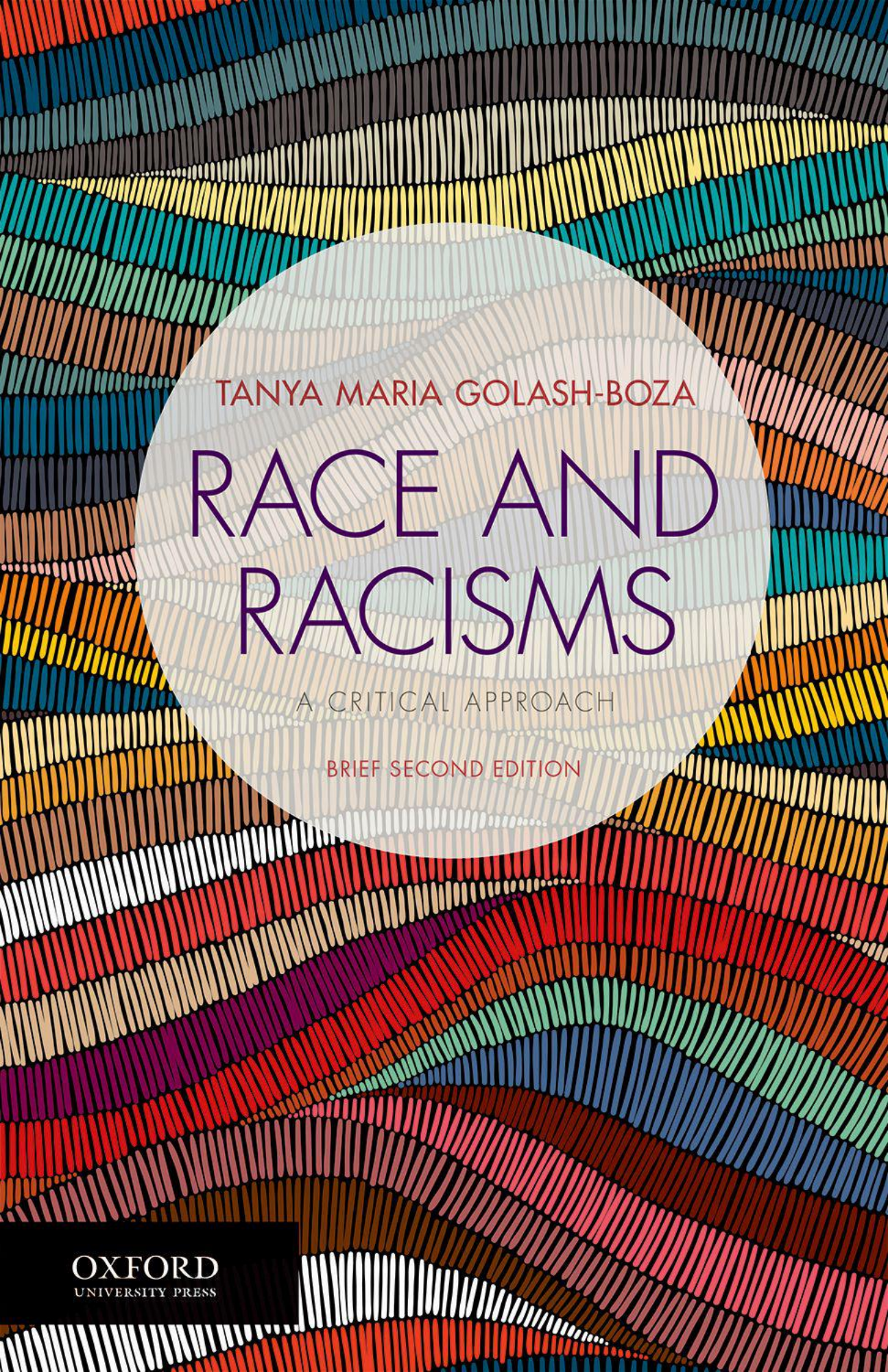
TANYA MARIA GOLASH-BOZA
RACE AND RACISMS
A CRITICAL APPROACH
BRIEF SECOND EDITION
OXFORD
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RACE AND RACISMS

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BRIEF SECOND EDITION

TANYA MARIA GOLASH-BOZA
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Brief Contents

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Preface

This brief second edition of *Race and Racisms* engages students in significant questions related to racial dynamics in the United States. In accessible, straightforward language, the text discusses and critically analyzes cutting-edge scholarship in the field.

FEATURES

Race and Racisms includes several unique features designed to aid both teaching and learning. Each of the following features appears throughout the book:

- **Voices** sidebars highlight individual stories about race and racism, bringing personal experiences to life.
- **Thinking about Racial Justice** sidebars pose questions for students to consider in thinking about how racism could be addressed or alleviated.
- **As You Read** questions point students to the key ideas in each chapter.
- **Check Your Understanding** sections at the end of the chapter relate to the As You Read questions and help students review.
- **Critical Thinking** questions guide students in questioning their own and others' assumptions about race and racism.
- **Talking about Race** prompts at the end of each chapter suggest ways to approach discussions about race and racism.

NEW IN THIS EDITION

The goal of the second brief edition of *Race and Racisms* was not merely to keep up with our changing world but to invite students to consider their own role in it. Each chapter has been carefully updated to reflect current issues and events as well as the latest data and research. Beyond these updates, new stories and examples throughout engage

readers in thinking about how racism could be addressed or alleviated. Highlights of this edition include:

- Expanded coverage of white privilege
- New discussions of gender and intersectionality
- Expanded coverage of Arab and Middle Eastern Americans, in addition to new topics such as Islamophobia
- Coverage of Black Lives Matter and other social movements
- New Voices sidebars in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10
- New feature: Talking about Race
- New section following this preface: "Talking about Race Outside the Classroom"

ORGANIZATION

Race and Racisms begins with a historical chapter on the origin and evolution of the idea of race. From there, it moves into an overview of racial ideologies and sociological theories of racism, and then to a historical and contemporary discussion of immigration. The next two chapters focus on racial ideologies in the media and on colorism. The final five chapters explore racial inequalities across five key areas: education, the labor market, housing, the criminal justice system, and health and the environment. Each chapter uses an intersectional framework to guide our understanding of racial dynamics.

ANCILLARIES

Oxford University Press is proud to offer a complete supplements package to accompany *Race and Racisms: Brief Edition*. The Ancillary Resource Center (ARC) at www.oup-arc.com is a convenient, instructor-focused, single destination for resources to accompany this book. Accessed online through individual user accounts, the ARC provides instructors with access to up-to-date ancillaries at any time while guaranteeing the security of grade-significant resources. In addition, it allows OUP to keep instructors informed when new content becomes available.

The ARC for *Race and Racisms: Brief Edition* contains a variety of materials to aid in teaching:

- PowerPoint lecture slides to aid in the presentation of course material
- Recommended readings that delve more deeply into the topics discussed in the chapter
- A test bank with multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I travel around the country to give talks at universities, I am always pleased and humbled when instructors tell me they use this book in their class and when students tell me how much they enjoy reading it. The positive feedback I received from the first edition was a major motivation to revise this book. I have attempted to respond to the many helpful critiques and comments I received to make this book an even better tool for teaching about race and racism.

My interest in race and racism derives in part from my experiences growing up as a white child in a primarily black neighborhood. I am grateful to my parents for deciding to raise our white family on the east side of Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., and for staying in that neighborhood to this day. Had my parents made different life choices, it is likely this book would never have been written.

Writing this textbook has been much less painful than it otherwise would have been due to the extraordinary efforts of the editorial team at Oxford University Press, especially Executive Editor Sherith Pankratz, Development Editor Lauren Mine, and Associate Editor Meredith Keffer. My deepest gratitude to this amazing and efficient team. I would also like to acknowledge the design and production team at Oxford University Press, including Managing Editor Lisa Grzan, Team Lead Theresa Stockton, Senior Production Editor William Murray, and Art Director Michele Laseau.

I did not write this book alone. In fact, many of these chapters were written in the company of fabulous colleagues in coffee shops and cabins around the world—from Yosemite to Hawaii to Bali. I'd like to extend a special thanks to my writing partners: Zulema Valdez, Ayu Saraswati, Christina Lux, Dalia Magaña, Whitney Pirtle, Amani Nuru-Jeter, Jemima Pierre, Winddance Twine, and Vilna Treitler.

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Talking about Race Outside the Classroom

This book is designed primarily for classroom use. I hope teachers and students find the analyses, narratives, and data it conveys helpful in generating productive class engagements on racial justice, racial equity, and race relations. Learning, however, is a lifelong experience. And, as many of my students point out, few people you encounter in your daily life will be privy to all the knowledge and insight conveyed in this book. So, how do you—the reader—carry this knowledge from the classroom to your living room, to the coffee shop, to the dining room table, to the bar, or to your workplace? How do you talk about race outside the classroom?

Each chapter of this book concludes with a "Talking about Race" prompt that provides some suggestions on how to have conversations about the specific topics in that chapter. Here, I'd like to address the issue of discussing race more generally.

Conversations about race can be either premeditated or surprise. Premeditated conversations can be easier because you can decide ahead of time how and why you would like to broach a topic with a friend, family member, or coworker. Surprise conversations are a bit harder to deal with because you have to respond on the spot—and many times emotions can make it more difficult to have level-headed responses. Let's consider each of these two conversation types in turn, as they are quite different and require different tools.

