.

Finally, it is critical to analyze *institutional practices, policies*, and *standard operating procedures* that are influenced by cultural norms and standards as well as by individual attitudes and behavior. To the extent that they reflect cultural norms and standards as well as individual attitudes and behaviors, institutions also reinforce them. To relate institutions to human differences, the analysis must focus on discrimination, identifying both ways in which the institution intentionally discriminates against certain groups and ways in which the institution unintentionally advantages certain groups and disadvantages others. In the late 1980s, the term "intersectionality" was coined to address the social reality of overlapping identities based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation and social class and the unique forms of oppression occurring as a consequence of individuals having multiple social identities. The term was intended to expand our understanding of the complexity of oppression and the need for anti-oppressive awareness and activity to go beyond the rigid, established categories (Robertson, 2017). This term is being included in the Vega conceptual framework for the 6th edition of this textbook in recognition of its usefulness in understanding how multiple identities influence oppression. Although the Vega conceptual framework describes the intricate relationship among the three areas—cultural, individual, and institutional—chapter narratives of necessity deal with each discretely. Readers are asked to keep in mind the double-headed arrows signifying that all three areas are interlocked to create the following relationships:

1. Cultural norms and standards influence and are reinforced by individual attitudes and behaviors and institutional policies and procedures.

2. Individual attitudes and behaviors influence and are reinforced by cultural norms and standards and by institutional policies and procedures.

3. Institutional policies and procedures influence and are reinforced by cultural norms and standards and individual attitudes and beliefs.

The four sections of this text that relate to the conceptual framework are as follows.

- Section 1 focuses on the *individual* by exploring personal values, interpersonal communication, and the way an individual develops negative attitudes toward other people based on perceptions of group identity (leading to bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and negative behavior toward members of these groups).

- Section 2 focuses on *culture* by examining the pattern of historical responses in American society toward immigration and the increased racial and religious diversity that has always been a consequence of this immigration. The final chapter of this section describes how those who are pluralism advocates are engaged in efforts to reject this historical pattern of discrimination, but as the following section illustrates, discrimination remains a problem in our society.

- Section 3 describes interrelationships among culture, individuals, and institutions to produce discrimination based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and disability, with institutional issues being a major focus of this section.

- Section 4 addresses changes that have been implemented to reduce levels of individual prejudice and institutional discrimination, focusing on major institutions in our society such as K–12 schools, higher education, business, the media, and the military; their pluralistic policies and practices are designed to benefit from the diversity that exists in our society. This conceptual framework helps us to appreciate not only the changes that are occurring but also the ongoing issues that illustrate how much further we have to go.

Before concluding this explanation of Vega's conceptual framework, consider this example to illustrate how interreliant culture is with individual and institutional behaviors. Although many forms of family exist in the United States, our cultural bias is for the nuclear family (the norm). Influenced by this cultural bias, Americans tend to form nuclear families. Even when people with a cultural tradition of extended families immigrate to the United States, they tend to form nuclear families within a few generations,

sometimes reversing convention with older adult parents receiving care in nursing homes rather than at home.

American institutions have encouraged the formation of nuclear families because they are more able to relocate in an age in which mobility of workers is highly desirable. In an analysis of discrimination, problems may emerge for minority subcultures that value extended families if they maintain that value rather than adjust to the cultural norm. As this example illustrates, Vega's conceptual framework helps clarify the complexity of intergroup relations by describing the related factors involved in the oppression of minority groups by a dominant group.

Inquiry Approach/ Discussion Exercises

Chapter narratives in this text are presented in an inquiry format. After a brief introduction, each chapter consists of related questions with responses based on research from a variety of disciplines and on author expertise. As references illustrate, information for this text has been collected from studies in a broad array of behavioral sciences, including education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, science, and literature. Although sources cited are from relatively recent publications, some older sources are also included either because they are still highly regarded in the field or simply because an author expressed a conclusion replicated by other research but not stated with as much clarity.

Discussion Exercises

To reinforce the inquiry approach, exercises for group discussion are provided at the end of each chapter to examine serious ethical questions. Based on specific issues, activities encourage readers to reflect on and discuss aspects of issues that involve ethical or moral dilemmas. The exercises are not designed to manipulate readers into finding a "politically correct" solution; rather, they enable students to hear the variety of responses from others and appreciate the complexity of individual, institutional, and cultural issues in America today.

The Intent of This Text

The information provided in this text is intended to challenge readers to think and talk about issues that each of us must consider as citizens in a multicultural society; this text is not necessarily intended to change reader values but to challenge attitudes based on incomplete or erroneous information (see Chapter 1 for a description of the difference between *values* and *attitudes*). Diversity brings benefits as well as challenges, but the surest way to enjoy the benefits is to meet the challenges with a firm foundation of knowledge and insight that is based on research from all behavioral sciences. Once students have read this text, the primary goal will be realized if they have gained a better understanding of the issues addressed. Whether or not that is accompanied by changes in attitudes is up to each individual; and there is an Attitude Inventory in the Instructor's Manual that accompanies this text. Your instructor may ask for your cooperation in taking this inventory before, during, or on completion of the course.

The intent of this text is to clarify our understanding of human differences and the role they play in interpersonal and intergroup relations. The Vega conceptual framework allows us to recognize how the interlocking circles of cultural biases, individual attitudes and actions, and institutional policies and practices have produced inequities that continue to polarize and all too often prevent Americans from achieving ideals first expressed over two centuries ago when dreamers imagined a radical new concept: a nation where each person would be given the freedom to be whoever he or she wanted to be.

Support Materials for Instructors

The following resources are available for instructors to download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Instructors enter the author or title of this text, select this particular edition of the text, and then click on the "resources" tab to log in and download textbook supplements.

Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank (0135170567)

The Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank includes a wealth of interesting ideas and activities designed to help instructors teach the course. Each chapter contains learning outcomes and a comprehensive test bank containing multiple choice questions, discussion questions, exercises, and suggested readings. There is also an Attitude Inventory and instructions for its potential use.

PowerPoint™ Slides (0135170575)

Designed for teachers using the text, the PowerPoint™ Presentation consists of a series of slides that can be shown as is or used to make handouts. The presentation highlights key concepts and major topics for each chapter.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1
Understanding Ourselves and Others: Clarifying Values and Language

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⌄ Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter you will know and be able to:

1.1 Explain how Americans learn their beliefs and values, and the role of these beliefs and values in shaping behavior.

1.2 Provide meaningful definitions and distinctions for two sets of related terms: (1) *bias, stereotype, prejudice, bigotry*, and *discrimination*, and (2) *race, ethnicity, nationality*, and *minority group*.

> "I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them, nor to hate them, but to understand them."
>
> — BARUCH SPINOZA (1632–1677)

If we take Spinoza's quote seriously, we need to understand all kinds of diversity— including opinions, appearances, values, and beliefs—as well as the categories of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Because America is not only a diverse society but also a democratic one, we have the freedom to choose

our perceptions, assumptions, and behaviors. The study of human diversity obviously requires an examination of social groups that encounter discrimination. However, in addition to focusing on the sociocultural differences among groups, we must also acknowledge the importance of individual differences. Each of us wants to be recognized as an individual. Our experiences are affected by multiple factors, including whether we are White or an individual of color; female or male; from a low-, middle-, or upper-income family; or from a rural, suburban, or urban home. Each individual's opinion offers a unique perspective that only the individual expressing it can fully understand. The task for us as listeners is to understand as best as we can the beliefs and values articulated by the individuals we encounter.

The Role of Beliefs and Values in Human Differences

How do scholars distinguish between beliefs and values? Kniker (1977) suggests that **beliefs** are inferences about reality that take one of three forms: descriptive, evaluative, or prescriptive. A *descriptive belief* is exemplified by those who argued that the world was not flat but round because they observed boats sailing off to the horizon and recognized that the hulls disappear while sails are still visible. An *evaluative belief* is illustrated by Winston Churchill's conclusion about democracy based on his reading of history: He understood why some called democracy the worst form of government, but he found it to be better than all other forms of government that had been attempted thus far. An example of a *prescriptive belief* would be the recommendation that students take a role in creating classroom rules because research showed that students who help create rules are more likely to be cooperative and abide by them. All beliefs are predispositions to types of action. Rokeach asserts that a cluster of related beliefs creates an **attitude**; he defines **values** as "combinations of attitudes which generate action or deliberate choice to avoid action" (Kniker, 1977, p. 33).
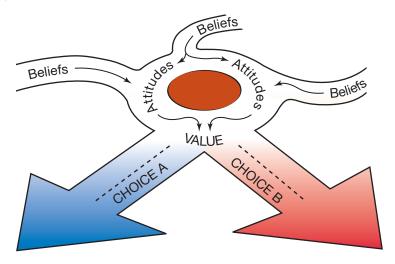
Rokeach is saying that values determine our choices: Values are the foundation for actions we choose to take—or to avoid (see Figure 1.1). What value do Americans place on wealth? For some, money and possessions are the primary measures of success. They admire others who are rich and successful, and they define their own worth by their income and wealth. For others, money is not a priority. Their main concern is to make enough money to support a comfortable lifestyle, however they choose to define it. There are also people who believe the biblical caution that love of money is "the root of all evil" and refuse to let wealth play an important role in their choices. Their behavior is a reflection of their values. While serving as vice president to John Adams, Thomas Jefferson was once turned away from a prominent hotel because his clothes were soiled and he had no servants with him. After the proprietor was told whom he had refused, he sent word to Jefferson, offering him any room in the hotel. Having been accepted into another hotel, Jefferson sent a reply politely refusing the offer of a room, noting that if the hotel proprietor did not have a room for a "dirty farmer," then he must not have a room for the vice president either (Botkin, 1957).

What is the relationship between values and behaviors?

America has a history of social commentary on the role of values in people's lives, and scholars engage in research examining the relationship between expressed values and behavior. Searching for consistent patterns in values research is challenging. However, one theme from social critics has been repeatedly supported by research and case study: There is a consistent inconsistency between what we say we value and our actual behavior (Aronson, 2012; Lefkowitz, 1997; Myrdal, 1944; Terry, Hogg, & Duck, 1999).

Figure 1.1 The Relationship of Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Choices

From Charles R. Kniker, *You and Values Education*. Published by Allyn & Bacon/Merrill Education, Boston, MA. Copyright © 1977. Reprinted and Electronically reproduced by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

The tendency for Americans to say we believe in a certain value and then engage in contradictory behavior is a curious and yet consistent pattern. Contradictory behavior by human beings has been criticized and even ridiculed by essayists, novelists, and observers of American society. In 1938, the Carnegie Foundation invited Swedish social economist Gunnar Myrdal to the United States to conduct a study on the "American Negro Problem." Myrdal (1944) went far beyond a study of racial relations: He attempted to identify and understand the core values of American society.

In his analysis of Myrdal's research, Risberg (1978) identified nine values that Americans perceived as defining their culture:

1. Worth and dignity of the individual
2. Equality
3. Inalienable rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
4. Rights to freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, and private association
5. Consent of the governed
6. Majority rule
7. Rule of law
8. Due process of law
9. Community and national welfare. (pp. 5–6)

These identified core values seem to be accurate, especially if we compare American culture to other cultures. For example, many nations around the world put great emphasis on the collective good, but in the United States we tend to focus on personal worth and to reward individual achievements. Expectations of equality and of having "inalienable rights" are expressed in founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, and our various freedoms are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution. Our representative form of democracy is based on the assumption that local, state, and national governments will be elected by the majority, with an expectation that they will rule with the consent of the governed for the welfare of the community, state, and nation. Finally, being ruled by laws and being given a chance to resolve issues by making our case in court (due process) was established to protect our citizens from the whims of the wealthy and powerful (a reaction to oppressive behavior from aristocrats and monarchs in the past). These values have historically defined America as a society, and they represent beliefs that all Americans share.

Despite the consensus about them, Myrdal observed that all of the values were regularly contradicted by American behavior. He provided examples from his observations, primarily based on race relations, to illustrate his conclusion.

What inconsistencies exist between American values and American behaviors?

Although Americans have always tended to emphasize individuality, American society quite consistently has demanded conformity. The influence of peers on individual behavior illustrates the seductive power of conformity. Social psychologists studying the influence of peer pressure have reported that people in groups engage in behaviors they would not undertake as individuals (Aronson, 2012; Haag, 2000; Terry, Hogg, & Duck, 1999). According to LeBon (1968), when individuals congregate, the group "presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it" (p. 27). In a study of young men who had assaulted gay males, Franklin (2000) found that many of the men she interviewed expressed tolerant attitudes toward homosexuality even though they admitted that when they were with friends, they participated in verbal or physical assaults on people perceived to be gay. When questioned, 35 percent said they were motivated by a desire to prove their "toughness" and to become closer to the friends who engaged in antigay behavior.

> "The primal principle of democracy is the worth and dignity of the individual."
>
> — EDWARD BELLAMY (1850–1898)

Contradictory behavior also is illustrated in the belief that Americans value equality. The Declaration of Independence proclaims that the United States is founded on the belief that "all men are created equal," and yet the man who wrote that statement owned slaves. During World War II, boxing champions Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson signed up for military service. At a bus stop in Alabama, a military policeman insisted that the two "colored soldiers" move to the rear of the station. When they refused, they were arrested. After an officer had reprimanded them, Louis responded, "Sir, I'm a soldier like any other American soldier. I don't want to be pushed to the back because I'm a Negro" (Mead, 1985, p. 231). Despite the gains made from the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the United States has still not achieved the goal of racial equality.

This nation also was founded on the rule of law and the belief in a justice system that would be fair to everyone, yet people with wealth and status are able to circumvent this ideal. One of many examples challenging this belief occurred in Texas in 2013. A mother and daughter tried to assist a woman whose car had stalled on the side of a highway, and a youth pastor also stopped to help. Suddenly a pickup veered off the road, smashing into the cars and killing the four people. Two people in the back of the pickup were also injured; one had a brain injury that deprived him of the ability to move or talk. The teenage driver, Ethan Couch, had a blood alcohol level of 0.24, three times the legal limit. When the case came to trial, the boy's wealthy father hired an expensive legal defense team. A psychologist testified that Ethan was a victim of "affluenza," describing his misbehavior as a result of having wealthy, privileged parents who never set limits for him. After the trial, the judge insisted that the "affluenza" claim had no influence on her ruling; however, as punishment for killing four innocent people and injuring two others, Ethan Couch was sentenced to no jail time and only 10 days' probation. In response to outrage over this light punishment, the judge modified her sentence to order Couch to a residential treatment facility. The judge did not indicate what length of time the teenager would be required to stay there (Ford, 2014). In contrast to Ethan Couch, there are a lot of poor people in prison today because they could not afford to hire the skilled lawyers available to wealthy clients who are more likely to be successful in getting desired outcomes in court.

Even when wealthy people are convicted and incarcerated, they may have a very different experience than the average individual. Since the 1990s, certain Southern California city jails and prisons have provided upscale cells for affluent prisoners. For $45 to $175 a day, incarcerated people can have luxuries such as an iPod, a cell phone,

an exercise bike, DVDs, or a computer. They may also request a private cell, have their meals catered, or be placed in a work release program depending on what they can afford. In contrast, jail conditions in Los Angeles County offer a compelling reason to avoid them. A *Michigan Law Review* article described the fate of 21,000 inmates who were each housed with three other prisoners in filthy cells (originally built for two people); 85 percent of these inmates were pretrial detainees, and most were arrested on nonviolent charges. In 2007, over 2000 prisoners in the Pasadena jail paid about $234,000 for what some have called "incarceration vacations" (Clark, 2014). Other states are copying the practices of California city jails and state prisons, and these luxury jail cells illustrate that our justice system does not dispense punishment equally.

What Myrdal observed and reported in the 1940s continues to be true: As individuals and as a society, Americans behave inconsistently, engaging in actions that contradict expressed values. Myrdal's observations reinforced what American social critics had been saying for years and what research and case studies have documented. These observations require some explanation, and it seems logical to begin by examining how people choose their values.

> "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."
>
> — ANATOLE FRANCE (1844–1924)

Are values individually chosen, or are we taught to accept certain values?

The way American values are taught plays a major role in our acceptance of them. Individuals, subcultures, and institutions are involved in teaching values; parents, teachers, peers, clergy, relatives, and youth counselors are just a few examples. By studying how individuals and organizations in America teach values to children and youth, Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1978) identified seven traditional approaches.

The first way to teach values is to (1) *set an example*. Parents and teachers are supposed to be role models for children and youth. Young people are also told to emulate various individuals—from historical leaders to contemporary athletes—whose achievements are attributed to practicing certain values. In similar fashion, schools and other organizations use (2) *rules and regulations* to promote certain behaviors in children and youth (and adults) that represent important values. Learning punctuality is considered important enough that teachers send children to the principal's office for a tardy pass if they are late for class. This example is especially interesting because the child securing the tardy pass from the principal is kept away from the classroom for additional time while the other children engage in some kind of learning activity, which is supposedly the primary purpose for requiring students to attend school.

Another approach is to (3) *persuade or convince* others to accept certain values. Respectful discussions with reasonable arguments can be an effective means of convincing someone that the values being espoused are appropriate for living a good life. Related to this is (4) an *appeal to conscience* in which a parent or teacher may challenge a child or youth who seems to advocate an inappropriate value or belief. This approach is illustrated when a teacher responds to a student making an inappropriate comment by saying, "You don't really believe that, do you?" The point of such questions is not to give the student a chance to explain or defend what he or she said but to produce a subtle and insistent form of moral pressure intended to coerce the student into rejecting an unacceptable point of view.

Parents often teach values by offering (5) *limited choices*. By limiting choices, parents intend to manipulate children into making acceptable decisions. If a mother values cooperation and tells her children that family members should share in household duties, what can she do if one of her children refuses? She asks one child to wash dishes twice a week, but the child hates to wash dishes and refuses. The mother might say, "Either you agree to wash dishes twice a week, or you will not be allowed to play with your friends after school." The child is restricted to two options in the hope that he or she will choose to do the dishes, reinforcing the mother's original objective of wanting her children to learn the value of sharing domestic responsibilities.

Organizations have employed the approach of (6) *inspiring people* to embrace certain values, often by sponsoring a "retreat" with inspirational or motivational speakers or a social function where the combination of speakers, films, and activities is designed to have emotional or spiritual impact. Although religious groups employ this approach, corporations sponsor such events to inspire employees to work harder to achieve personal or group goals and, in doing so, contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

Some religious groups and secular organizations emphasize (7) *religious or cultural dogma* to teach values. To accept beliefs without questioning them is to be **dogmatic**. If a Christian with dogmatic beliefs were questioned, he or she might say, "That's what the Bible says," or, similarly, a dogmatic Muslim might say, "This is what it says in the Qu'ran," even though for centuries people have interpreted the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad in different ways. Even early Christians held widely divergent views on the meanings of the life and words of Jesus (Pagels, 2006). Dogmatic beliefs stifle debate by emphasizing tradition: "This is what we have always believed."

Dogmatic beliefs also can be found in a secular context. When someone questions a value based on cultural beliefs, a dogmatic response might be "We've always done it this way." The appeal to tradition in opposing change has been employed in such controversies as using Native American mascots for school sports teams and including the Confederate flag in the official flags of some southern states. Only in 2003 did Georgia change its state flag to remove the Confederate symbol, and in 2015, South Carolina finally removed the Confederate flag from its statehouse grounds after a White supremacist murdered nine Black people in a church.

Understanding how values are taught provides some insight in answering the question about why people consistently behave in ways that contradict their expressed values. Each of the seven traditional approaches to teaching values seems to be based on a common assumption, and that assumption might explain the inconsistencies.

"When people are free to do as they please they usually imitate each other."

— ERIC HOFFER (1902–1983)

How does the way values are taught explain the inconsistency between values and behavior?

What do the seven traditional approaches to teaching values have in common? They are all based on an assumption that certain prescribed values should be taught and that the individuals being instructed should accept them. The individual teaching values—the teacher, parent, Scout leader, minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or employer—knows which values are appropriate. The goal is to persuade the student, child, parishioner, or worker to accept those values. In actuality, each approach is a form of **indoctrination**, where the intent is to dictate cultural values that must be accepted rather than assist people in deciding what is right and wrong (see Figure 1.2).

This assumption shared by all seven traditional approaches to teaching values in America caused Raths et al. (1978) to question whether all approaches were primarily successful in convincing people to *say* the right thing, yet not *do* the right thing. If this is true, there are important implications for how values should be taught. It is neither ethical nor prudent to teach values that are advocated but not practiced in our everyday lives. This teaches hypocrisy, not values. If the goal of teaching is to help learners understand what they genuinely believe and choose values to incorporate into their behavior, then those who teach must recognize the limitations of coercing children and youth to feign acceptance of prescribed values. For Americans to behave consistently with our expressed values, we must demonstrate authentic commitment to them.

Why should anyone be concerned about inconsistencies between values and behavior?

If we understand our values and consistently act on them, it is more likely that our choices will reflect our highest ideals. We are constantly confronted with ethical dilemmas that challenge our values and require us to make moral choices. A *New York Times* reporter

Figure 1.2 "The First Thanksgiving"

Often found in public school textbooks, illustrations such as this one suggest that Native Americans and colonists had a peaceful, harmonious relationship, but the reality was one of consistent conflict as Indians were pushed off their lands and forced to move westward.

SOURCE: "The First Thanksgiving," painting by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863–1930). Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division [Jean Leon Gerome Ferris/LC-USZ62-1234].

interviewed a national sales manager for Wachovia who was living in an upper-middle-class suburb of Atlanta—a homogeneous community where everyone was of the same race and social class, and residents even shared similar opinions on a variety of issues. At his corporate worksite, the manager said the importance of diversity was emphasized: "At work, diversity is one of the biggest things we work on" (Kilborn, 2005, p. 157). Yet in his private life, the manager admitted that he and his suburban neighbors were "never challenged" to learn about other groups, so they did not. The contrast between what happens at work and what takes place at home reveals an inconsistency that could call into question the sincerity of the manager's commitment to diversity. Another example is that many people assume that well-educated White people harbor fewer prejudices than poorly educated White people, but studies have found that highly educated White people are not more likely to support proposed policies to address racial inequality than White people who are less well educated (Wodtke, 2012). In contrast, there is the example of Bono, lead singer for the rock group U2, who has used his position and wealth to lobby for human rights. Accepting an NAACP Image Award in 2007 for his work on poverty issues and the AIDS crisis in Africa, Bono identified Martin Luther King Jr. as someone who inspired him, and he went on to say:

> The poor are where God lives. God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house. God is where the opportunity is lost and lives are shattered. God is with the mother who has infected her child with a virus that will take both their lives. God is under the rubble in the cries we hear during wartime. God, my friends, is with the poor. God is with us if we are with them. This is not a burden. This is an adventure. (Gamber, 2007, p. 37)

Should parents rather than schools teach values to children?

The question of who should teach values is a rhetorical one. Both parents and schools in America are expected to contribute to the development of children's value systems.

We constantly encounter people who reveal their values in everyday words and actions. Teachers model their values regardless of whether they consciously choose to do so. The question is not whether values should be taught but how they should be taught.

Of the many approaches Kniker (1977) identified for teaching values, the most effective allow children and youth opportunity for discussion and debate, employing activities that stimulate them to think about their beliefs, hear other perspectives, and consider what effect different decisions could have for others as well as themselves. Discussing values, related behaviors, and possible consequences exposes young people to perspectives of others; evaluating arguments about values from their peers can help them decide which ones seem more attractive, compelling, and meaningful. In the process, they learn not only what values are important to them but also how to accept people with values different from their own.

> "Consciously we teach what we know; unconsciously we teach who we are."
>
> — DON HAMACHEK (CONTEMPORARY)

As adults we do not tend to make decisions about values at a particular point in time and then never change our minds. Our values are based on beliefs and attitudes that change frequently, resulting in an ongoing process in which decisions are made and reevaluated throughout our lives. Culture, geographical location, parents, and life experiences influence each individual's decisions. Each individual must determine what he or she believes is best, and the cumulative decisions individuals make influence the evolution of our society (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991; Lappe, 1989; Zinn, 1990). School classrooms are part of this journey. Teachers must present students with moral dilemmas and trust that when our children and youth are given the freedom to choose, they will be capable of making ethical decisions.