Let's say an organization you are involved in has a policy that disadvantages people of color. You decide you would like to initiate a conversation with the leaders so that they will reconsider the policy. Here are some tips for having a productive conversation with your colleagues, drawn from a brief by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on "How to Talk about Race":

- **Emphasize shared values**. Begin the conversation by focusing on what you all may agree on.
- **Provide more than a critique**. Offer a manageable solution that can be implemented.

- **Use narratives more than numbers**. Provide concrete examples of how people are affected by the current policy and how a change could benefit them.
- **Emphasize shared goals**. Present the change you are proposing as an opportunity for the organization to move forward.

It is great when you have an opportunity to prepare for a discussion about race. Often, however, we encounter racial microaggressions, macroaggressions, overt acts of racism, or other forms of bigotry and have to respond on the spot. Of course, you can choose not to respond, but even silence is a response in and of itself.

How do you respond if you experience a microaggression? What if you are sitting with friends and someone makes a racial or racist joke? What if you witness someone mistreating a person based on that person's race? What is the best way to respond? Having a strategy ready ahead of time can make it easier to respond in the moment. Here are some options:

- **Respond with silence**. If you are with someone who tells a racist joke, you can be silent. By not laughing, you are sending a message that this joke is not appropriate.
- **Leave the room**. If you are with a group of people, and the conversation takes a turn toward complaining about a particular ethnic group, you can exit the room or grab your keys and leave the event. That sends a signal that their conversation is not appropriate.
- **Question the statement**. If you are with a group of people, and some of them say that all black people are great dancers, you can ask them why they think that. You can push them and ask if they think it is genetic or cultural. You can keep asking them questions to help them see that their statement is problematic.
- **Ask the persons making a racist statement if they would make the statement in different company**. For example, if someone makes a joke about Jewish people, ask the person if he or she would feel comfortable making the joke in front of Jewish people. That may help everyone in the room see that the statement is problematic.

Hearing a bigoted joke or statement—directed at you or others—can stop you in your tracks. How you respond is a personal decision that is based on your personality as well as your relationships with others. It is important to know that you have options—ranging from remaining silent to leaving to responding directly. Thinking through these options ahead of time will make you better prepared to respond.

1

The Origin of the Idea of Race

CHAPTER OUTLINE

AS YOU READ

1.1 What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?
1.2 How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference?
1.3 How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery?
1.4 How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans?
1.5 What role did science play in the propagation of racism?

In the colonial Americas, no one would have described the population using the terms *Native American*, *white*, or *black*. Instead, people identified themselves by groups such as Shawnee, Irish, and Ashanti. How, then, did our current racial categories come to be? What distinguishes the idea of race from previous ways of thinking about human difference? These are the questions we will consider in this chapter.

In the contemporary United States, one of the first things we notice about someone we meet is race. When we aren't sure of someone's race, we may get inquisitive or begin to feel uncomfortable (Dalmage 2000). It is as if, before interacting, we have to know if the other person is white, black, Asian, Native American, or something else. The perceived race of the other person affects how we treat one another and what we expect the other person to say and do.

It may be hard to imagine a time when the idea of race did not exist, when we did not categorize ourselves and others this way. But this time was not so long ago: although humans have long used various factors to classify one another, the idea of race as a classificatory system is a modern invention. Ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, did not think that the world's population could be divided into races (Eze 1997). Their system of social classification was much different from ours. Race is a modern **social construction**, meaning that the idea of race is not based on biological differences among people, even though race has become important in determining how we interact. It is a particular way of viewing human difference that is a product of colonial encounters.

Many people falsely believe that race has a biological basis, but advances in genetic science show there is more genetic variation within races than between them. There are certainly not clear genetic boundaries between races. People who are related to one another share an ancestry and thus may share genetic similarities; however, ancestry and race are distinct concepts (Yudell et al. 2016). Your ancestry, for example, is your personal family tree—your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on. You have genetic similarities with your ancestors. In contrast, if you were to encounter someone you believe to be of the same race as you, you could not assume you have genetic similarities. You could, however, assume you may share some social experiences—as you are both racialized by others as members of the same race.

DEFINING RACE AND ETHNICITY

The word ***race*** refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits. The idea of race implies that the people of the world can be divided into biologically discrete and exclusive groups based on physical and cultural traits. This idea is further linked to notions of white or European superiority that became concretized during the colonization of the Americas. As we will see in this chapter, the history of the idea of race is critical to an understanding of its meaning. ***Racism*** refers to both (1) the belief that races are populations whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences within a hierarchy, and (2) the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

The idea of race is slightly different from the concept of ethnicity. Races are categories of people based on a hierarchical worldview that associates ancestry, descent, and phenotype with cultural and moral attributes. **Ethnicities**, by contrast, are group identities based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Ethnicity also has a distinct historical trajectory from race. People self-identify as belonging to an ethnic group on the basis of a perceived shared history and a concomitant set of cultural attributes. In contrast to ethnicity, race is often an externally imposed category. In the United States, people are placed into races based on socially constructed, ascribed characteristics that are often related to physical appearance, such as skin color or hair texture, regardless of self-identification. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997, 469) argues that "ethnicity has a primarily sociocultural foundation, and ethnic groups have exhibited tremendous malleability in terms of who belongs; racial ascriptions (initially) are imposed externally to justify the collective exploitation of a people and are maintained to preserve status differences."

Race is a social construction, an idea we endow with meaning through daily interactions. It has no biological basis. This might seem an odd statement, as the physical differences between a Kenyan, a Swede, and a Han Chinese, for example, are obvious. However, these physical differences do not necessarily mean that the world can be divided into discrete racial groups. If you were to walk from Kenya to Sweden to China, you would note incremental gradations in physical differences between people across space, and it would be difficult to decide where to draw the line between Africa and Europe and between

Europe and Asia. There may be genetic differences between Kenyans and Swedes, but the genetic variations within the Kenyan population are actually greater than those between Swedes and Kenyans (Smedley 2007; Yudell et al. 2016). Although race is a social, as opposed to a biological, construction, it has a wide range of consequences in our society, especially when used as a sorting and stratifying mechanism.

Race is also a historical construction, meaning that the idea of race was formulated at particular historical moments and places. Of particular note in its development are the eras of **colonialism**—the practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically—and slavery in the Americas. The idea of race involves classifying humans into distinct groups. Through this classification and the assignment of cultural and moral traits to each group, Europeans and their descendants have used the idea of race to rationalize exploitation, slavery, colonialism, and **genocide**, the mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

RACE: THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEOLOGY

An **ideology** is a set of principles and ideas that benefit the dominant group. The racial ideologies that operate today reflect our times and are rooted in the history of the Americas. The way we understand the idea of race today is distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference. Before the conquest of the Americas, there was no worldview that separated all of humanity into distinct races (Smedley 2007; Montagu 1997; Quijano 2000). Understanding what race means today requires delving into the historical process through which the idea of race was created. Once we understand that racial categories are not natural but constructed, we can begin to think about why and how these categories were created. As we will see, European thinkers created racial categories to rationalize genocide and exploitation. This brutal history in turn raises the question of why we continue to use these categories.

Historical Precedents to the Idea of Race

Until the sixteenth century, Northern Europeans had limited knowledge of the world beyond their immediate communities. Without this knowledge, it would have been difficult to develop a worldview that

classified the people of the globe into various racial groups. Southern Europeans, in contrast, had much more contact with other peoples. People from the Mediterranean region have had extensive involvement with people from Asia, Africa, and the Arab world since time immemorial. These contacts, which range from Alexander the Great's travels to India and Greek exchanges with Ethiopia to the conquest of Spain by Islamic peoples, did not lead to a racial worldview. Ancient peoples did not divide the world into distinct races based on their physical and cultural traits. Instead, Greeks had great respect for the achievements of Ethiopians (Snowden 1970), and Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in reasonable harmony together in Spain for hundreds of years (Smedley 2007).

Although the idea of race did not develop until later, these early interactions between Europeans and other groups did provide important precedents for current ways of conceptualizing human difference. The Spanish Inquisition is one example. When the Catholic Church began to consolidate its power in Spain under the reign of monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile (1479–1504), Jews were expelled from Spain, and converted Jews were subject to scrutiny. In 1480, Ferdinand and Isabella established a tribunal called the Spanish Inquisition, which was intended to ensure the orthodoxy of people who had converted from Judaism and Islam to Catholicism. The monarchs issued royal decrees in 1492 and 1501 that ordered Jews and Muslims to convert or leave the country. During the Inquisition, Jews and Muslims were obliged to convert, but conversion did not ensure their safety, as converts continued to be subject to scrutiny and suspicion. Moreover, people believed to be the descendants of Jews and Muslims also faced persecution. Discrimination against Jews and Muslims was more religious in nature than racial, yet the ideas regarding purity of blood that emerged set the stage for ideas of racial difference that were to become part of the European understanding of human differences (Smedley 2007; Quijano 2000).

Another crucial precedent to the idea of race is the English view of the Irish. England and Ireland were involved in centuries of conflict before the English first settled in North America, and English soldiers often portrayed the Irish as savage, sexually immoral, and resistant to civilizing forces. Many English colonists had been deployed to Ireland before settling in the New World. The ideas the English developed about the Irish may thus have played a role in settlers' perception of

Native Americans as savage (Allen 1994; Smedley 2007). This perception was a precursor to the racial idea that some humans were less fit for civilization than others.