What problems can interfere with making ethical decisions?

One of the main problems in making ethical decisions about human differences is confusion concerning the language employed to address those differences. Many essential words or phrases are either unfamiliar terms or common expressions with a history of misuse. Confused language often reflects the discomfort people feel toward sensitive issues. For example, the word *racism* did not appear in most English dictionaries until the 1960s. As the civil rights movement gained momentum and attracted considerable attention from the media and people across America, we could no longer avoid using the term. Similarly, the word *sexism* did not appear in dictionaries until the early 1970s, as the women's movement became increasingly successful at bringing issues concerning the treatment of women to public attention (Miller & Swift, 2000).

Using inaccurate or ambiguous language creates problems when we are addressing sensitive, uncomfortable issues. To be coherent and meaningful in our discussion of human differences, we must clarify our vocabulary and agree to specific appropriate meanings for significant words and concepts.

Defining Terms Related to Human Differences

One would expect that consultation with any scholarly authority would provide definitions for a term such as *prejudice*, but the scholarly world is not free from confusion. Some textbooks have defined *prejudice* as a prejudgment that could be either positive or

negative; this definition confuses prejudice with *bias*, a feeling in favor of—or opposed to—anything or anyone. *Stereotypes* always refer to people and also can be positive or negative. As with stereotypes, prejudice always refers to people, but prejudice is always negative.

This chapter includes a series of definitions intended to clarify terms referring to human differences. Definitions throughout the text are based on the work of scholars from various fields in the behavioral sciences, including racial and ethnic studies, women's studies, education, sociology, and anthropology. Unless cited, definitions reflect a distillation of common themes identified in several scholarly sources (Andrzejewski, 1996; Feagin & Feagin, 2010; Herdt, 1997; Levin & Levin, 1982; Schaefer, 2015; Simpson & Yinger, 1985). The following series of definitions makes distinctions and indicates relationships between the terms.

> **Bias** A preference or inclination, favorable or unfavorable, that inhibits impartial judgment.
>
> **Stereotype** A positive or negative trait or traits ascribed to a certain group and to most members of that group.
>
> **Prejudice** A negative attitude toward a group and individuals perceived to be members of that group; being predisposed to behave negatively toward members of a group.
>
> **Bigotry** Extreme negative attitudes leading to hatred of a group and individuals regarded as members of the group.
>
> **Discrimination** Actions or practices carried out by a member or members of dominant groups or their representatives that have a differential and negative impact on a member or members of subordinate groups.

Notice that each of the first four terms just listed represents attitudes of greater intensity than the previous one. Regarding bias and stereotypes, attitudes can be either positive or negative and can influence an individual's perceptions of an individual or group. Having a *bias* related to a group creates an inclination to favor or dislike an individual from that group. (See Table 1.1.) *Stereotyping* a group indicates an expectation that most members of the group will behave in certain positive or negative ways. No positive option exists for prejudice or bigotry because of the greater intensity of these attitudes. *Prejudices* are negative attitudes based on a prejudgment of a group; *bigotry* involves hatred and represents a harsher form of prejudgment against an individual or group. Note that whereas bias, stereotype, prejudice, and bigotry relate to attitudes, discrimination refers to actions taken that demonstrate negative attitudes. An individual can have a bias, stereotype, or prejudice, or even be a bigot and still not engage in any kind of negative or positive behavior. Unless an individual's attitudes are publicly expressed, others may not be aware of them. Discrimination can be seen and documented, and it can cause physical and emotional harm.

How do negative attitudes develop?

We learn various biases, stereotypes, and prejudices as we grow up. We can be biased in favor of or against certain kinds of foods, categories of books, styles of clothing, or types of personalities. Bias can affect decisions about what we eat, read, or wear; it can influence our choice of friends. A stereotype assumes that individuals possess certain human traits simply because they are members of a particular group. Some traits are regarded as positive—such as Black people have rhythm, Asian people are good in math—and other traits are viewed as negative—certain groups are lazy, shiftless, dishonest, or violent. Although negative stereotypes are regarded as unacceptable, many people accept positive stereotypes. The problem with positive stereotypes is that they cause us to have specific expectations for individuals and groups even though we have little or no evidence for these assumptions. A positive stereotype may sabotage the process of forming a realistic and accurate perception of an individual, as is illustrated in the following example.

Table 1.1　Examples of Bias

The following selection comes from a list of 27 biases:

1. **Family Bias:** Believing information from family members without seeking evidence to support the accuracy of their information.
2. **Attractiveness Bias:** Believing information provided by attractive people.
3. **Confirmation Bias:** Believing information that reinforces beliefs already held and ignoring information that contradicts these beliefs.
4. **Self-Serving Bias:** Believing information that is beneficial to self-interest and goals.
5. **In-Group Bias:** Believing information from people who are members of our group (e.g., friends, co-workers, racial or ethnic group, etc.).
6. **Expectancy Bias:** Tending to pursue information and draw conclusions that reinforce our beliefs when looking for information (or even conducting research).
7. **Pleasure Bias:** Assuming that pleasant experiences offer greater insights for strengthening our beliefs than unpleasant experiences.
8. **Perceptual Bias:** Assuming that our own perceptions and experience of reality reveal objective truths to confirm our beliefs.
9. **Perseverance Bias:** Perpetuating our beliefs even after encountering information that contradicts those beliefs.
10. **Uncertainty Bias:** Choosing to believe or disbelieve information rather than remain uncertain because people tend to be uncomfortable with ambiguity.

SOURCE: Adapted from Newburg and Waldman (2006), *Why We Believe What We Believe*. Free Press.

During a coffee break at a Midwestern university, three Asian American women employed by a student services office reminisced about their undergraduate days. They complained about how difficult math classes had been and laughed as they recalled some of their coping strategies. The student services director, an African American, walked into the room, overheard what they were saying, and interrupted their discussion to chastise them for "putting yourselves down." He said they should stop. He also said he was disappointed in them and departed.

After the director left, the three women initially were too surprised to speak. Once they started talking, they realized they were angry because his comments suggested that he assumed they all had good math skills and were not being honest when discussing their lack of math ability. The women had thought the director viewed them as individuals, and they were angry and hurt when they realized that he had allowed a stereotype to distort his perception of them. They were especially upset because they had not expected an individual of color to believe in a stereotype—even a positive one about the math abilities of Asian people—but apparently he did.

One of the ways that positive or negative stereotypes are reinforced is a result of **confirmation bias**. Newberg and Waldman (2006) describe *confirmation bias* as the tendency to accept information reinforcing your beliefs while ignoring information contradicting those beliefs. It is a bias with a long history in human attitudes and behavior. In 1620, philosopher Francis Bacon observed: "the human understanding, once it has adopted an opinion, collects any instances that confirm it, and though the contrary instances may be more numerous and weightier, it either does not notice them or else rejects them, in order that the opinion will remain unshaken" (Mlodinow, 2008, p. 189).

How does confirmation bias influence people, and can it be overcome?

Confirmation bias not only causes people to look for evidence that reinforces their views, it also causes them to interpret ambiguous information in a way that strengthens their preconceived notions. The latter is especially disturbing since accurate information about most issues is likely to have some degree of ambiguity that should stimulate critical thinking and perhaps lead to new insights. Instead, confirmation bias pushes people along well-worn paths, diminishing their ability to think critically and solve problems effectively. Kolbert (2017) cites a Stanford study in which some participants

supported the death penalty and some did not. All participants were given a packet of research in which half of the packet supported the death penalty as a deterrent to crime and half refuted this claim. Participants were instructed on the weaknesses of each study, but in the end, participants who had held opinions about the death penalty prior to being given the research said that reading these studies had reinforced their views. This outcome is especially disturbing because we hope that reason is used to make good judgments and not simply reinforce biases that lead to a greater polarization.

Kolbert (2017) also reported on a study asking participants for their views on social issues such as favoring a single-payer health-care system, rating how strongly they agreed or disagreed. Afterward they were asked to explain in detail how they would implement proposals related to each issue. This proved difficult, and when asked again to rate their views, they tended to rate themselves as less intense than before. In another study with positive implications, participants were given a bogus personality test and then half were randomly identified as "open-minded" or "closed-minded." Almost all of the participants accepted these identifications as accurate. They were then given two controversial issues and asked to comment on both. The students identified as "closed-minded" typically articulated one point of view on each issue, whereas the "open-minded" participants tended to make comments that reflected both sides of the issues. By using learning activities that promote being "open-minded," teachers could help students to take account of confirmation bias. Both studies support the approach of science teachers who ask students to question their assumptions, beliefs, and theories, an approach that could be used in other disciplines. Mlodinow (2008) recommends that teachers ask students to engage in research to find evidence that contradicts their views as well as search for supportive evidence. Aronson (2012) described a study suggesting how confirmation bias could be used to achieve a positive outcome. Participants were given a bogus personality test, and half were randomly identified as either "open-minded" or "closed-minded." Almost all of the participants accepted these identifications as accurate. They were then given two controversial issues and asked to comment on both. The students identified as "closed-minded" articulated one point of view on each issue, whereas the "open-minded" participants tended to make comments that reflected both sides of the issues. This suggests that if schools and other institutions engage students in learning activities designed to promote being "open-minded," students could be taught to be aware of and take into account the influence of confirmation bias. Mlodinow (2008) recommends that we also teach students to search just as actively for information that contradicts their views as they do for evidence that supports them. Teaching science offers an opportunity to reinforce an open-minded approach because scientists are taught to question their assumptions, beliefs, and theories; this approach could be used in other disciplines as well.

If the influence of confirmation bias is reduced, the power and pervasiveness of stereotypes should also be diminished. On the other hand, negative attitudes reinforced by confirmation bias can strengthen prejudices, which are always negative, and may result in negative behavior. If an individual engages in negative actions toward a group, this usually reinforces his or her negative attitudes about that group. If left unchallenged, prejudice can transform an individual into a bigot whose hatred of others could even lead to violence. Prejudice and bigotry toward others are usually based on human differences such as race, ethnicity, or nationality.

What are the differences among race, ethnicity, and nationality?

Race is not a scientific concept but a social reality dictated by the color of someone's skin, even though skin color as a basis for human categorization is absurd. African Americans are identified as black, yet the skin color for many African Americans is more accurately described as brown. White is an inaccurate description of skin color for White Americans. At an elementary school in Minneapolis, young children created

a poster with the title "The Human Rainbow." The first band of their rainbow was colored with a light brown crayon, making a very pale brown band, and each band above it was a slightly darker shade of brown until the outer band, which was colored in such a dark brown color that it almost looked black. The children had created a realistic way of representing and understanding the effect of melanin on the color of human skin.

The concept of race is both easy and difficult to discuss. Most Americans believe they know the meaning of the term, yet there is no specific set of racial categories that is acceptable to the scientific community. In 1758, Carolus Linnaeus proposed the first racial classifications based largely on human geographical origins, but as Gould (2002) pointed out, J. F. Blumenbach has usually been credited as the originator of racial categories. It was Blumenbach who created the term *Caucasian*, and his taxonomy established a racial hierarchy with White people on top. This would be the foundation for much "scientific" theory and research in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the 1930s, scientists such as anthropologist Franz Boas challenged theories describing a hierarchy of races (Gosset, 1997). In 1937, American historian Jacques Barzun bluntly denounced the spuriousness of race as a legitimate scientific concept:

> [Racial classifications] come and go and return, for the urge to divide mankind into fixed types and races is evidently endless. Each attempt only illustrates anew how race-groupings have been shaped not by nature but by the mode of thought or the stage of mechanical efficiency that mankind valued at the moment. The history of these attempts confirms . . . that race-theories occur in the minds of men for an ulterior purpose. (1965, p. 196)

The series of paintings on "Caste" from the Spanish colonial era (see Figure 1.3) supports Barzun's point about the historical effort to find ways to divide and label human beings. Current research on the human genome emphasizes human similarities rather than differences. According to this research, every woman living today has the mitochondrial DNA of a single woman who lived approximately 150,000 years ago, and every man living today has the Y chromosome of a single man who lived approximately 59,000 years ago (Wade, 2006). Scientists involved in this research report that 85 percent of human genetic variation occurs within groups, and only 15 percent of human genetic variation occurs between groups. And yet, as Olson (2002) acknowledges, "societies have built elaborate systems of privilege and control around these miniscule genetic differences" (p. 69).