Slavery before the Idea of Race

Slavery was not new to the Americas: the practice of enslaving people has existed since antiquity. In African, European, and Middle Eastern societies, conquered peoples often became slaves in the aftermath of war. As agricultural societies grew, so did the demand for labor, leading peoples such as the Greeks and Phoenicians to raid other societies for slaves. Slavery existed not only across societies but also within societies: people lacking the support of a family often had no place other than as slaves, and some people became enslaved as a means of paying off a debt or as punishment for a crime. Slavery of this latter form almost always involved persons of the same ethnic group as their masters.

The prevalence of slavery in ancient societies does not imply that racism existed then as well. Although some ancient writings refer to skin color, these references are rarely derogatory and by no means represent the general ideology of any ancient society. On the contrary, Greeks and Romans held the Egyptians as well as the Ethiopians in high esteem and admired their culture and way of life. These ancient peoples developed no known stereotypes of blacks as primitives or lacking in culture (Snowden 1983). Marriages between Egyptians and other Africans were commonplace in ancient times, and Muslim conquerors regarded anyone they succeeded in converting as brethren (Franklin 1974).

The status of slaves varied across societies. In some instances, slaves were adopted as kin after serving for a certain number of years; in other cases, slaves were permitted to marry and own property (Smedley 2007; Morgan 1975). Many slaves were granted rights not found in the

TIMELINE

The American Slave Trade

1492 Christopher Columbus lands in the Caribbean.
1619 First African slaves arrive in Jamestown.
1660 First slave codes enacted.
1676 Bacon's Rebellion.
1863 Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.
1865 Slavery is abolished in the United States.

system of slavery in the New World. These rights included access to education, the potential to obtain freedom for themselves and their children, the right to marry, and the right to own property. Until the eighteenth century, no society categorically denied the humanity of slaves. Denying that slaves were fully human was not seen as a necessary rationale for slavery. Although slaves were at times treated brutally, the humanity of slaves was never put into question, and slavery was never attributed to racial inferiority (Smedley 2007).

European Encounters with Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

Before the arrival of the European colonizers, the Americas were home to over 100 million indigenous people. As a result of warfare, slavery, and disease, about 95 percent of this population was decimated during the first two centuries of colonization. The excerpted accounts in the Voices sidebar provide a small window into the depths of this massacre.

When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean islands in 1492, he found them to be peaceable and generous. Despite the Spaniards' initial admiration for the indigenous people, the relations between the two groups soon deteriorated, as it became clear that the Spaniards' primary motive was to extract gold from the Americas. Intent upon taking as much gold as possible, the Spaniards used their weaponry to overpower and enslave the people indigenous to the Americas to compel them to find gold and silver for the Spaniards to take back to Spain (Todorov 1984). The abuse the Caribbean peoples suffered at the hands of the Spaniards was devastating: the Arawaks of Santo Domingo, for example, were reduced from over 3 million people in 1496 to a mere 125 in 1570 (Jones 2003).

Reports of the Spaniards' extreme cruelty toward the indigenous people of the Americas made their way back to Spain and eventually became a subject of controversy. Fifty years after Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean islands, the enslavement of indigenous people was outlawed. The Spaniards continued to extract labor from indigenous people, however, by relying on other systems of forced labor (Wade 1997).

One of the most remarkable aspects of the conquest of the Americas is that many of the civilizations in the Americas were far more

When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean, he found them to be peaceable and generous.

voices

The Spanish Treatment of Indigenous Peoples

The following excerpts are from a 1519 report of Dominicans about the Spanish treatment of indigenous peoples in the Carib Islands.

> Some Christians encounter[ed] an Indian woman, who was carrying in her arms a child at suck; and since the dog they had with them was hungry, they tore the child from the mother's arms and flung it still living to the dog, who proceeded to devour it before the mother's eyes.

voices *continued.*

The Spanish Treatment of Indigenous Peoples

> When there were among the prisoners some women who had recently given birth, if the new-born babes happened to cry, they seized them by the legs and hurled them against the rocks, or flung them into the jungle so that they would be certain to die there.
>
> Each of them [the foremen] had made it a practice to sleep with the Indian women who were in his workforce, if they pleased him, whether they were married women or maidens. While the foreman remained . . . with the Indian woman, he sent the husband to dig gold out of the mines; and in the evening, when the wretch returned, not only was he beaten or whipped because he had not brought enough gold, but further, most often, he was bound hand and foot and flung under the bed like a dog, before the foreman lay down, directly over him, with his wife.

Source: Todorov 1984, 139.

advanced than those from which the Europeans hailed. Europe in the sixteenth century was quite a ghastly place, with frequent famines and epidemic outbreaks of the plague and smallpox. Large cities were pestilent and dirty, with unsightly open sewers. Crime was rampant. Half of all children died before they turned ten. Thus, we can imagine the surprise and awe that the magnificent city of Tenochtitlán engendered in the Spaniards who arrived there. Tenochtitlán, an Aztec city in central Mexico, had about 350,000 inhabitants—many times the population of London or Seville at the time. When the Spanish explorer and colonizer Hernando Cortés (1485–1547) saw this city, he declared it to be the most beautiful city on earth. His companion and chronicler Bernal Díaz (1492–1585) agreed, calling it a "wonderful thing to behold." Unlike European cities of the time, Tenochtitlán boasted clean streets, amazing floating gardens, a huge aqueduct system, and a market more extensive than any the Europeans had ever seen (Stannard 1993).

Despite their admiration, the Spaniards did not preserve this city. The arrival of the Spaniards led to the destruction of not only this amazing city, but also many towns and cities across the Americas. The population

of central Mexico was decimated in less than a century, declining from 25 million in 1519 to barely 1.3 million in 1595. This pattern continued throughout the Americas, so that nearly 95 percent of the native populations were destroyed in less than 200 years (Stannard 1993).

Slavery and Colonization

Africans were present in the conquest of the Americas from the beginning, both as slaves and as sailors and explorers. Spain and Portugal were slaveholding societies long before Columbus set sail in search of the Indies. Many, but not all, of the slaves in Spain in the fifteenth century were Africans. Some African residents of Spain and Portugal—enslaved as well as free—accompanied Spaniards on their initial conquest voyages to the New World. Juan Garrido (ca. 1480–ca. 1547), for example, was born in Africa and later traveled to Portugal and then to Spain, where he joined an expedition to Santo Domingo. Juan Garrido also participated in the conquest of Puerto Rica, Cuba, and then Mexico. Juan García (ca. 1495–date of death unknown), in contrast, was born in Spain as a free mulatto and traveled to Peru as a colonist (Restall 2000).

The Spanish colonists—often called *conquistadores*—endeavored to subdue native populations and to convert them into Catholics and subjects of the Spanish Crown. Their main goal, however, was to extract as much wealth as possible from the Americas. This extraction of wealth required labor, and the Spanish colonists enslaved the native populations to this end. The harsh conditions of this enslavement led to massive declines in the native populations, and in 1550, the Spanish Crown outlawed the practice, although it continued to allow other forms of forced labor. The ban on enslavement of indigenous people did not end the need for labor, and the Spaniards turned to Africa in their search for workers. As they realized that agricultural exploitation, particularly the harvesting of sugarcane, could bring enormous wealth, they began to bring African slaves in very large numbers to their colonies in the Americas (Smedley 2007; Franklin 1974; Morgan 1975). The Spaniards and Portuguese had long been trading with Africans and thus could imagine the possibilities for slave trading with Africa. Notably, the Spaniards were well aware of the technological advances developed in Africa and did not seek Africans as slaves because they thought they were inferior. To the contrary, the Spaniards believed enslaved Africans would be a valuable asset. Consequently,

tens of millions of Africans were brought over between the early 1600s and the nineteenth century as slaves (Bowser 1974).

Whereas the Spaniards had had centuries of contact with Africans, the English who settled in North America had had no such contact until the arrival of twenty Africans in Jamestown in 1619. Slaves did not become an essential part of the workforce in North America until much later.

The form of slavery that eventually emerged in the North American colonies was unique in several ways. First, slaves had no human or legal rights. They were seen only as property, not as people who could marry or own property themselves. Second, slavery was permanent and the slave status was inherited. Third, slaves were forbidden to learn to read or write, thereby ensuring their inferior social status. Finally, slavery in North America was unique insofar as nearly all Africans and their descendants were enslaved, and only this group could be enslaved. This unique system of human exploitation laid the groundwork for a new idea of human difference (Smedley 2007). Before delving further into this point, let's take a closer look at the English settlements in North America.

Exploitation in the Thirteen English Colonies

In the late fifteenth century, Europeans began to explore parts of North America where indigenous peoples had lived for thousands of years. The English, learning of the great wealth the Spanish had accrued in the New World, were anxious to fill their coffers with riches as well. England first sent colonists to Roanoke Island in the late sixteenth century, but that attempt at settlement failed. The first permanent English settlement was at Jamestown in 1607. Much as Columbus had recounted in 1492, these English settlers reported that the local Native Americans were kind and generous and helped them to survive the unfamiliar conditions. Amicable trade relations did not last long, however, as it became clear that the Englishmen's intentions were not benign: they planned to take over indigenous land and resources (Zinn 2010; Morgan 1975).

European colonists engaged in constant warfare with Native Americans, often burning their lodgings and crops and enslaving entire tribes. The English colonists justified their takeover of indigenous lands in religious terms. They interpreted their successes as God's will. For example, John Winthrop (1588–1649), a leader of the

Massachusetts Bay Colony in the mid-seventeenth century, wrote that the death of so many Native Americans as a result of smallpox showed that "the Lord hathe cleared our title to what we possess" (quoted in Wood 1991, 96). It is important to note that when the English colonists interacted with Native Americans, they did not see them as belonging to a separate race; this idea did not yet exist. Instead, the English saw themselves as superior in religious and moral terms. These religious justifications laid the groundwork for racial distinctions that emerged later (Smedley 2007; Jordan 1968).

The first fifty years of the new settlement in Virginia were full of hardship. Disease, starvation, and war caused extremely high death rates among both Native Americans and English colonists. There were severe food shortages, partly because the first settlers did not plant enough corn. Morgan (1975) points out that most of the settlers in Virginia were not farmers but nobles or gentry who thought food cultivation was beneath them. Although the settlers were too proud to grow corn to eat, they were willing to take up the enterprise of growing tobacco to sell and expected to make their riches in this manner. As there was no shortage of land in this vast country, the only commodity lacking was labor power (Zinn 2010).

The English colonists were notoriously successful at decimating the Native American population, yet less so in their attempts to use Native Americans for labor. When the English realized they would not become rich instantaneously through gold or silver mining, as it appeared the Spaniards had done, they turned to agricultural production to seek wealth. For this, they needed labor—lots of it. The English were able to enslave Native Americans they captured in warfare, but most indigenous slaves either died or ran away, leaving the English in need of more labor in order to accumulate wealth (Zinn 2010).

Indentured Servitude

The lack of success at enslaving Native Americans led the colonists to turn to Britain, where they recruited poor men, women, and children from the streets of economically depressed cities such as Liverpool and Bristol. Englishmen also rounded up Irish and Scottish peasants who had been conquered in warfare, banished, or released from prison. Indentured servants from Europe who were willing to work for four to seven years to pay off their passage and debt soon became the primary source of labor for the colonies. The harsh treatment of European

indentured servants needed no justification, as servitude was a way of life in Britain at the time (Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).

Throughout the seventeenth century, indentured servants endured harsh conditions as laborers in the colonies. Hopeful laborers continued to come to the Americas, despite the difficult circumstances, because North America offered possibilities for social and economic advancement that did not exist in England. The flow of English laborers began to decline, however, with the restoration of the monarchy in England in 1660, as King Charles II implemented policies that discouraged emigration (Smedley 2007).

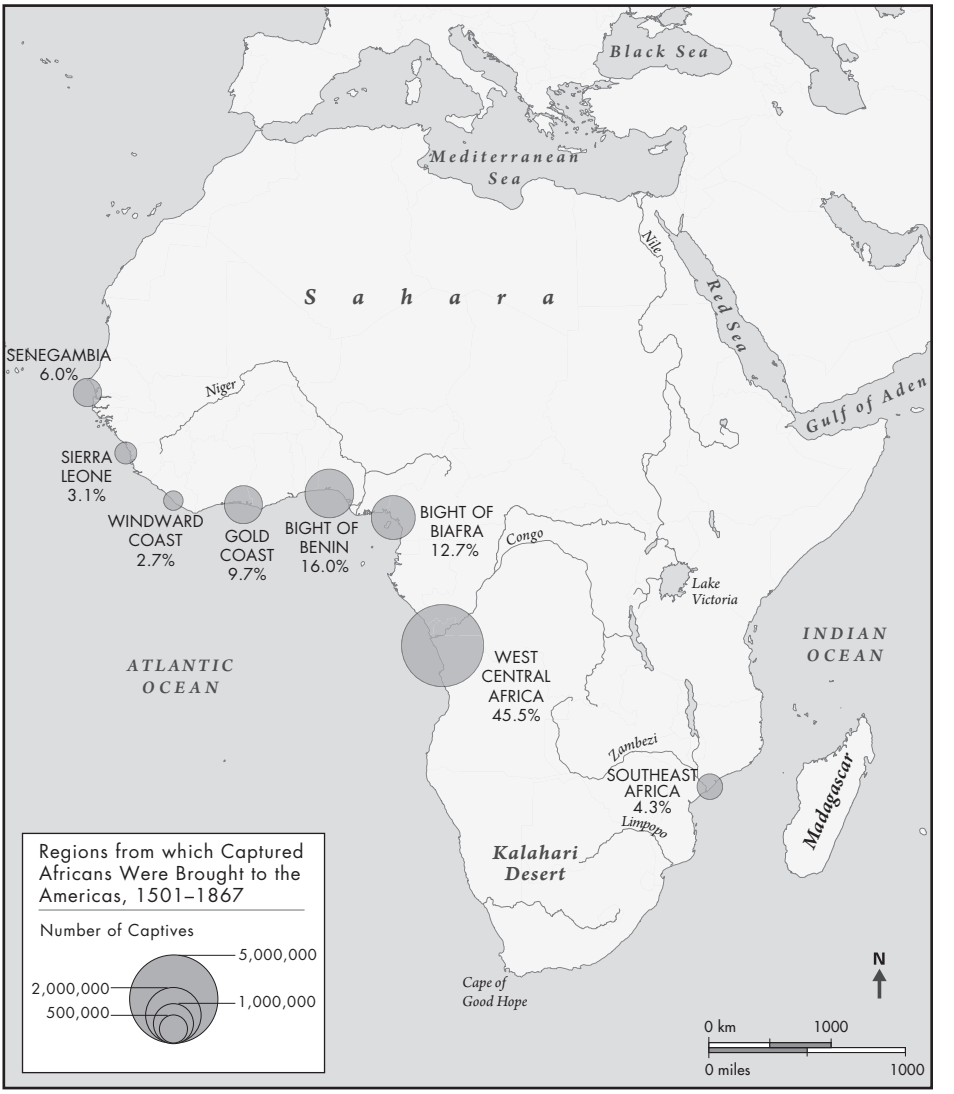
Enslavement of Africans

In addition to bringing English laborers, colonists brought Africans to the colonies as slaves. Most African slaves brought to North America were from West Africa and were Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, or Mada. In 1619, English colonists brought the first group of Africans to the North American colonies. These twenty Africans occupied nearly the same social status as European indentured servants and were soon joined by African slaves brought over by Dutch and Spanish slave ships. All of these early Africans were granted rights that were later denied to all blacks in Virginia. There is no evidence that African slaves during the period before 1660 were subjected to more severe disciplinary measures than European servants. Some slaves were allowed to earn money of their own and to buy their freedom with it. There are several cases recorded in which masters set up conditions in their wills whereby Negro slaves would become free or could purchase their freedom after the master's death. The terms of these wills imply that the freed slaves would become regular members of the community (Morgan 1975; Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).

The enslavement of Africans turned out to be especially profitable in part because Africans brought with them agricultural and craft experience. In addition, unlike people indigenous to the Americas, Africans had immunities to Old World diseases and thus could live longer in slavery. The initial justifications for bringing Africans to the colonies were not racial in nature. At the time, slavery was an accepted social system. To the extent that a justification was offered, it was that Africans were heathens and their enslavement would ensure their salvation (Smedley 2007). Over time, however, racial justifications for the enslavement of Africans emerged.

FIGURE 1-1

REGIONS FROM WHICH CAPTURED AFRICANS WERE BROUGHT TO THE AMERICAS, 1501–1867



The Legal Codification of Racial Differences

Slave codes of the 1660s spelled out the legal differences between African slaves and European indentured servants. In 1667, Virginia issued a decree that slaves who had converted to Christianity could continue to be enslaved because of their so-called heathen ancestry. Whereas

earlier justifications for slavery were primarily religious, the idea that ancestry could be used to determine social status set the stage for developing the idea of race. In the late seventeenth century, Virginia and Maryland each passed a series of laws that solidified the status of blacks. The strongest indicator of the solidification of the status of Africans was the prohibition of manumission: masters were not allowed to free their slaves, thereby establishing a permanent slave class. Other laws established lifelong servitude, forbade interracial marriage, and limited the rights of blacks to own property and bear arms. These laws specific to blacks both reflected the social order and solidified the status quo. For most of the seventeenth century, European indentured servants and African slaves had shared a similar social status. The slave codes gradually changed this social classification.

Laws against Intermarriage

The shared social position of African and European servants and slaves in the early years of the colonies meant that these groups intermarried and fraternized. The fact that Africans and Europeans had amicable relations can be seen in the passage of laws that forbade these relationships. In 1661, Virginia passed a law that imposed harsh conditions on English servants who ran away with African slaves. In 1691, Virginia passed another law that prohibited free whites from intermarrying with blacks and Native Americans. Had these groups been naturally disinclined to intermarry or to fraternize, these laws would not have been necessary. As the 1661 law shows, plantation owners were concerned that European indentured servants and African slaves would see that they shared a common interest in fighting for more rights and better conditions. As historian Howard Zinn puts it, "only one fear was greater than the fear of black rebellion in the new American colonies. That was the fear that discontented whites would join black slaves to overthrow the existing order" (2010, 37).

When Africans and Europeans first found themselves together in the Americas, sexual relations and even marriage between these two groups were not uncommon. African men and women married European men and women (Smedley 2007). Various laws were passed, however, both to prevent and to control these relationships. The aforementioned 1662 law made it clear that when African women had children, the child's status as slave or free would be in accordance with the condition of the mother. The law also indicated that when

Christians—here meaning Europeans—had sexual relations with Africans, they would pay double the normal fine for adultery. The European men who wrote these laws thought it important to prevent sexual relations between Europeans and Africans and to ensure that the children of enslaved African women would also be slaves. This law effectively prevented the formation of families by enslaved African women and European men.