"In claiming the unity of the human race we resist the unsavory assumption of higher and lower races."

— ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT (1769–1859)

Although race is based on perceptions of physical differences, **ethnicity** is based on cultural differences (Jones, 1997). Ethnicity refers to the historic origins of an individual's family. For immigrants to the United States, ethnicity identifies their country of origin or that from which their ancestors came—Poland, Mexico, China, Italy, Cuba, Ethiopia, Russia, or Iran, for example. For those whose ancestors emigrated from different countries of origin, ethnicity can represent a choice about personal identity based on culture. As Dalton (2008) explains it,

> [Ethnicity] describes that aspect of our heritage that provides us with a mother tongue and that shapes our values, our worldview, our family structure, our rituals, the foods we eat, our mating behavior, our music—in short, much of our daily lives. (p. 16)

Most Americans identify more than one ethnic group as part of their heritage, and for that reason ethnicity may have little meaning because of a lack of strong cultural identification with one of those groups. Some of us with multiple ethnic heritages may claim a stronger cultural affinity with one of the groups. An individual may be a mixture of Irish, German, and Swedish ancestry and yet, perhaps because her surname is Irish or because Irish traditions were more strongly promoted in her family, she identifies most strongly with being Irish (Banks, 1994).

Figure 1.3 Eighteenth-century Paintings of "Castas"

A series of Mexican paintings from the eighteenth century identifies categories of people (such as Indian, Spanish, or African) and names the children of mixed marriages. For example, the child of a Spanish and African couple is a Mulatto, and the child of a Spanish and Mulatto couple is a Morisco. In these three paintings, the artist illustrates how descendants of a Spanish and Indian couple can regain status as a White individual. The child of the Spanish and Indian couple is a Mestizo, the child of a Spanish and Mestizo couple is a Castiza, and the child of a Spanish and Castiza couple is considered Spanish.

SOURCE: De Espanol, y India, na ce Mestiza (190.1996.1), De Espanol, y Mestiza, Castiza (190.1996.3), and De Espanol, y Castiza, Espanol (1990.1996.2), c. 1775, Francisco Clapera, Frederick and Jan Mayer Collection, Denver Art Museum.

For Native Americans, ethnicity generally refers to tribal affiliation: Apache, Kwakiutl, Cherokee, Seminole, Mohawk, Hopi, or Lakota. For most African Americans, ethnic identity was obliterated by the experience of slavery, making it practically impossible to trace an individual's heritage to a specific tribal group such as Hausa, Ibo, or Tsutsi. The introduction of the term "African American" in the 1980s was intended to provide an "ethnic" label for Black people as distinct from race (Dalton, 2008). Because of the unique preservation of his oral family history, Alex Haley (1976) was able to reconnect with his ethnic group as described in the book *Roots*.
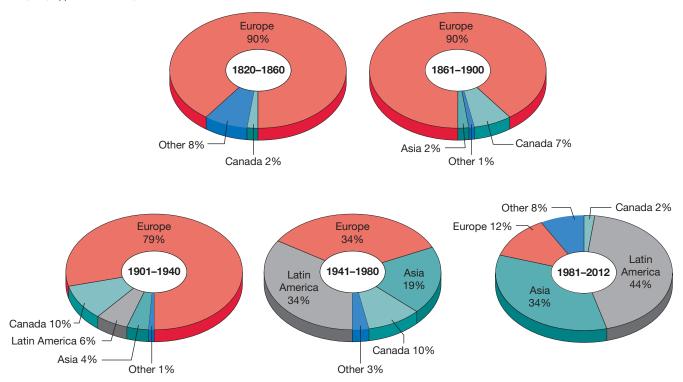
Nationality refers to the nation in which an individual has citizenship. To ask people about their nationality is to ask where they reside or what nation is identified on their passport. People curious about someone's ethnic heritage often ask, "What is your nationality?" instead of "What is your ethnic background?" Being asked about your nationality may be considered quite insulting because it implies that the questioner does not perceive you as American but as belonging to another country (see Figure 1.4). What do the terms *race, ethnicity*, and *nationality* have in common? They each refer to people considered to represent minority groups in the United States.

What are minority groups and why are they called minority groups?

The term **minority group** does not necessarily indicate anything about the *number* of people in the group; however, it does imply something about their power. Minority group members possess limited power compared to members of a dominant group. It is possible for a minority group to be larger than a dominant group because it is the group's lack of power that defines it. When the White minority held power in South Africa, Black South Africans were the majority in terms of numbers, but they were considered a minority group because they lacked power under the racist system of

Figure 1.4 Nationalities of Ethnic Immigrants to America

These pie graphs show the nationality of immigrants since the early 1800s and illustrate the dramatic change that has occurred in recent years.

SOURCE: Schaefer, R. T. *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, 14th Edition. Copyright © 2015, p. 92. Reprinted and Electronically reproduced by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

apartheid. Women in the United States are included as a minority in affirmative action plans and equity proposals even though numerically they are the majority because historically they have not held as much power as have men.

An individual in a minority group must overcome obstacles—handicapping conditions—related to her or his group identification based on such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, or disability. Some people refer to minority groups and diversity as if the two terms are synonymous, but **diversity** refers to the presence of human beings with perceived or actual differences based on a variety of human characteristics. Diversity exists both in classrooms having no minorities and in classrooms where all students are African American; too often, these differences can result in some children being stigmatized and marginalized by other children. The concept of diversity includes minority groups as well as groups identified according to differences based on age, marital status, parental status, educational status, geographic location, physical characteristics, and other factors that influence individual personality and behavior.

How have minority groups been perceived by the majority?

The majority group has created derogatory names for members of minority groups. When a dominant group has the power to label a subordinate group, others will consistently associate that label with individuals from the subordinate group. The power to label results in the power to define the people in a group, not only for the dominant group, but sometimes for the members of the labeled group as well. In recognition of the power of such labels, many groups have engaged in efforts to label themselves in a positive way. In the 1960s, many in the group that the majority had labeled *colored people*

or *Negroes* rejected the majority group's names and chose to call themselves *Blacks*. This was accompanied by calls for "Black power" and claims that "Black is beautiful." Many Black people continue to prefer that designation because they believe it makes a positive contribution to an individual's sense of identity. Since the 1980s, *African American* has also become a popular choice among Black people and others as a positive label for this group.

When a majority group has the power to label and define those belonging to a minority group, they also can control subordinate group members, obviously by limiting their opportunities, but sometimes in more subtle ways as well. Macedo and Bartoleme (2001) compare the term *migrant*, which most often labels Latinos seeking economic opportunity in the United States, with the term *settlers*, which is used to designate English and other Europeans immigrating to America to improve their economic opportunities. Reactions to the two terms are significantly different, even though both terms describe people engaged in a similar quest.

How have labels been used to define and control subordinate groups?

The idea that the power to label equals the power to define, which equals the power to control, was illustrated by the 2012 media coverage of the shooting in a movie theater at Aurora, Colorado, where James Holmes killed 12 people and wounded 70 others. The media reported on the shooter's history of mental illness (i.e., schizophrenia), but the coverage never mentioned that such violent acts were unusual for the 46 percent of American adults diagnosed with some form of mental illness at some point in their lives (Friedman, 2008). Instead, the media too often resorts to labels. After the Sandy Hook mass shooting, where Adam Lanza killed 20 children and 6 adults with a semi-automatic gun, two respected media outlets reported on the speculation that he had a mental illness, specifically with *undiagnosed* schizophrenia. After Dylan Roof murdered eight African Americans at their Bible study class, several newspaper accounts suggested that he had a mental illness, but his website included racial slurs, guns, and violent content. Studies show that one of the consequences when people read accounts of shootings by an individual with a mental illness is they react more negatively to people with mental illness (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015).

Media portrayal of mental illness in movies and television programs tends to focus on people with severe problems rather than problems that can be controlled by therapy and medications. Characters with mental illness on prime time television programs were 10 to 20 times more likely to be shown engaged in violent behavior than happens in reality (Fawcett, 2015). From 1995 to 2015, people with mental illness were responsible for only 4 percent of individual acts of violence, a conclusion reported by multiple studies. During that same 20-year period, a study of a random sample of over 400 news accounts related to mental illness reported disproportionate news coverage of people with mental health problems engaging in acts of violence, especially mass shootings. Only 7 percent of news stories during this period described the successful treatment of an individual with mental illness (McGinty, Kennedy-Hendricks, Choksy, & Barry, 2015). A recent study reported that media portrayals of people with a mental illness are still largely stereotypical, ranging from describing them as behaving childishly to the other extreme of viewing them as violent people. In 2013, the Associated Press revised its Stylebook to assist journalists in avoiding such stereotyped portrayals (Fawcett, 2015).

Labels related to mental illness are official, formal, bureaucratic terms; others are informal and societal—terms used or heard by people in everyday life. The existence of **derisive labels**—terms reflecting a sense of contempt or ridicule based on factors such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender—and their variety suggest the extent to which prejudices exist. Wessler (2001) described the observations of

elementary educators who have heard children using such labels, especially during recess, where children may feel they have more freedom to express themselves. Stephan (1999) insists that reducing prejudice requires that teachers help children become aware of the tendency to attach negative labels to others. After all, such words can be heard on the playgrounds of America, and some, for example, the word *squaw*, even show up in instructional materials such as maps, textbooks, or activities.

One theory of the origin of the word *squaw* is that it derives from a French word meaning vagina and was used by early French trappers to indicate that they wanted sex, usually followed by an offer to pay or barter something (Chavers, 1997). Other linguists claim that squaw has a more neutral origin, merely referring to a woman, but as Green (1975) demonstrated, its use has been consistently negative. The word *squaw* can still be found in elementary school materials and in names for lakes and other geographic sites around the United States.

Because they objected to the term, high school students in Minnesota successfully lobbied the state legislature to change the names of state geographical sites containing the word *squaw*, yet at least one White community in Minnesota, Squaw Lake, refused to change. Chavers (1977) reports that students have lobbied other state legislatures to delete *squaw* in geographic sites or town names because the word is offensive and insulting to Native American women.

The power of labels was the focus of a study that asked participants to supervise groups whose task was to make a collective decision on various issues (Zimbardo, 2007). The "supervisor" listened to the group's conversation from an adjacent room and was asked to evaluate the group's decision-making process using criteria provided that was supposed to describe good decision making. If the group made a bad decision, the supervisor was supposed to give them an electric shock ranging from a mild shock at level 1 to the maximum level of 10. No one was actually shocked, but supervisors heard a recording that simulated people being shocked.

The researcher was interested in how supervisors would be affected by overhearing labels ascribed to a group. The participants "overheard" the researcher talking to his assistant over the intercom, describing the group that the participant was asked to supervise as an "animalistic, rotten bunch" or as a "perceptive, thoughtful group"; another group was not labeled either positively or negatively. Supervisors tended to give minimal shocks to all groups after the first trial, but as the experiment went on and groups continued to make bad decisions, the "punishments" chosen for the groups began to diverge. Supervisors tended to shock the group labeled *animalistic* with more intensity, and they increased the shock level on subsequent decision-making exercises, whereas they gave those teams labeled positively the smallest amount of shock, with the neutral group falling in between. The study suggested that labels can enhance or diminish the human qualities we ascribe to others, and when human qualities are diminished, our concerns about not harming an individual or group may also be diminished.

What is the impact of labels on individuals who are labeled?