Bacon's Rebellion

Bacon's Rebellion, which occurred in September 1676, provides one example of what could happen when blacks and whites joined forces to fight for their interests. The rebellion itself was not particularly successful, but the coalition that emerged between poor whites and African slaves and freedmen became a cause for concern among the elite planter class, who depended on these groups for cheap labor. In Bacon's Rebellion, white indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans and freedmen to protest their conditions. This massive rebellion, in which protestors demanding an end to their servitude burned Jamestown to the ground, was a clear threat to the status quo. One of the last groups to surrender was a mixed group of eighty black and twenty white servants. This multiracial coalition indicates that blacks and whites were willing to join forces to fight for their common interests as laborers. After Bacon's Rebellion, an official report arguing for the continued presence of British soldiers in Virginia stated: "Virginia is at present poor and more populous than ever. There is great apprehension of a rising among the servants, owing to their great necessities and want of clothes; they may plunder the storehouses and ships" (Zinn 2010, 37).

Howard Zinn and other historians argue that Bacon's Rebellion stirred up fear in the hearts of the elite planter class and that this fear led these elites to pass laws that divided blacks and whites. For example, in the aftermath of the rebellion, the Virginia Assembly gave amnesty to the white servants who had rebelled but not to the blacks. By extending this and other privileges to whites that were denied to blacks, the elites succeeded in preventing future class-based alliances between blacks and whites that would threaten the social order.

Wealth Imbalance and the Tenuous Social Order

Wealth in colonial North America was concentrated in the hands of very few people. In 1700, there were about 250,000 colonists, most

of whom lived in horrendous conditions. In Virginia, there were only about fifty wealthy families, who depended on the labor of the other 40,000 poor colonists. This imbalance of wealth made for a tenuous social order (Zinn 2010). It soon became clear to the rich elite and the governing body that they could not continue to disregard the interests of the majority of the population. In 1705, a law was passed requiring masters to provide white servants whose indenture time was completed with ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings, a gun, and fifty acres of land (Morgan 1975, 344). This tactic of giving servants a piece of the American Dream was intended to avoid rebellion by convincing poor whites that the rich landowners were not extortionists or enemies, but protectors of their common interests. To reinforce this impression, it was further mandated that servants had the right to possess property but that slaves did not (Morgan 1975, 333). The Virginia Assembly in 1705 also prohibited any Negro, mulatto, or Indian from raising his hand in opposition to any Christian, which meant any white man (Jordan 1968). By denying black slaves privileges extended to white servants, the first step was taken in creating a division between blacks and whites (Zinn 2010).

In New York in 1708, a group of slaves was accused of murdering a farmer and his family. Shortly afterward, a law was enacted preventing the conspiracy of slaves. This meant, in effect, that slaves could not gather in private to talk about anything. In 1712, a slave rebellion involving about fifty slaves left nine whites dead and six others wounded. Immediately thereafter, New York's repressive laws were reinforced. For example, arson committed by a slave was now considered a crime punishable by death (Szasz 1967).

One purpose of the slave codes was the prevention and deterrence of slave rebellions, which were becoming more and more of a real danger with the increasing number of slaves, especially in the southern colonies, where slaves often outnumbered whites. In 1730, in Virginia, the governor ordered that all whites should bring their guns with them to church on Sunday so that they would be prepared for a slave uprising in the event that slaves took advantage of their absence to conspire (Jordan 1968). The idea of a slave rebellion was even more distasteful to whites because of the widespread idea that any slave insurrection would have as its ultimate goal not only the emancipation of slaves but also the dominance of blacks over whites (Jordan 1968).

Solidifying the Idea of Race

Eventually, the entire slave class was composed of black Africans, and, as a result of manumission restrictions, most blacks were enslaved. The creation of this sort of color line, alongside the introduction of the concept of hereditary slavery, was an important step toward solidifying the idea of race. Notably, it was not until the eighteenth century that negative beliefs about Africans became widespread among the English settlers. Even then, there is ample evidence that blacks and whites continued to fraternize. In 1743, a grand jury in Charleston, South Carolina, denounced "The Too Common Practice of Criminal Conversation with Negro and other Slave Wenches in this Province" (Zinn 2010).

The stories of Mary Peters and Daniel Dowdy (Voices: From *Bullwhip Days*) elucidate the cruelty and dehumanization that were part and parcel of colonialism and enslavement in the Americas. These two phenomena—colonialism and slavery—have shaped the way people in the United States view the world. Our contemporary racial worldview is a relic of the systems of human classification that were first used in the context of the colonization of Native American territories and the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. Although such brutal practices are no longer morally or legally permissible, the ideas of racial difference that emerged from those practices persist.

voices

From *Bullwhip Days*

My mother's mistress had three boys—one twenty-one, one nineteen, and one seventeen. One day, Old Mistress had gone away to spend the day. Mother always worked in the house; she didn't work on the farm, in Missouri. While she was alone, the boys came in and threw her down on the floor and tied her down so she couldn't struggle, and one after the other used her as long as they wanted, for the whole afternoon. Mother was sick when her mistress came home. When Old Mistress wanted to know what was the matter with her, she told her what the boys had done. She whipped them, and that's the way I came to be here.

—Mary Peters describing the brutal circumstances of her own conception

I saw slaves sold. I can see that old block now. My cousin Eliza was a pretty girl, really good-looking. Her master was her father. . . . The day they sold her will always

voices *continued.*

From *Bullwhip Days*

be remembered. They stripped her to be bid off and looked at. . . . The man that bought Eliza was from New York. The Negroes had made up'nuf money to buy her off theyself, but the white folks wouldn't let that happen. There was a man bidding for her that was a Swedeland. He allus bid for the good-looking cullud gals and bought'em for his own use. He ask the man from New York "What you gonna do with'er when you git'er?" The man from New York said, "None of your damn business, but you ain't got money'nuf to buy'er."

—Former slave Daniel Dowdy

Source: Mellon 2002, 287, 297.

SLAVERY VERSUS THE IDEAL OF FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Declaration of Independence famously begins by stating that all men are created equal. The question was, then, why were some enslaved? Although the concept of liberty was at the core of the American Revolution, nearly half of the fifty-five men who made up the 1787 Constitutional Convention owned slaves, and most of the rest profited from slavery through their business practices. A prominent member, George Washington (1732–1799), was one of the richest men in the colonies and the owner of many slaves. These men struggled with the contradictions inherent in advocating for freedom in a slaveholding society, yet they were unwilling to outlaw slavery (Feagin 2001).

The writers of the founding documents of the United States were not willing to end slavery in part because most of them profited directly or indirectly from it. The wealth generated by slave labor in the United States had made the American Revolution possible: a significant amount of the funds that financed the American Revolution came from profits from slavery (Feagin 2001). The contradiction between the ideals of freedom and the prevalence of slavery led to justifications of slavery in terms of blacks' alleged racial inferiority. Writings by people such as Thomas Jefferson validated the belief that people of African descent were less than human. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson

wrote in *Notes on Virginia*: "Blacks, whether originally a distinct race or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to whites in the endowment both of body and mind" (Jefferson [1787] 2004, 98–99).

Slavery was an immensely profitable enterprise for a small number of slaveholders. In 1860, the twelve wealthiest counties in the United States could all be found in the Deep South. The profits were not evenly divided, however: about 7 percent of Southerners owned three-quarters of the 4 million slaves in the South. This concentration of wealth meant that slaveowners constituted a powerful planter class that went to great lengths to protect its property, which included humans: slaveowners saw enslaved Africans and African Americans as an investment they did not want to lose. Additionally, many whites who did not own slaves profited indirectly from the slave system. In the southern United States, slavery was part of the economic and social fabric of society. There were fewer slaves in the northern states, but many Northerners had strong economic ties to slavery insofar as they consumed and manufactured products made on slave plantations. These strong economic interests in slavery meant that the practice was not ended in the United States until the victory of the North in the Civil War (Wilson 1996; Feagin 2001).

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves held in the rebel states of the Confederacy. His willingness to issue this proclamation was not hindered by his belief that blacks were inferior to whites. Five years earlier, in 1858, Lincoln had declared: "I am not nor ever have been in favor of the social and political equality of the white and black races: that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters of the free negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office or having them to marry with white people. . . . I as much as any other man am in favor of the superior position being assigned to the white man" (quoted in Feagin 2001, 83–84).

In 1865, the United States finally abolished slavery. Slavery was one of the main reasons for the long and bloody Civil War that had pitted the North against the South. From the perspective of plantation owners in the South, slavery was a profitable institution that ensured the proper place of blacks in society. From the perspective of capitalists in the North, slavery gave southern capitalists an unfair competitive advantage (Feagin 2001). The end of slavery marked the end of an era of extreme exploitation. The racist ideologies that had justified

the enslavement of Africans and the massacre and removal of Native Americans, however, would endure.

THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT: THE CONTINUATION OF MANIFEST DESTINY

The **Indian Removal Act of 1830** enabled the administration of President Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process. Indian removal is often associated with the Cherokee of Georgia, but there were actually many more "**Trails of Tears**," including the forced displacement of the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes (Littlefield and Parins 2011). These removals violated treaties the United States had made with Native Americans, even though the Indian Removal Act contained a clause guaranteeing that "nothing in this act contained shall be construed as authorizing or directing the violation of any existing treaty between the United States and any of the Indian tribes" (quoted in Cave 2003, 1335). These forced displacements, which continued until 1859, when the Seminoles were removed from Florida, wreaked havoc on indigenous communities (Littlefield and Parins 2011).