Wright (1998) believes that young children are only minimally aware of skin color and are often unaware of race. Asked what color she was, a 3-year-old Black girl wearing a pink-and-blue dress responded, "I'm pink and blue. What color are you?" At about the age of 4, children begin to understand that skin color is permanent, yet they do not regard it as negative. At 5 years of age, children are likely to become more interested in differences of skin color and may ask teachers many questions; they also begin to be aware of race and societal attitudes about racial differences. Early childhood educators can be proactive in promoting positive racial awareness. In one study, a multicultural curriculum was implemented to a class of preschool students who tended to develop

a more favorable attitude toward children of ethnicities other than their own (Gellini, Pereda, Cordero, & Suarez-Morales, 2016). Such interventions could reduce negative behaviors such as name calling that teachers often confront on playgrounds and in their classrooms.

Racist name calling usually involves blatant, ugly words that carry harshly negative connotations. What impact does it have on a child to hear such words? Some members of a subordinate group may believe and internalize myths, stereotypes, and prejudices expressed about their group. Even for those who do not internalize the negative messages, being called derisive names, especially by other children, has an impact. Anthropologist Jamake Highwater, who identified as a Native American, recalled the impact of the derisive terms he heard as a child:

> At first, the words had no meaning to me. Even when I was told their meaning, I couldn't easily grasp why they were supposed to be shameful. . . . [They] were whispered in the classroom and remorselessly shouted when adults were not around. On the playground. In the locker room. In the darkness of the balcony at Saturday movie matinees. Those were the words that filled my childhood. . . . They were words that aroused a sense of power and self-aggrandizement for those who shouted them; they brought shame and humiliation in those at whom they were shouted. (Highwater, 1997, pp. 24–25)

Highwater believes that *derisives*, derogatory terms, damage individuals in the dominant group as well as those in minority groups because derisive language creates boundaries. Derisive terms define the oppressor as superior and the oppressed as inferior. Herbst (1997) agrees that such terms create suspicion, fear, and contempt in members of dominant groups and arouse frustration and anger in individuals from minority groups. Some groups have tried to take over certain words, to "own" them and reshape them to make them less hurtful. For example, gay men and lesbians, especially young people, use the word *queer* as a generic term for the gay community, and courses in queer studies are taught in colleges in an attempt to change formal, bureaucratic language (James, 2013).

How are negative bureaucratic terms as harmful as social derisive terms?

When we think of derisive terms, we usually think of informal, social labels. Derisive terms for social class, such as *hillbilly* or *redneck*, often have a regional origin but may become widespread, as in *White trash*, a term that evolved into a variety of forms, including *trailer park trash*. Yet some argue that the most harmful derisive terms for low-income people come from formal sources such as government reports and scholarly studies; these terms include *culturally deprived, culturally disadvantaged, welfare households*, and *inner-city residents*. What images do such terms suggest? Derisive bureaucratic terms are powerful purveyors of negative images primarily because they have the sanction of authority behind them.

In addition to negative images, derisive bureaucratic terms send a negative message. Being labeled *culturally deprived* represents a form of blaming the victim. What group are we talking about? What do they lack? The term *cultural deprivation* suggests that poor people lack an ability to appreciate arts and humanities; it does not acknowledge the reality that they are economically deprived and need financial assistance for such things as job training, employment, and better health care. Using such a label implies that a deficiency in cultural qualities or values is the cause of their problems.

People without disabilities have used many negative terms in reference to people with a disability (Brown, 2016). Linton (1998) explained that when adults refer

to someone as a "retard" or children tell "moron" jokes, they are asserting a claim to normalcy by rejecting those who have a disability. Negative labels are also used in a bureaucratic setting, as illustrated by the term "handicapped." Since the 1950s, people with disabilities have objected to the term *handicapped* and have been largely successful in having it removed. Phrases such as *the retarded* or *the disabled* are also derisive bureaucratic terms because they isolate one adjective for an individual with a disability and make it a noun to label the group. According to Charlton (1998), people with disabilities object to being labeled with such adjectives because "their humanity is stripped away and the individual is obliterated, only to be left with the condition—disability" (p. 54).

> "One may no more live in the world without picking up the moral prejudices of the world than one will be able to go to Hell without perspiring."
>
> — H. L. MENCKEN (1880–1956)

To understand what Charlton means, imagine someone who is bold and energetic, impish yet compassionate, and now add *disabled* to the description. If the last adjective is singled out and made a noun, that word defines the individual. This is how a term like *the disabled* distorts and diminishes people with a disability. People without disabilities in America have viewed people with disabilities as unable to care for themselves and institutionalized them, justifying this by claiming that it was "for their own good." The history of institutionalizing people with disabilities illustrates the power of labels to control the quality of life for a labeled group.

How has our society responded to social problems experienced by minority groups?

Ryan (1976) described two radically different approaches involved in addressing social problems. The **exceptionalistic perspective** focuses on individuals; it perceives all problems as local, unique, exclusive, and unpredictable. Because problems are viewed as a consequence of individual defect, accident, or unfortunate circumstance, proposed remedies must be tailored to fit each individual case that is an "exception" to the general situation. A criticism of this approach is that it treats only symptoms of problems and not causes; exceptionalistic remedies have been derided as "Band-Aid solutions" that alleviate but do not solve problems.

Ryan describes an alternative approach, a **universalistic perspective** that views social problems as systemic, originating in flaws in the fundamental social structures within a community or a society. Because social structures are inevitably imperfect and inequitable, the problems that emerge are predictable and preventable because they do not stem from a situation unique to one individual but rather from conditions common to many. The universalistic perspective emphasizes engaging in research to collect and analyze data and to identify patterns that predict certain outcomes. Once patterns and root causes are identified, appropriate solutions can be created and implemented through public action, institutional policy, or legislation. Research takes time, so the universalistic approach has been criticized because it does not address the immediate consequences of particular problems or assist people who are currently suffering.

To illustrate the difference between exceptionalistic and universalistic perspectives, Ryan describes two responses to the problem of smallpox. An exceptionalistic approach would be to provide smallpox victims with medical care to help them recover; a universalistic approach would first demand legislation to fund inoculation of the population to prevent the disease from spreading. The contrast is similar to a metaphor from Kilbourne (1999) about bodies floating down a river and ambulances being called to rescue the drowning people. Although rescuing people from the river is important, it is also important to send someone upstream to investigate why people are falling in (p. 30).

These metaphors illustrate a need for both approaches. While people are engaged in studying problems, help must be provided to those who are suffering right now. If everyone goes upstream to discover why people are falling into the river, no one is

left to save those who are drowning; if everyone stays downstream to rescue drowning people, the cause of the problem will never be found. Neither perspective can be neglected in the efforts employed to solve social problems.

Afterword

The chapter began by discussing diversity and individuality. Holding differing values is part of both diversity and individuality. The values we choose are influenced by our membership in groups defined by such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class; however, the ultimate decision to embrace certain values is up to the individual. Almost everyone holds some values similar to those of their parents, and almost everyone holds some values different from those of their parents. We share some values with friends, yet we hold some values that are different, too. Values, and the attitudes and beliefs that determine them, are part of the landscape of human differences. But beliefs and attitudes change as we learn more information that helps us to understand and appreciate diversity.

Language is the primary tool we use to pursue understanding. When we use language that labels a group of people, we create misunderstanding. It is important to observe and evaluate the behaviors of others, but we will never understand them without interacting with them or reading what they have written. Confusing or ambiguous language is like a smudge on the lens of a microscope; it prevents us from having a clear understanding of our subject. This chapter has tried to clarify some confusing terms so that our view is not distorted as we begin our study of human differences.

When Jewish author Isaac Bashevis Singer was asked if he believed people had free will, he replied, "Of course we have free will, we have no choice." As citizens of a democracy, we have many choices. As human beings living in a diverse society surrounded by a multitude of global cultures, trying to understand human differences would seem to be a necessary choice. For every reader who has already made that choice, this text offers insights and information to enhance your understanding. For readers who have not made that choice, this text may help to create an understanding of why the choice is necessary. But it is still each individual's choice to make; as Singer said, we have no choice about that.

> "Freedom is the right to choose; the right to create for yourself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice, human beings are not human but instruments, things."
>
> — ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892–1982)

Summary

- Scholars have defined nine major values of American culture, yet Americans have historically behaved inconsistently with regard to these values. Values have usually been taught in one or more of seven traditional approaches, but all of them involve indoctrination, which contributes to these inconsistencies in American behavior.

- There are two sets of terms that are often muddled together, creating confusion: (1) There is an increasing intensity of negative attitudes in the terms *bias, stereotype, prejudice*, and *bigotry*, but *discrimination* is the only term that involves actions; (2) *ethnicity* relates to cultural heritage, *nationality* has to do with country of origin, and *minority group* involves limitations on a group's power, but *race* is an unscientific concept based on observed or assumed physical attributes.

Terms and Definitions

Attitude A cluster of particular related beliefs, values, and opinions

Beliefs Inferences an individual makes about reality that take one of three forms: descriptive, evaluative, or prescriptive

Bias A preference or inclination, favorable or unfavorable, that inhibits impartial judgment

Bigotry Extreme negative attitudes leading to hatred of a group and individuals regarded as members of the group

Confirmation bias Believing information that reinforces beliefs already held and ignoring information that contradicts these beliefs

Derisive labels Names that reflect attitudes of contempt or ridicule for individuals in the group being named

Discrimination Actions or practices carried out by a member or members of dominant groups or their representatives that have a differential and negative impact on a member or members of subordinate groups

Diversity The presence of human beings with perceived or actual differences based on a variety of human characteristics

Dogmatic To accept beliefs you have been taught without questioning them

Ethnicity Identification of an individual according to national origin and/or distinctive cultural patterns

Exceptionalistic perspective Views social problems as private, local, unique, exclusive, and unpredictable, a consequence of individual defect, accident, or unfortunate circumstance, which requires that all proposed remedies be tailored to fit each individual case

Indoctrination Instruction whose purpose is to force the learner to accept a set of values or beliefs, to adopt a particular ideology or perspective

Minority group A subordinate group whose members have significantly less power to control their own lives than do members of a dominant, or majority, group

Nationality Refers to the nation in which an individual has citizenship status

Prejudice A negative attitude toward a group and individuals perceived to be members of that group; being predisposed to behave negatively toward members of a group

Race A social concept with no scientific basis that categorizes people according to obvious physical differences such as skin color

Stereotype A positive or negative trait or traits ascribed to a certain group and to most members of that group

Universalistic perspective Views social problems as public, national, general, inclusive, and predictable; a consequence of imperfect and inequitable social arrangements that require research to identify their patterns and causes so that remedial institutional action can be taken to eliminate these problems and prevent them from reoccurring

Values Combinations of attitudes that generate action or the deliberate choice to avoid action

Discussion Exercises

Discussion exercises are provided in which groups of three to five students can delve deeper into the content presented in the chapter.

Clarification Exercise—My Values: What I Believe

Directions: Share your responses to the following questions:

1. How would you describe the way your parents raised you? If you choose to have children, will you raise them the same way your parents raised you? Explain.
2. Do you value experiences over possessions? Upon graduating from college, what if a wealthy relative offered to pay for a trip anywhere in the world or to give you an expensive gift (e.g., a new car) that you have wanted for a long time? Which option would you choose, and why would you choose that option?
3. An eccentric multimillionaire approaches you and says he wants to give you money. He will either give you $100,000 to spend on yourself any way you want, or he will give you $1 million if you will anonymously distribute it to strangers. If you choose the first option,

what would you spend the money on? If you choose the second option, on what basis would you give money to strangers (i.e., what would be your criteria)?

4. Can you think of anything that has happened to you that was beyond your control and had an impact on your life? What was that event, and how did it change you? Given that such events happen to most people, how much control do you think you (or anyone else) have over the course of your life?

5. After getting married, you and your spouse have your first child. Even as a toddler, your child shows signs of incredible intelligence, and it becomes clear that you will be raising a child much more intelligent than you are. How would you feel about that? When your second child is born, it soon becomes clear that this child has health problems and learning difficulties. How would you feel about raising that child?

6. It is early in your career, and you have a job you really enjoy, working with people you really like, that pays enough for you to maintain a middle-class lifestyle. You are offered a job that will not be as enjoyable, and you will be competing with your co-workers, but the salary is twice what you currently make and may go even higher. Would you keep the job you enjoy or take the job with the higher salary? Explain.

7. You are walking to your car in a parking lot, and a stranger comes up and asks for a dollar to catch a bus home, explaining that he has lost his wallet. Would you give him the money? Explain. The next day a rather unkempt stranger approaches you in that same parking lot and says he has lost his job and his home and is living on the streets; then he asks you for a dollar for food. Would you give him the money? Explain.

8. When America enters the next (twenty-second) century, do you think our nation will be a better place to live than it is today or worse? Explain.

Selected and adapted from Gregory Stock, *The Book of Questions* (1987) and *The Kid's Book of Questions* (1988) (New York, NY: Workman Publishing).

Intergroup Exercise—A Mutual Support Dilemma

Directions: Examine the case situation explained below. Discuss it with the members of your assigned group. Respond to each of the questions. Then explain your group position to the class.

The Story of Mary and Luke: A Mutual Support Dilemma

Mary and Luke were married during their senior year in college. After their graduation, Mary took a secretarial job in the registrar's office of the university where Luke was attending graduate school. Mary worked for five years while Luke completed his doctoral degree. Their first and only child was born during the second of the five years, and Mary missed only two months of work at that time.
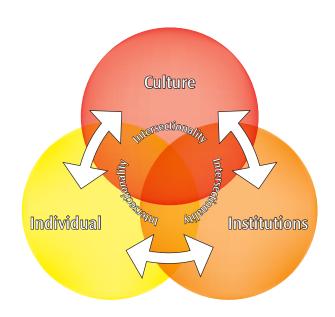
Luke has now been offered an assistant professorship at a prominent eastern school and is eager to accept it. Mary has applied to and been accepted into graduate school at the University of Chicago. She is eager to accept the assistantship she has been offered.

Mary argues that Luke should give her the chance for an education now that he has completed his. She also reminds him that he has been offered a job at the Chicago Junior College. Luke says that he intends to take the job in the east and that Mary can find someplace out there to go to school. If Mary refuses to follow him, Luke promises to file for a divorce and seek custody of their 3-year-old daughter.

Questions for discussion:

1. What would you do if you were Mary?
2. What advice do you have for Luke?
3. How could this situation be handled so that neither Mary nor Luke loses?
4. Does your group agree that either Mary or Luke loses?

Chapter 2
Understanding Prejudice and Its Causes

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter you will know and be able to:

2.1 Describe confusion regarding the term *prejudice*, and provide examples of how prejudice is reflected in language and media.

2.2 Understand how denial, avoidance, and victim blaming perpetuate prejudice, and identify examples of these rationalizations in written or spoken language.

2.3 Describe how frustration, threat to self-esteem, uncertainty, and competition foster the development of individual prejudice and how that prejudice can lead to discriminatory behavior; also discuss how discrimination occurs in the absence of prejudice.

"No one has ever been born a Negro hater, a Jew hater, or any other kind of hater. Nature refuses to be involved in such suicidal practices."

—HARRY BRIDGES (1900–1990)

No credible studies have concluded that prejudice is part of human nature, that it is an innate outcome of being human. In fact, Hauser (2006) cited a study reporting that during their first hours of life, babies will cry if they hear other babies crying. One developmental psychologist explained this phenomenon as a "rudimentary form of empathy" (p. 193). The evidence supports the claim that prejudice, as Bridges suggests, must be learned. It is also important to remember that prejudice is an attitude, not an action. Whether you are looking at definitions in a dictionary or reading scholarly writing, you will inevitably encounter puzzling uses of the term *prejudice*. Some people describe prejudice as a hatred of others, but hatred is bigotry. Based on their study of world cultures, anthropologists have argued that people everywhere in the world have prejudices, yet they do not claim that hatred—or bigotry—is widespread.

Confusion, not clarification, is caused by a definition suggesting that prejudice is synonymous with bigotry. Such a definition may cause many of us to deny that we are prejudiced: A bigot hates, and we are certain we don't hate anyone. In addition, we deny the pervasiveness of prejudice because we don't observe widespread hatred in the world; thus confusing prejudice with bigotry creates misunderstanding about the nature and extent of prejudice.

Conceptions and Misconceptions of Prejudice

We confuse prejudice with bias, stereotypes, and bigotry. As defined in Chapter 1, *bias* is a mildly positive or negative feeling about someone or something; and to *stereotype* is to associate positive or negative traits with a group of people. **Prejudice** is a stronger feeling, but it is always negative, and it always refers to a group of people. Prejudice predisposes us to behave negatively toward certain people because of a group to which they belong. And when prejudice reaches the intensity of hatred, it becomes bigotry. Even educated people, including linguists and other scholars, have contributed to misconceptions regarding prejudice.

What are examples of misconceptions about prejudice?

Some dictionaries define *prejudice* as the process of forming opinions without looking at relevant facts, yet people with prejudices may examine relevant facts and simply interpret them to confirm their prejudices. Other definitions describe prejudice as being irrational, implying that those we acknowledge as rational could not possibly be prejudiced. The problem here is that rational people also hold prejudices; we know this from reading what they wrote. Aristotle claimed that a woman was an inferior man. Abraham Lincoln believed Black people were intellectually inferior to White people. Carroll (2001) quoted Martin Luther warning German Christians, "Do not doubt that next to the devil you have no enemy more cruel, more venomous and virulent, than a true Jew" (p. 368). However, their prejudices did not deter any of these men from achieving significant improvements in human rights.

It is easy to view ancient racist or sexist attitudes as patently absurd and to denounce them, yet often we do not acknowledge current widespread prejudices that future generations may find just as incongruous. In fifty or one hundred years, what will people think about today's programs for the poor in the United States? Or how people with disabilities were so often isolated or ignored? Or how gay men and lesbians were condemned by so many people?

How widespread is prejudice?

Although this text focuses on attitudes in the United States, prejudices are not limited to one country or one race. People living in nations around the world possess negative attitudes toward others within their own borders or close to them. Prejudices have been ignored, promoted, or tolerated but rarely challenged. When prejudice has been challenged, the case often has become a cause célèbre, as when Emile Zola published "J'accuse," an essay denouncing anti-Semitism in France's prosecution of Alfred Dreyfus for treason (Bredin, 2008). Persistence of prejudice was illustrated by Jean-Paul Sartre's 1945 description of French anti-Semitic attitudes as Jewish people returned to France following World War II, even though French people were aware of the existence of Nazi concentration camps and of the genocide against the Jews. Today, migrants continue to leave their homes for economic reasons or to escape violence and persecution of their group, and demographers predict that diversity is going to increase significantly in the populations of most nations around the world.

> "There are, in every age, new errors to be rectified, and new prejudices to be opposed."
>
> — SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709–1784)

More than twenty years ago, scholars such as Gioseffi (1993) described a growing global economy, arguing that it required functional and respectful relationships among nations, and that prejudice was a destructive force. Since 2011, the Syrian civil war has significantly increased the numbers of immigrants, with over half going to Europe. This migration seems to be causing a change in European attitudes as immigrants are being increasingly viewed as a burden on society by 50 percent of people in France and Poland and nearly 70 percent of Greeks and Italians (Krogstad, 2015). In the United States only 41 percent of the people view immigrants as a burden, but this negative attitude seems to be increasing, causing social justice advocates to criticize the media for promoting prejudicial attitudes with negative portrayals of racial and ethnic groups. Language is an important source for understanding a culture because analyzing language reveals a culture's assumptions, beliefs, values, and priorities, as well as examples of prejudice. Some countries are now addressing their historic prejudices by changing or eliminating media images and language that have promoted negative attitudes, especially toward racial or ethnic groups.

How are prejudices reflected in American media?

To understand how prejudices are transmitted in our culture, we need only observe some of the prevalent images of racial or cultural groups in our everyday lives. Look for magazine advertisements that depict Native Americans, Asian Americans, or Hispanic Americans. Why is it that most advertisements seem to use African American models to reflect diversity? If people of color are included in advertisements, why are they often featured in ways that reflect historic stereotypes? Native Americans are almost never portrayed as part of contemporary society but instead as nineteenth-century warriors; Asian Americans are often shown working at computers or in math-related professions; Mexican Americans are presented as gardeners or servants. Problems of omission and stereotyping affect other groups as well: People with disabilities are invisible; blue-collar workers are usually stereotyped, if they appear at all; and women appear frequently in advertisements as sex objects to sell products. Still, we typically don't recognize such advertisements as stereotypes because these images are so familiar that they seem not to be stereotypes at all but rather to portray reality. This is one reason so many White Americans do not understand why Native Americans are offended by the use of Indian mascots for sports teams. (See Figure 2.1.)

Media portrayals of Muslim Americans represent the most recent example of pervasive stereotyping. Although anti-Muslim attitudes in the United States have a long history, Ansari (2004) insists that ever since the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, the media has focused on activities of militant Muslims. In a 2015 poll, 55 percent of Americans said they had an "unfavorable" view of Islam, and 40 percent supported the proposal that the federal government should establish a national registry of Muslims (Chalabi, 2015).

Figure 2.1 Cultural Images

The cartoonist is illustrating some of the stereotypes in our culture that shape how non-Indians think about "Indians."

SOURCE: John Branch, *San Antonio Express-News*.

In one national survey, 40 percent of White Americans said they believed Muslims sanction and support terrorism, and 40 percent of African Americans shared that belief (Sue, 2015). In a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, about half of Americans believed that a significant percentage of Muslims harbor anti-American attitudes (Lipka, 2017). Chalabi (2015) says the lack of familiarity between White and Muslim Americans contributes to negative attitudes, citing a study that found that only 13 percent of non-Muslims had been inside a mosque, and only 26 percent of them had Muslim co-workers. Media portrayals of Muslims are another factor. In a panel discussion at Duke University, veteran journalists acknowledged the role of the media in promoting a strong association between Muslims and violence (Ballentine, 2017).

Although the media bears some responsibility for reinforcing stereotypes, many Americans may not recognize portrayals of certain groups as stereotypical because of the prejudices embedded in our language.

> "You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements."
>
> — NORMAN DOUGLAS (1868–1952)

What examples of prejudice exist in our language?

One pattern observed in the English language has been called the **black/white syndrome**. Scholars report that this language pattern emerged in English long before the British knew that people described as Black were living in Africa (Moore, 2006). Although the pattern likely originated in biblical language referring to Satan, evil, and hell as black or dark, it has been argued that a consistently negative pattern for references to *black* affected British perceptions of Africans and that negative connotations for blackness were readily applied to all dark-skinned people they encountered. A negative pattern for *black* has persisted in the English language, as can be seen in familiar phrases: black deed, black day, black-hearted, black mass, black magic, the Black Death, black thoughts, black looks, and blacklist. Such words and phrases illustrate the point made by linguist Skuttnab-Kangas (2000), "Dominant groups keep a monopoly of defining others, and it is their labels we see in dictionaries" (p. 154).

Skuttnab-Kangas also argues that labeling others includes "the power to define oneself" by not having to accept the definitions others have for your group. It should not be surprising that references to *white* in the English language follow a consistently

positive pattern: telling little white lies, having a white wedding, cheering white knights (in shining armor), indicating approval by saying "that's really white of you," and even engaging in white-collar crime (perceived as less harmful than other crimes). Some authors such as Robert Frost and Herman Melville have exploited the pervasive black/white pattern by deliberately using *white* as a negative term, invoking images of sterility, death, or evil to shock readers with unexpected associations.

Sometimes prejudice is not just black and white but is instead a shade of gray, as in the expression, "Where there's a will there's a way." At first glance this expression seems nothing more than an attempt to encourage children and youth to try hard, but it has another meaning: If all that it takes to be successful is to have the will to succeed, then those people who are not successful are at fault for their failure because they just didn't "try" hard enough. This belief leads to blaming the victim, providing an ethical escape for middle-class people. After all, if they were successful because they worked hard, then someone who is poor must not have worked hard enough, perhaps because they are lazy or incompetent.