During these treacherous journeys, tens of thousands of Native Americans died from disease, cold, starvation, and exhaustion. Approximately 17,000 Cherokee were forcibly removed, and nearly half of those who embarked on the Trail of Tears died in the process. Large numbers of indigenous people died in other removals: about 6,000 of the 40,000 Choctaw did not survive the journey, and only about half of the Creek and the Seminole peoples survived their removals (Churchill 2002).

The justifications for Indian removal were distinct from those used for slavery, as whites tended to see Africans as a vital source of labor. Native Americans, in contrast, were construed as hindering white expansion, and thus the racial ideologies surrounding Native Americans tended to explain and predict their gradual extinction. Notably, this extinction was imagined as occurring through both assimilation (marriage to whites) and natural selection (death from disease). Whereas colonists' ideas about Africans served to rationalize their hyperexploitation of slaves, whites' ideas about Native Americans aimed to rationalize the assimilation and gradual extinction of these groups, enabling whites to appropriate Indian lands (Berger 2009).

THE RISE OF SCIENTIFIC RACISM

In the seventeenth century, people in the Americas developed and acted on folk ideas about differences between Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans that were based on daily interactions and the prevailing social order. The slow emergence of the idea of racial difference can be seen in the laws passed by legislatures and the decisions made by religious leaders. However, the rise of science in the eighteenth century would fundamentally alter this conversation. The question of human difference began to move from the realms of religion and folk ideas to that of science.

European Taxonomies

Before the rise of science, Westerners understood the world primarily in biblical terms. Theology provided explanations for nearly everything. Thus, when Europeans encountered the Americas, they attempted to place these peoples into their understanding of the history of the world, as described in their scriptures. This led to debates over which of the three sons of Noah was the ancestor of the Native Americans and even over whether Native Americans were fully human. The strong belief in the biblical scriptures carried over into scientific thought, which became the central arena for shaping understandings of race (Smedley 2007).

One of the key features of the rise of science was the emergence of taxonomy. Scholars endeavored to classify all flora and fauna known to them. Soon, scientists began to attempt to classify human beings into types. One of the first efforts to develop a classificatory system for humans appeared in a French journal in 1684. The author, François Bernier (1625–1688), divided humans into four groups: Europeans, Far Easterners, Negroes, and Lapps (people from Lapland in northern Scandinavia). His system used physical traits such as skin color and hair texture, which would later become prominent determinants of racial status, to categorize different groups. Other scholars worked on developing classificatory schemes, but it was not until 1735 that a comprehensive system of classification that resembles the modern concept of race began to be developed (Eze 1997).

In 1735, the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) proposed that all human beings could be divided into four groups. These four groups are consistent with the modern idea of race in two ways:

all of them are still used today, and Linnaeus connected physical traits such as skin color with cultural and moral traits such as "indolence." Linnaeus described these four groups, which correspond to four of the continents, in *Systema Naturae* in 1735:

> Americanus: *reddish, choleric, and erect; . . . obstinate, merry, free; . . . regulated by customs.*
>
> Asiaticus: *sallow, melancholoy, . . . black hair, dark eyes, . . . haughty, . . . ruled by opinions.*
>
> Africanus: *black, phlegmatic, relaxed; women without shame, . . . crafty, indolent, negligent; governed by caprice.*
>
> Europaenus: *white, sanguine, muscular; inventive; governed by laws.*

Other European men elaborated on this schema. For example, Johann Blumenbach (1752–1840), a German professor of medicine, proposed a classificatory system that divided humans into five varieties that also were associated with geographical origins: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. Both Blumenbach and Linnaeus endowed Europeans—their own group—with the most admirable qualities. It bears repeating that the idea of race was initiated by European men and that, not surprisingly, it is an idea that consistently has been used to explain and rationalize European superiority. The Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776), for example, asserted in 1748 that whites were the only "species" to have created civilized nations and to have developed arts and sciences. European explanations of white racial superiority espoused by Blumenbach, Linnaeus, and Hume soon reached the Americas, where they were used to explain and rationalize the enslavement of Africans and the continued takeover of indigenous lands (Eze 1997).

Scientific Racism in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century was an age of emancipation from slavery and liberation from colonial powers. It also saw the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence of **scientific racism**—the use of science or pseudoscience to rationalize or reproduce racial inequality. For intellectuals in the Americas and Europe, scientific racism was central to most human and social inquiries. Eighteenth-century scientists had

developed elaborate systems of human classification. In the nineteenth century, scientists built on these classification systems by developing anthropometrics—tools designed to measure the qualities of humans.

With the publication between 1853 and 1855 of Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau's four volumes entitled *Essays on the Inequality of the Human Races*, by the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of race was fully in place. Gobineau (1816–1882) divided humanity into three races—white, yellow, and black—and argued that racial differences allow us to explain fundamental differences between people. Gobineau's thinking was in line with that of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who contended that the superiority of the European race explained its dominant position. He pointed to the natural inferiority of Native Americans as an explanation for their decimation. Spencer's ideas of the "survival of the fittest" would hold great sway for many years to come. Both Spencer and Gobineau used ideas, arguments, and rudimentary evidence from travel accounts to make their claims. Other scientists, however, were developing anthropometric techniques that enabled them to measure differences between people (Gould 1996).

Samuel George Morton (1799–1851), a scientist and physician who worked in Philadelphia, amassed an impressive collection of human skulls. He began his collection in the 1820s, and by the time of his death in 1851 he had over 1,000 skulls. Morton used these skulls to test his hypothesis that brain size could be used to rank the various human races. In his initial efforts to measure brain size, Morton filled the cranial cavity with mustard seeds. Later, when he realized that mustard seeds did not provide consistent measurements, he switched to lead shots with a one-eighth-inch diameter that produced less variable results. Through use of both mustard seeds and lead shots, Morton's measurements consistently showed that Europeans had larger brains than Africans or American Indians. In 1977, however, evolutionary biologist and scientific historian Stephen Jay Gould reanalyzed Morton's raw data and found several examples of unconscious bias in his work (Gould 1996).

Morton found that American Indians had the smallest skull sizes. Gould explains that Morton arrived at this conclusion because he had included 155 skulls of Peruvian Incas, who had an average brain size of seventy-five cubic inches, yet he only included three skulls of Iroquois people, who had, on average, a much larger skull size. In contrast, in the Caucasian group, Morton eliminated the Hindus, who had the

smallest skulls, from his sample. Had Morton ensured equal representation from each of the American Indian and Caucasian groups, he would have found no significant differences in skull size.

Stephen Gould explains that skull size is related to body size, and yet he contends that Morton never took body size into account when he measured skulls. As women tend to be smaller than men, women often have smaller skulls. When Morton compared the brain sizes of Africans and Europeans, his African sample was entirely female and his English sample entirely male. Of course, he found that Europeans had larger brains. What is remarkable about Morton's research is not just that it is full of unconscious bias, but also that his biases are consistently in favor of his expectations. Morton set out to prove, through science, that Europeans were superior. All of his miscalculations favored his hypothesis. In this sense, Morton was similar to nearly all of his contemporaries: European and American male scientists of the nineteenth century developed a plethora of methods to measure human abilities and consistently found that white men were superior to all other groups.

Paul Broca (1824–1880), a French anthropologist, built on Samuel Morton's work to develop more elaborate techniques for measuring humans. Broca believed strongly that there was a direct correlation between brain size and intelligence, and he spent much of his career measuring the brains of dead people. Broca eventually ran into trouble with his arguments when he measured the brains of eminent scholars who had passed on and discovered that many people considered to be highly intelligent turned out to have small brains. Undeterred, Broca accounted for those anomalies by asserting that they had died at a very advanced age or that their brains had not been properly preserved. When a study of criminal brains revealed that criminals had abnormally large brains, Broca argued that their sudden death by execution meant that their brains did not atrophy, as did those of people who died of natural causes. Broca eventually went on to measure other characteristics of brains and bodies; not surprisingly, his scientific measurements always showed what he set out to prove: that Europeans were superior to other groups (Gould 1996).

Intelligence Testing

When nineteenth-century scientists compared the skulls of blacks to those of whites, they used science to demonstrate what they thought

they already knew: that the white race was superior to all others. Nineteenth-century **craniometry**—the measurement of cranial capacity—provided the first opportunity for scientists to bring massive amounts of data to bear on their ideas of human hierarchy. These data on brain size supposedly provided "scientific" proof of white superiority. Eventually, however, craniometry lost its appeal, and scientists looked for new ways to measure human difference and argue for European supremacy. These new methods revolved around measuring intelligence directly (Gould 1996).

In the United States, **intelligence testing**—the quantification of intellectual ability using scientific measures—became popular in the early twentieth century. Such tests were used in attempts to demonstrate the alleged superiority of not only Europeans as a whole but also particular groups of Europeans. When the United States began to receive large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, American scientists used intelligence testing to draw distinctions among them (Gould 1996; Brodkin 1998).

Intelligence tests were not originally designed to find out which races were the most intellectually fit. Instead, the goal was to identify children who needed extra help in school. Alfred Binet (1857–1911), director of the psychology laboratory at the Sorbonne in Paris, dedicated much of his scholarly career to developing ways to measure children's intellectual ability. It was only when Binet's test was taken to the United States that it began to be used to determine which groups were innately superior or inferior.