Such stereotypes for "the poor" reinforce the conclusion that poor people are responsible for their poverty and thus the rest of us are under no obligation to help them. Other stereotypes may be revealed in expressions. When people negotiate with the seller on the price of a product, they might say, "I Jewed him down," alluding to an old stereotype. Parents and teachers have been overheard telling children to stop behaving "like a bunch of wild Indians." Teenagers who say, "That's so gay" do not intend it as a compliment. Boys are still ridiculed by comments such as "he throws like a girl" or "he's a sissy." Children are no longer limited to the term *sissy*. Today, even elementary children can be heard calling one another a *faggot*. They may not be certain what the word means, but they know it is a negative term (Wessler, 2001).

Some people tell sexist, racist, and ethnic jokes that clearly reveal their prejudices. When others complain that these jokes aren't funny, they are likely to be told they don't have a sense of humor: "It was a joke!" Just a joke. Although people are more careful today about telling racist jokes, sexist jokes are frequently told at work and in school. Perhaps the numerous examples of sexist words and phrases in our language make it easier to express sexist attitudes publicly.

How does gender prejudice in our language promote sexist attitudes?

Unlike many other languages, English does not have a neutral pronoun that includes both men and women, so the word *he* is used to refer to someone of indeterminate gender. *Man* has traditionally been used in words or phrases where the referent could be female (even though there are neutral nouns such as *human* and *people*). Some people continue to insist that *man* is generic when used in words such as *businessman, chairman, congressman, fireman, layman, mailman, policeman, salesman, spokesman*, and *statesman*, but studies over the past twenty years have concluded that generic language invoked mental images of men.

For example, in a study reported by Miller and Swift (2000) involving 500 junior high students, one group of students received instructions to draw pictures of "early man" engaged in various activities and to give each individual drawn a name (so researchers could be certain that a man or woman was the subject of the drawing). The majority of students of both sexes tended to draw only men for every activity identified except the one representing infant care, and even for that activity, 49 percent of boys drew an image of a man. A second group of students was instructed to draw pictures of "early people" engaged in the same activities and to give each human figure drawn a name; once again, the majority of the humans drawn by both sexes were men. It is possible that the phrase *early people* sounded strange and that many students translated

it as "cave men" and drew pictures of men. The third group of students was asked to draw pictures of "early men and early women," once again giving names to human figures. Only in this group did the figures drawn by students include a significant number of images of women, but even with these instructions, some students of both sexes drew only men.

What sexist terms for men could be considered derisive?

Although a plethora of derisive terms exist for women, derisive language for men often sends a mixed message. It may be intended as an insult to call a man a *prick* or a *bastard*, but it can also be interpreted as being envious of a man's power. Men may feel that they have to be tough, ruthless, and relentless if they are going to be successful in a "dog eat dog world"; such language could be regarded as a compliment to a man's prowess, his masculinity.

In American English, unambiguously derisive terms for men often accuse a man of being feminine. No little boy wants to be called a *sissy*; no man wants to be called a *wimp* or a *pussy*. Although a man may not like being called a name that implies he acts like a woman, according to Baker (1981), it is even more insulting to be called a name suggesting that a woman controls him, that he's *pussy whipped*. Men often use such language in a joking manner, but the message is serious.

That it is an insult for a man to be compared to a woman was illustrated by an incident at a summer festival. A man and his son were setting up a dunking booth. Three young men came up and volunteered to be dunked. The man said he had all the volunteers he needed. Animated by alcohol, the three of them badgered the man for several minutes before they gave up. As they walked away, the man at the booth said, "Goodbye, girls!" One of the young men turned around and shouted, "What the f*** did you call me?" He came storming back clearly intending to engage in violence for this insult, even though the father's young son stood next to him.

A group of mothers and daughters standing nearby in a line for face painting had observed this confrontation. One mother shouted sarcastically, "Oh, what a terrible thing to be called!" The young man looked angrily at the group of women, and other mothers shouted similar comments. The young man's face betrayed his confusion. His body had swelled up with anger, but now it seemed to deflate. His expression became almost sheepish as he approached the man at the dunking booth; he was still angry but not to the point of engaging in violence. A security officer arrived and escorted the young man away. Considering the hostility aroused by such a flippant remark, you have to wonder about the attitudes men are being taught concerning women. Is it possible for a man to hate the idea of being called a woman and not subconsciously hate women as well?

Aren't some prejudices positive?

Some people misuse the term *prejudice* by saying they are prejudiced *for* something, but they are misusing the word because prejudice is always a negative attitude. A milder attitude of liking or disliking anything or anyone is a bias. The concept of prejudice involves learning to fear and mistrust other groups of people and to strengthen negative attitudes we have been taught about them. Once we learn to be prejudiced against a certain group, we tend to behave in negative ways toward others who appear to be members of that group. Negative behavior is *discrimination*: We no longer merely hold a negative attitude—we have acted on that attitude. To prevent such negative consequences of prejudice, it is necessary to unlearn whatever prejudices we have been taught, but that is more difficult than it sounds because there are powerful factors motivating people to persist in maintaining their prejudices.

> "I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings."
>
> — CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

The Perpetuation of Prejudice

People want to be successful and often will try to promote their own self-interests. When members of one group believe that individuals from another group are becoming more successful than they are, they may become angry at those individuals—even hostile toward the entire group—and rationalize that an advantage other than talent or skill is responsible for that individual's or group's success. Resentment stemming from economic competition for good jobs with high salaries and status fosters prejudice. Because humans are intelligent enough to identify these various causes of prejudice, it seems logical to assume that people should be able to recognize that they have prejudices and attempt to eliminate them.

How are prejudices perpetuated?

A major factor in the perpetuation of prejudice is the tendency to rationalize prejudices and the negative behaviors prejudices promote. As Gioseffi (1993) noted, this not only affects individuals but also is an international phenomenon: "Just as individuals will rationalize their hostile behaviors . . . so nations do also" (p. xvii). Vega (1978) described rationalizations as taking three forms: (1) denial, (2) victim-blaming, and (3) avoidance. To unlearn our prejudices and develop effective ways of confronting prejudices expressed by others, we need to recognize these rationalizations so we can respond appropriately when they are expressed.

Denial rationalizations. In making **denial rationalizations**, an individual refuses to recognize that there are problems in our society resulting from prejudices and discrimination. Such claims are astonishing in their ignorance, yet they continue to be made. In response to assertions of racism, the most common denial rationalization is the *reverse discrimination* argument claiming that women and minorities receive the best jobs because of affirmative action programs. Is there any truth to this claim?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people of color today represent 36 percent of American workers, and White people account for 64 percent; since women comprise about 50 percent of all White workers, White men are only about 32 percent of the workforce (Burns, Barton, & Kerby, 2012). One study defined the best jobs in terms of annual earnings placing them in the top 25 percent of all workers. Historically, 85–90 percent of this group has been White workers, but since 2000, the White share has declined to 70 percent, still twice as high as their presence in the workforce. Despite this change, among the professional, managerial and other occupations regarded as being the most desirable, White people are still the dominant group, and even when people of color are found in these jobs, they tend to be paid less (Alba, 2016). Further, Woodruff (2013) reported that the income for White households in the United States was almost $30,000 higher than the incomes for Black or Latino households. Claims that White men are unfairly discriminated against as a result of affirmative action policies appear to be inaccurate (see Table 2.1).

The most common denial rationalization related to sexism is the "natural" argument, which denies gender discrimination, claiming that it is natural for women to do some things better than men, and for men to do some things better than women. This denial rationalization is offered as an explanation for why men and women have historically held certain types of jobs. The argument does not explain the difference between the skills of a tailor (predominantly men) compared to a seamstress (predominantly women) to justify the differences in their compensations. Nor does it explain

Table 2.1 Annual Incomes of Full-Time Workers in the United States

Race/Gender	Median Weekly Earnings	
	2014	2017
White men	$897 (100 percent)	$977 (100 percent)
Black men	$680 (75.8 percent)	$722 (73.9 percent)
Hispanic men	$616 (68.7 percent)	$692 (70.8 percent)
White women	$734 (81.8 percent)	$790 (80.8 percent)
Black women	$611 (68.1 percent)	$645 (66.0 percent)
Hispanic women	$548 (61.1 percent)	$596 (61.0 percent)

SOURCE: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017.

why construction workers (mostly men) should be compensated at a greater rate than college-educated social workers (mostly women). Historically, women have been paid less than men for doing the same work, and occupations dominated by women still receive lower wages than occupations dominated by men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). This is the reality, but denial rationalizations have little to do with reality.

The most subtle denial rationalization is personal denial illustrated by the man who says, "How can I be sexist? I love women! I married a woman. I have daughters." This seems a reasonable statement: A man who denies he has gender prejudices does not appear to be denying the existence of widespread prejudice against women—but the statement actually does imply a more sweeping denial. Psychologically, most people feel they are normal, average people. If an individual denies being prejudiced, he is actually denying that most other normal, average people are prejudiced as well. The real meaning of such a statement is that the speaker does not believe prejudice and discrimination are serious problems in society. If the individual making this denial rationalization argues this point, she might resort to victim-blaming responses because the two are closely related.

> "Prejudice blinds, ignorance retards, indifference deafens, hate amputates. In this way do some people disable their souls."
>
> — MARY ROBINSON (1944–)

Victim-blaming rationalizations. Ryan (1976) was one of the first scholars to identify **victim-blaming rationalizations**, in which individuals reject the idea that prejudice and discrimination are problems in society, even while they admit that problems exist. The problems they identify, however, are typically deficiencies or flaws in members of minority groups. Victim blamers focus on the group being harmed by societal prejudices and insist that the group is the problem, not the society. Victim blamers urge individuals to stop being so sensitive or so pushy, to work harder, and to quit complaining. Group members are told they are responsible for whatever problems they must overcome. Ironically, victim blamers often do not hold themselves responsible for their own failures. In a study of college students who took an intelligence test, participants tended to explain the poor performance of others as an indication of inferior intellectual ability, but if *they* performed poorly, they were more likely to view the results as a consequence of the level of difficulty of the test (Aronson, 2008).

Victim blaming often occurs among people who want to believe in a just world. In one study, participants observed two people working equally hard at a task. By a random decision, researchers gave one of the workers a significant reward when the task was completed; the other worker received nothing. When asked to rate how hard the two people had worked, the participants tended to describe the individual who received nothing as not working as hard as the individual receiving the reward. Aronson (2008) concluded his analysis of this study by suggesting that "we find it frightening to think about living in a world where people, through no fault of their own, can be deprived of what they deserve or need" (p. 323).

People who engage in victim-blaming rationalizations often go beyond blame to propose solutions. By defining the problem as a deficiency existing in the victimized

group, every solution proposed by a victim blamer involves how the victim needs to resolve the problem. The rest of us need do nothing. Rape is increasing on college campuses? That's a woman's problem, so what women need to do is to wear less provocative clothing, avoid going out late at night, and learn to defend themselves by taking martial arts classes or carrying pepper spray. What to do about the rapist isn't addressed. Because victim blamers offer solutions, it is easy to confuse victim blaming with some avoidance rationalizations.

Avoidance rationalizations. Unlike people who employ denial and victim-blaming rationalizations, those who promote **avoidance rationalizations** recognize the problems in society as stemming from prejudice and discrimination. This is a significant departure from the previous rationalizations. Even though an individual making avoidance rationalizations admits there are problems, he will not address them and will rationalize a reason to avoid them. Ways to avoid confronting issues include offering a solution that (1) addresses only part of a problem or (2) is a false solution that does not address the problem at all.

If college administrators decide to confront prejudice by requiring students to take an ethnic studies course, that requirement will address a small part of the problems caused by prejudice and discrimination. Learning more about ethnic groups is a good idea, but if colleges are serious about actively opposing prejudice and improving intergroup relations, administration and faculty must recruit diverse students, hire diverse faculty, and promote cultural diversity through workshops and seminars both on campus and in the community.

An example of a false solution that does not address problems of sexism is the proposal that "sexism would just disappear if we didn't pay so much attention to it." Problems created by sexism did not suddenly appear, and they won't disappear unless people engage in actions to confront, challenge, and change sexist attitudes, policies, and laws. The only way any society can solve problems and improve conditions is to analyze a problem, create appropriate solutions, implement the solutions that seem most likely to be effective, and, after time passes, assess the impact of these solutions.

Another form of avoidance rationalization involves making an argument that distracts attention from the issue or question being discussed. Imagine a group of people discussing efforts that could be made to increase social justice in our society. Suddenly someone says, "You're being too idealistic. We are never going to solve this problem because we're never going to have a utopia." The speaker was not arguing for the creation of a utopia, a perfect society, but for ways to improve society. By making the reasonable statement that utopias are not possible, the speaker has shifted the focus of the conversation to a different topic that avoids the issue. It is not realistic to believe that it is possible to create a perfect society, but it is possible—in fact, essential—to believe that any society can be improved.

Another example of a distracting argument: In a discussion about the need for child-care centers at a work site, someone says, "I support the idea, but it takes time; it's not going to happen overnight." This is a reasonable response, except what has been achieved if the discussion ends with that comment? To implement any solution successfully, it is necessary to clarify what is entailed: What needs to be done? Who will do what? Which actions should be taken next month? What can we expect in the next 6 months? Who will determine whether the solution is working, and how will progress be assessed? Saying a solution takes time may be true, but it is still necessary to discuss what must be done to implement it. Such a discussion avoids dealing with the problem or confronting your own prejudices. Problems are not solved by talk or the passage of time but by taking some kind of action.

Conservatives are often accused of engaging in denial and victim-blaming rationalizations. Their solutions tend to concentrate on perceived flaws in victims of prejudice rather than addressing the prejudice and discrimination that create many of

these difficult circumstances. On the other hand, liberals are more likely to be criticized for engaging in avoidance rationalizations in which they acknowledge and express sympathy for the problems faced by oppressed groups but never do anything to address the causes of these problems. As long as significant numbers of individuals continue to employ such rationalizations, Americans are not likely to perceive or confront causes or consequences of the persistent inequities stemming from prejudices based on race, gender, and other human differences.

Causes and Consequences of Prejudice and Discrimination

Considerable research has been conducted to address the question of how and why individuals become prejudiced. Some studies suggest that elitist attitudes foster prejudice. **Elitism** is the belief that the most able people succeed in society and form a natural aristocracy, whereas the least able enjoy the least success because they are flawed in some way or lack the necessary qualities to be successful. This condescending attitude promotes the belief that those in the lower levels of society deserve to be where they are and that successful people have earned their place in society. Unsuccessful people are often held responsible for their failure. Elitist attitudes are a major factor in studies based on social dominance theory (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Howard, 2006).

Other studies suggest a link between prejudice and attitudes about power. Some people express a **zero-sum** attitude, a highly competitive orientation toward power based on the assumption that the personal gains of one individual mean a loss for someone else; therefore, to share power is regarded as having less power. According to Levin and Levin (1982), an individual with a zero-sum orientation toward power tends to be an individual with strong prejudices. Some have even proposed that prejudice is innate, but there are no scientific studies to support that claim. To be as pervasive and persistent as it has been, prejudice must serve some purpose and offer some benefit to individuals or to society.

What are the major causes promoting the development of prejudice?

Having reviewed research concerning causes of prejudice, Levin and Levin (1982) identified four primary causes, and within these causes, functions of prejudice that sustain it. The four causes include (1) personal frustration, (2) uncertainty about an individual based on lack of knowledge or experience with the group to which the individual belongs, (3) threat to self-esteem, and (4) competition among individuals in our society to achieve their goals in relation to status, wealth, and power.

> "Everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudices—just recognize them."
> — EDWARD R. MURROW (1908–1965)

How does frustration cause prejudice?

The frustration-aggression hypothesis maintains that as frustration builds, it leads to aggressive action. Frustration causes tension to increase until an individual chooses to act on the frustration to alleviate the tension. Jones (1997) and others have called this the "scapegoat phenomenon." The word **scapegoat** derives from an ancient Hebrew custom described in Leviticus 16:20–22, in which each year the Hebrew people reflected on their sins during days of atonement. At the end of that time, a spiritual leader would stand before them with a goat, lay his hands on the goat's head, and recite a list of the

people's sins, transferring the sins of the people to the goat—which was then set free. In modern America, the term generally refers to blaming an individual or group for problems they did not cause.

When we take aggressive action—from verbal abuse to physical violence—we inevitably cause harm to others. Because most individuals define themselves as "good" according to some criteria, they will usually find a way to rationalize their actions as being good or at least justified. When Southerners lynched Black people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they justified their actions by insisting that all Black people were lazy, lustful, or liars. Using the Kafkaesque reasoning that all Black people were guilty and therefore it didn't matter what crime a Black individual was accused of committing, they executed victims with no regard for whether that specific Black individual was guilty of a crime. Today some Americans use American Muslims as a scapegoat by assuming that they are terrorists or at least sympathetic to terrorists and acting aggressively against them by vandalizing mosques and verbally or even physically abusing them.

Finding a scapegoat does not necessarily solve problems, as illustrated in domestic abuse cases. When a man takes out his frustrations by abusing his partner, he has to justify his actions. It is common for men arrested for domestic abuse to claim that: "She made me do it," or "She kept nagging and wouldn't shut up." This not only depicts the man as a victim (the suffering husband) but also reinforces the stereotype of nagging wives, providing the husband with an excuse for assaulting the woman he once claimed to love. As violence escalates with each domestic abuse complaint from the same home, it is obvious that blaming a spouse or partner doesn't solve the problem; in fact, it may cause the abuser to become more violent toward those interfering with his actions.

Because of the high rates of injury and death to police officers responding to domestic abuse cases, many American cities, counties, and states require officers to file abuse charges directly, even over the objections of the one abused. Courts often mandate counseling for abusers to address and understand how gender prejudices and stereotypes created negative attitudes leading to abuse, and to teach abusive men effective, nonviolent strategies for managing anger. The role of gender stereotypes in contributing to domestic abuse illustrates another major cause of prejudice—uncertainty.

What do stereotypes have to do with uncertainty, and how do they cause prejudice?

Most of us only have knowledge of the groups to which we belong; often we do not know much about other groups. In the United States, schools have historically implemented curricula reflecting perspectives, contributions, and experiences of the dominant (White) group, and many of our neighborhoods still tend to be segregated by race or social class. The result is that people from different racial and ethnic groups have few opportunities to learn about one another. Because of our lack of accurate information, we may believe in stereotypes as a way to convince ourselves that we know about certain groups. (See Figure 2.2.) Our stereotypes can be reinforced by images or information contained in such media as advertisements, textbooks, and films.

For an example of ignorance promoting prejudice, how many Americans know that Muslims have been in the United States from colonial times because many slaves brought to America from West Africa were Muslim? The evidence is in the names that "read like a Who's Who of traditional Muslim names"—Bullaly (Bilali), Mahomet (Muhammad), Walley (Wali), and Sambo meant "second son" to Muslim Fulbe people (Abdo, 2006, p. 66). Although Americans tend to stereotype all Arabs as Muslims, the majority of Arabs immigrating to the United States in the late nineteenth century were Christians. Another stereotype is that Muslims have only lived in urban areas. How many Americans know that in the 1920s a small group of Muslims settled in Ross, South Dakota, and built the first mosque in the United States or that the oldest continuously functioning mosque is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Abdo, 2006)?

Figure 2.2 Learning about Stereotyping

This drawing has been used for research and in classrooms. One individual is shown this picture and whispers a description of the entire scene to another individual, who then whispers the description to another individual until each individual in the room has heard it. The last individual is asked to describe the scene to everyone. Typically, the individual describes a poorly dressed Black man with a weapon preparing to attack a well-dressed White man, thus illustrating the power of racial stereotypes.

Even if they don't know this history, how many Americans know that 27 percent of Muslim Americans own their own business (Wolfe, 2017)? How many know that Muslims tend to be well educated or that more undergraduate and graduate degrees have been earned by women (40 percent) than by men (35 percent) in the Muslim American community (Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017)? About 50 percent of Muslim Americans today are immigrants, and they are doing what America expects of immigrants. But, unaware of this information, and surrounded by stereotypes and the media's focus on Islamic terrorists, how many Americans harbor negative views of both the Islamic faith and Muslims? According to a poll by the Pew Research Center (2013), 46 percent of Americans believed that the religion of Islam was no more likely to promote violence than any other religion, and yet 42 percent of Americans disagreed, believing that the Islamic faith encouraged violence more than other faiths.

People have long known that stereotypes skew an individual's perception of a group, but more recently scholars have reported that being aware of the stereotypes of your own group can adversely affect group members. This is called a **stereotype threat**, which Aronson (2012) defines as "the apprehension experienced by members of a minority group that they might behave in a manner that confirms an existing cultural stereotype" (p. 437). Such apprehensions can contribute to feelings of anxiety and poor performance.

Ariely (2008) described a study in which Asian American women were divided into two groups and administered the same math exam. Prior to receiving the exam, one group was asked numerous questions related to their gender, and the other group was asked numerous questions related to their race. The second group performed much better than the first group on the math test, suggesting that stereotypes about women being deficient in math and Asian people excelling at math may have influenced their performance. Other studies have reported similar results, including one study of White male engineering students who had almost perfect math scores on the SAT tests. These

White men were randomly divided into two groups, and prior to being given a challenging math test, one group was told that the test would measure their math abilities, whereas the other group was told that the purpose of the study was to understand why Asian people appear to be superior to all others in their math ability. The second group had much lower scores on the math exam than the first group (Aronson, 2008).

When an individual actually encounters individuals of a different race, ethnicity, or social class, selective perception of the behaviors of those individuals often reinforces stereotypes. Stephan (1999) reported on one study where participants were presented with equal amounts of positive and negative information about a group to which they belonged (in-group) and a group to which they did not belong (out-group). Participants tended to recall more positive information about the in-group and more negative information about the out-group. According to Stephan, negative attitudes in our memory tend to increase over time.

Selective perception was illustrated in another study in which two groups of participants viewed consecutive videos: The first video was of a fourth-grade girl playing with friends, and the second video was of the same girl taking an oral test in school in which she answered some difficult questions correctly but missed some easy questions. Although the second video was the same for both groups, the first video shown to one group was the girl playing in a low-income neighborhood, and the first video shown to the other group was the girl playing in a high-income neighborhood. After watching both videos, participants were asked to judge the girl's academic abilities. Those who saw her playing in the low-income neighborhood rated her academic ability lower than those who saw her playing in the more affluent neighborhood. Whether the participants focused more on the girl's correct or incorrect answers appears to have been influenced by the neighborhood in which they believed she lived and stereotypes associated with affluence and poverty (Aronson, 2008).

Researchers have also shown that becoming more knowledgeable about others helps people overcome stereotypical perceptions. In a psychiatric hospital with an all-White staff, clients acting violently were either taken to a "time-out room" or subjected to the harsher penalty of being put in a straitjacket and sedated. In the first month of a research study, both Black and White clients were admitted. Although the Black clients admitted were diagnosed as being less violent than the Whites, they were four times more likely to be put in a straitjacket and sedated by the staff if they became violent. The discrepancy in the White staff's use of restraints suggests that they believed in the stereotype that Black people were more prone to violence. As they became better acquainted with the clients, the staff responded to violent incidents with more equal use of restraints for both Black and White clients (Aronson, 2012). Stereotypes that portray a group as being prone to violence, lazy, or less intelligent can influence an individual's behavior; stereotypes can also play a part in an individual's self-esteem being threatened, which is another major cause of prejudice identified in research.

How does threat to self-esteem cause prejudice?

In the United States, people are encouraged to develop self-esteem by comparing themselves with others. We do so by grades in school, music contests, debates in speech, and athletic competitions. But what happens when positive self-esteem is achieved by developing feelings of superiority to someone else? Or when we achieve our sense of superiority by projecting our feelings of inferiority onto another individual or group? If we believe in the innate superiority of our group compared to other groups, then we believe we are better than anyone who is a member of the inferior group. If members of an inferior group become successful, their achievements threaten those whose self-esteem was based on feelings of group superiority, and that group's condescending attitude unconsciously turns into prejudice.

"Sometimes (prejudice) is like a hair across your cheek. You can't see it, you can't find it with your fingers, but you keep brushing at it because the feel of it is irritating."

— MARIAN ANDERSON (1897–1993)