One of the first psychologists to use Binet's test was H. H. Goddard (1866–1957), who adapted it for use in the Vineland Training School for Feeble-Minded Boys and Girls. Goddard firmly believed that feeble-mindedness was inherited, attributing intelligence to a single gene. To provide evidence for his beliefs, Goddard took Binet's test to Ellis Island, where he administered the exam to arriving immigrants who spoke little English. Many received a low score, but instead of questioning the conditions under which he performed the exam, Goddard concluded that immigrants were of low intelligence. He further argued that, given these results, immigration had to be curtailed. Later in his career, Goddard conceded that perhaps what he defined as feeble-mindedness could be cured through education (Gould 1996).

The next prominent psychologist to use intelligence testing was Lewis Terman (1877–1956), a professor of psychology at Stanford

University. Terman modified the Binet test, endeavoring to standardize it such that the average person would score 100. This number should sound familiar, as it is still used today as the mean for IQ—the intelligence quotient—in what's known as the Stanford-Binet test. Terman's colleague R. M. Yerkes (1876–1956) carried on Terman's work and developed the Army Mental Tests, which aimed to measure innate intelligence. Yerkes succeeded in convincing the U.S. Army to allow him to administer the tests to all of its recruits. This massive sample of over a million respondents gave significant quantitative weight to the emerging field of intelligence testing (Gould 1996).

Stephen Gould argued that the primary error in intelligence testing is that of reification—making intelligence into a scientific concept by measuring it. Some people know more facts and trivia, are more quick-witted, can calculate sums in their heads faster, and are more eloquent in speech and writing than others. But as Gould contends, intelligence tests are flawed because they cannot truly measure this wide range of abilities. Moreover, instead of promoting the idea that each of these skills can be learned and nurtured, intelligence testing implies that they are innate (Gould 1996).

Eugenics

The **eugenics** movement, which had its heyday from about 1900 to 1930, promoted the idea that not only intelligence but also alcoholism, laziness, crime, poverty, and other moral and cultural traits could be inherited. Based on this notion, eugenicists advocated the selective breeding of Americans and the sterilization of the biologically unfit as a way of creating a superior breed of people. During this period, many Americans believed that the American population was in decline as a result of immigration and the high fertility of poor people (Lindsay 1998).

One of the main proponents of eugenics was Madison Grant (1865–1937), a lawyer, historian, and physical anthropologist. In much of his work, including the 1916 book *The Passing of the Great Race*, Grant proposed that Europe could be divided into three races: "Nordics," "Alpines," and "Mediterraneans." He forcefully argued that Nordics were the most fit of the three and that measures should be taken to ensure their racial purity and survival. His ideas made it into the mainstream both through his book and through his position as chairman of the U.S. Committee on Selective Immigration. In that capacity, he advocated for a reduction in the number of Alpines and

Mediterraneans admitted into the United States. The views of Madison Grant and other eugenicists played an important role in the development of immigration policy in the 1920s, placing limits on the immigration of "undesirable" groups (Jacobson 1998).

Madison Grant's ideas—particularly that Nordics were the "master race" and that it was incumbent upon the state to ban interracial marriages and sterilize inferior races—found a large audience in Germany. Adolf Hitler referred to Grant's book, *The Passing of the Great Race*, as his "bible," and the German translation became widely read in the 1930s (Spiro 2008). Hitler put Grant's ideas into practice when he passed the Eugenic Sterilization Law in 1933, which led to the sterilization of 225,000 people in Germany in just three years. Similar to sterilization laws in the United States, this law was intended to improve the population. The Nazis then took these ideas several steps further, first to euthanasia and then to gas chambers (Smedley 2007).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The brutal, troubled history of the idea of race clearly demonstrates the power of ideologies about human difference. The idea that the world's population can be divided into discrete racial groups is a product of a specific series of events: colonialism, slavery, and the rise of scientific racism. To rationalize their desire to take land from indigenous peoples in the Americas and to extract labor from Africans, Europeans developed ideologies of inferiority.

Alongside this large-scale theft of land and exploitation of labor, science began to emerge as a field of study concerned largely with the classification of all objects and species into specific groups. Scientists rushed to develop taxonomies of flora and fauna, including classifications of humans. Europeans who proposed these classifications put their own group at the top of the hierarchy.

This subjective (and overt) bias of Europeans continued with the development of anthropometric and other measurement techniques in the nineteenth century. European scientists measured human skulls, brains, and every other imaginable part of the human body and arrived at the same conclusion: Europeans are superior. This recounting of history offers a revealing look at not only the past but also the present. We cannot simply look at the past and point fingers at those "racists" of yesteryear. Instead, we should also be compelled to explore the assumptions and ideologies that govern our behavior today.

THINKING ABOUT RACIAL JUSTICE

IN THIS CHAPTER, we have seen that the idea of race was created to rationalize mass genocide and brutal exploitation. We have also seen that there is as much or more diversity and genetic difference within any racial group as there is across racial groups. But race is an important part of our identities nevertheless. How does what you learned in this chapter affect the way you think of yourself? Write a 500-word essay that (1) shows what your racial identity is and how you usually think of yourself, (2) provides evidence that race is a social construction and not a biological reality, (3) demonstrates how this evidence affects how you think of your own racial identity, and (4) reflects on how this knowledge might be used in the pursuit of racial justice.

Key Terms

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1.1 What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?

- *Race* refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits. Race is a social construction and has no biological basis. *Ethnicity* is a group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.
- *Racism* refers to the belief that some races are superior to others, as well as the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

Q Why do sociologists argue that race is a social construction?

1.2 How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference?

- There are historical precedents to the idea of race, including the Spanish Inquisition and the subjugation of the Irish by the English.
- Slavery existed long before the invention of the idea of race.
- When the Spanish colonists arrived in the Americas, they displayed extreme cruelty to the native people of the Americas.

- Africans were enslaved in the Americas to meet labor needs.
- The idea of race emerged to rationalize slavery and colonization.

Q When was the idea of race invented? Why do sociologists argue that race is a historical construction?

1.3 How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery?

- Although the Declaration of Independence declares that "all men are created equal," nearly half of the authors were slaveowners.
- Slavery was not abolished in the United States until 1865.

Q Why were slavery and freedom in tension during the writing of the Declaration of Independence?

1.4 How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans?

- The Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the death of tens of thousands of Native Americans as a result of forced displacements.

Q How and why were the rationalizations for Indian removal distinct from those used for slavery?

1.5 What role did science play in the propagation of racism?

- The idea of race was originally based on simple taxonomies. However, as science developed, scientists created more complex explanations of the differences among racial groups.
- In the nineteenth century, scientists measured skulls in an attempt to assess differences among racial groups.
- In the early twentieth century, scientific racism continued. In an attempt to scientifically demonstrate the superiority of the white race, scientists used intelligence testing, and many promoted eugenics.

Q How did bias influence early scientific measurements of various racial groups?

Critical Thinking

1. Why is it important to clarify that the idea of race is a modern invention?
2. Can you imagine a world in which racial classifications had no importance? Why or why not?

3. What are today's prevailing racial ideologies in the United States? In what ways do those ideologies work to rationalize the current racial hierarchy?
4. How and why do racial ideologies related to Native Americans and African Americans differ?
5. What biases toward race might be present in today's sciences and social sciences?

Talking about Race

Imagine someone said to you that African Americans are naturally gifted at basketball. How could you respond to such a statement in a constructive way? The first step is to ask for further explanation. Listen to any evidence provided to support the claim. The person who made the statement may provide anecdotal evidence or possibly cite national trends. You should be able to draw from the knowledge you gained in this chapter to respond to the contention that there are natural or genetic differences between racial groups. Use your sociological imagination to encourage your conversational partner to think of explanations other than genetics for racial differences in basketball skills.

2

Racial Ideologies and Sociological Theories of Racism

CHAPTER OUTLINE

AS YOU READ

2.1 How is individual racism linked to institutional inequality?
2.2 How do systemic racism and structural racism create racial disparities?
2.3 What are racial ideologies, and how have they functioned and changed over time?
2.4 What is racial formation, and how does this concept inform our understanding of racial inequality?
2.5 What does the perspective of indigenous studies reveal about racism in the contemporary United States?
2.6 In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together?
2.7 What is white privilege, and how does it function?

Racial inequality is pervasive in the contemporary United States. We see it in the criminal justice system, where black and Latinx people are several times more likely to go to prison than whites. We can find racial inequality in employment as well: audit studies have shown that blacks are less likely than whites to be interviewed and, once interviewed, to get a job. Once blacks have jobs, they are less likely to get promoted. Black business owners have more trouble getting contracts. In education, the picture is equally bleak. Many schools in the United States are racially segregated, and the quality of education is lower at primarily black and Latinx schools. Within schools, white students are given preferential treatment. When white parents visit schools, they get more attention from staff members, and teachers are more likely to recommend white students for gifted programs. Sociologists and other researchers have carried out study upon study demonstrating such inequality. Yet how do we explain it?

This is where **sociological theories of racism** come into play; they are lenses that help make sense of patterns such as the overrepresentation of African Americans in the criminal justice system. Sociologists use evidence from their studies to develop explanations, known as theories, for how racial inequality is created and reproduced.

Before we begin an examination of these theories, what do you think? How would you explain the racial disparities in the criminal justice system, for example? Do you think blacks commit more crimes? Do you think police officers spend more time policing black communities? Do you think police officers are biased against African Americans? All of these questions can be translated into hypotheses that can be tested through scientific studies. First, let's look at how racism can be the basis of an explanation for racial inequality.

PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racism encompasses both racial **prejudice**—the belief that people belong to distinct races and that these racial groups have innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged—and racial **discrimination**—the practice of treating people differently on the basis of their race. For example, an employer can think African Americans are less competent than whites; this belief constitutes racial prejudice. When

that employer decides to hire a white person instead of an equally qualified black person, that decision may be considered racial discrimination. Both prejudice and discrimination are widespread in U.S. society.

In one survey, Joe Feagin (2001) found that three-quarters of whites agreed with prejudicial statements about blacks, such as "blacks have less native intelligence" than whites (109). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2013) found that most whites use color-blind discourses that reproduce and rationalize racial inequality. In 1995, researchers conducted a study in which they asked participants to close their eyes for a second and imagine a drug user. Fully 95 percent of respondents reported imagining a black drug user (Alexander 2010). The reality is that African Americans account for only 15 percent of drug users in the United States and are just as likely as whites to use drugs. However, Americans have an unconscious bias against blacks and imagine them to be more likely than other groups to use drugs (Alexander 2010). These and other studies show the widespread nature of racial prejudice.

Many Americans, even those who do not believe they are racially prejudiced, have implicit biases that operate at the level of the subconscious. It is hard to avoid these biases because of the barrage of racialized messages we receive in the media and through our personal networks. Racial prejudice and implicit biases inevitably lead to racial discrimination. (Curious about your own implicit bias? Take the Implicit Association Test at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit.)

In this chapter, we will focus on theories of race and racism. There is another set of scholars whose work focuses more on ethnicity, often through the lens of **assimilation**—understood as the incorporation of ethnic minority groups into the mainstream. This body of work considers how cultural characteristics, the labor market, and U.S. immigration policies shape the incorporation patterns of ethnic minorities (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). These scholars explain ethnic minority incorporation primarily as the result of the ethnic features and traits of a group and that group's unique "context of reception" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Valdez 2011).

As Howard Winant (2000) explains in an article on race theory, there are clear limits to approaches that focus on ethnicity. These include obstacles to integration and the undesirability of assimilation. As we will see in this chapter, approaches that place race and racism at the center of their analyses allow us to perceive these obstacles more clearly and to understand how and why racial hierarchies persist.

Assimilation theories can be further distinguished from race theories in that they tend to focus on group-level factors, whereas race theories look primarily at the individual or the social structure. Most theories of race and racism emphasize the social structure. However, as we will see in the next section, understanding racial discrimination at the individual level continues to be crucial.

Individual Racism

Discrimination can occur at the individual level when one person discriminates against another. Audit studies have consistently shown that blacks are less likely to be interviewed for jobs than whites and that black and Latinx people face housing discrimination on a regular basis (Feagin 2001; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). Racially discriminatory actions by individuals such as not calling back an interviewee for a job because of his race or telling a person on the phone that the apartment is taken because he or she has a Spanish accent or lives on a reservation constitute **individual racism**. Individual acts of racial discrimination and bigotry are commonplace in our society and help to reproduce racial inequalities.

How widespread is individual racism? Researchers have consistently found that racial discrimination is pervasive. One study of Department of Defense employees revealed that nearly half of the black employees had heard racist jokes in the previous year (Feagin 2001). Another survey conducted by Feagin and McKinney (2003) revealed that 80 percent of black respondents had encountered racial hostility in public places. One African American secretary detailed the consequences of constant discrimination as follows: "I had to see several doctors because of the discrimination, and I went through a lot of stress. And, then, my blood pressure . . . went on the rise" (82). This woman, like many other African Americans interviewed in this study, displayed high levels of stress as a result of her mistreatment in the workplace and consequently developed health issues. In another study, Dwanna Robertson (2015) found that Native Americans constantly face the consequences of negative stereotypes about them. One of her participants told her, "I hear things like: 'Show me an Indian, I'll show you a drunk Indian.' 'Indians are lazy'" (130).

It is remarkable that individual racism is widespread in a society that usually condemns overt acts of racism. If a television announcer were to make a racially charged or overtly racist statement such as "African Americans are inherently more violent than whites," we can be sure that

the following day, critics would forcefully condemn the racist statement. If racial discrimination is frowned upon, how can it be so widespread?

One way that individual racism persists, even in a society that decries racism, is through **racial microaggressions**—daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color. The consequences of these microaggressions can be severe, and studies of African Americans, Latinx Americans, and Asian Americans have uncovered the continued prevalence of microaggressions. One study of African Americans on college campuses, for example, found that white students and professors consistently doubted the academic potential of African Americans. One black student was presumed to have cheated after getting an "A" on a difficult math quiz. Another black student found that people assumed his scholarship was for sports, when, in fact, it was for his academic achievements. These students reported that the cumulative effect of these slights was to make them tired, discouraged, and frustrated—especially since they had expected more from their professors and peers (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000). These microagressions can have severe consequences: a recent study among African American college students found that certain types of racial microaggressions were associated with elevated levels of suicide ideation (Hollingsworth et al. 2016).

African Americans are not the only group to experience microaggressions. In a study of Asian Americans' experiences of discrimination, Derald Wing Sue and his colleagues found that Asian Americans experienced a wide variety of microaggressions, ranging from the assumption of foreignness to exoticization of Asian women to invisibility. For example, Asian Americans reported that white Americans consistently asked them questions such as "Where are you from?" or made comments such as "You speak good English," when the only indication that they might not be from the United States was their Asian appearance. Other Asian Americans pointed out that people presumed they were good at math and that men presumed Asian women would be submissive lovers. Asian Americans also reported that people presumed that they didn't face discrimination. The Asian Americans in this study recounted that the constant barrage of microaggressions angered them but that they also felt disempowered to respond, as any single event could seem inconsequential by itself (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, and Torino. 2007). These experiences are commonplace: a recent study of 152 Asian Americans found that 78 percent of them

experienced microagressions during a two-week period (Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, and Sue 2013).

Kevin Nadal and his colleagues conducted a study of multiracial people's experiences of microaggressions and found them to be pervasive (Nadal et al. 2011). Their studies of both Asian Americans and multiracial individuals reveal that well-intentioned whites often deliver microaggressions because of their insensitivity toward and ignorance about nonwhites. This can be seen, for example, when a white person speaks Japanese to a Chinese American or tells a biracial woman with a black mother and a white father that being half-white makes it easier to get along with her. In the first instance, the white person may be trying to show a cultural interest in Asian people, although her act simultaneously tries to erase the differences between Japanese and Chinese people and reasserts the presumed foreignness of Asian Americans. In the second instance, this assertion reinforces white supremacy by implying that the biracial woman is better than other blacks because she has a white parent.

Microaggressions and other forms of individual racism continue to pose a problem on college campuses. Studies have consistently found that individual acts of bigotry are commonplace in institutions of higher learning (Harper and Hurtado 2007). In a recent study (Harper et al. 2011), higher education researchers interviewed fifty-two African American male resident assistants (RAs) on five college campuses and found that many of the participants reported that supervisors and fellow students consistently doubted their competence and stereotyped them as potential thugs or gangsters. The frequency of individual acts of racism on college campuses has led a number of scholars to argue that many primarily white campuses have hostile climates that are not conducive to learning for nonwhite students (Harper and Hurtado 2007). These issues came to a head at the University of Missouri amid a series of overtly racist incidents beginning in 2014. In April that year, freshman Bradley Becker inscribed a swastika and the word "heil" on a dormitory wall. In September, a group of young people near campus yelled the N-word at the student body president. When the administration did not respond to these incidents in a meaningful way, black students and allies organized and demanded the president's resignation. As student protests mounted, racist incidents continued, including another swastika drawing. Finally, following the football team's threatened boycott, President Tim Wolfe resigned in November 2015 (Izadi 2015).

voices

Microaggressions

Individuals who have had the following experiences and consider them to be racial microaggressions posted these reports on the website microaggressions.com. How do you feel as you read these reports? What would you say if you overheard such comments? What would you say if someone directed one of these comments at you?

The presumption that Asian Americans use chopsticks at every meal is based on an idea of inherent cultural differences. We don't see these same presumptions applied to third-generation Italian Americans or Irish Americans.

- Often when I have dinner at people's houses, they ask me if I would prefer chopsticks, regardless of the meal!
- I am a registered nurse and always get told that I speak English so well. I was born in Australia and I am of Filipino background. I don't think about my appearance until a patient or their family member points it out, and they are quite amazed/baffled that someone who appears Asian "speaks so well" and could be considered a "real Australian."
- I always get asked to be an interpreter for patients who are not native English speakers, specifically for those of Asian background. Because I am of Asian background as well, there is this assumption that I speak every language in Asia or that there is only one language/country in Asia. Unbelievable.
- "Sorry, that must be my black coming out." [Said by] my biracial friend (African American and Mexican). Whenever she does or says something negative she blames it on the "Black" side of her. Makes me feel angry, belittled, resentful.
- I express that my brother attends a private university. Immediately a girl in the car responds in a very sure voice "Oh, he plays football?" This is the second time this has happened. As if a young black male can only attend a prestigious private college on a football scholarship.
- "You're really unintimidating for a black guy." Said by white male. I am a freshman in college. Made me feel as though I should be intimidating because I'm black.
- Ohmygawd. You're totally not what people think of when they think of Muslim women. You're so cool.
- Wow. Don't get the Muslim mad, guys. We don't want a blown-up school tomorrow.
- Substitute teacher: Quiet down! You're acting like a bunch of wild Indians!