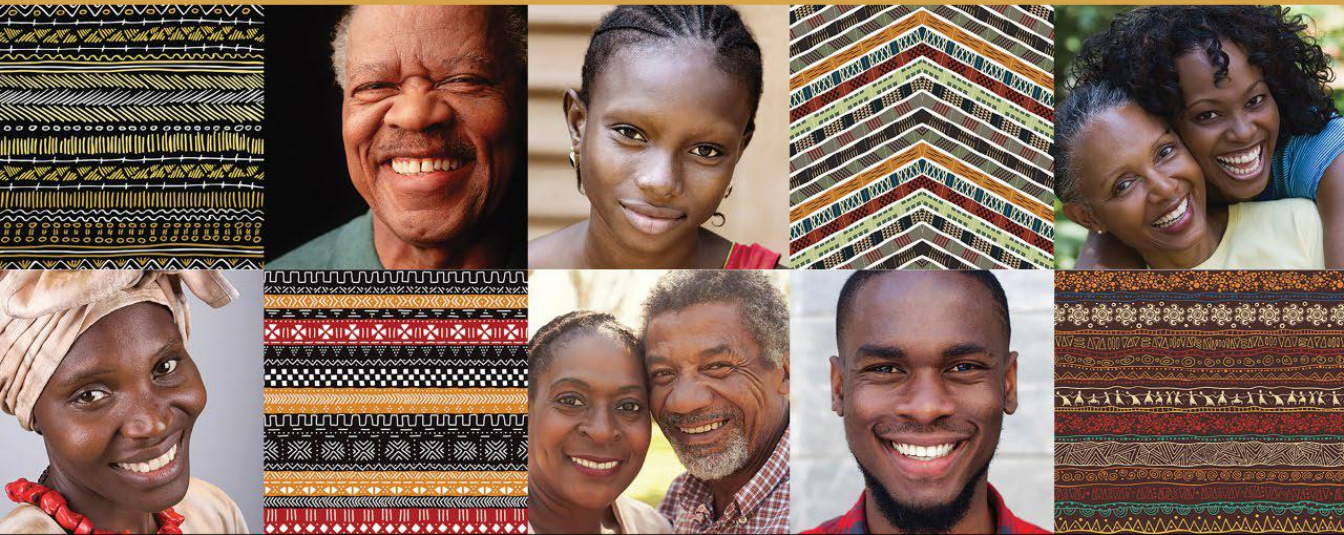FOURTH EDITION

African American
PSYCHOLOGY

From Africa to America

Faye Z. Belgrave / Kevin W. Allison

African American Psychology

Fourth Edition

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From Africa to America

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SECTION II • SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

SECTION IV • ADJUSTMENT AND ADAPTATION

PREFACE

The completion of this fourth edition of *African American Psychology* is at a time of tremendous division and challenges in this country. A very contentious election with a president unpopular among many, coupled with increases in overt displays of bigotry, has impacted all Americans. High-profile police violence has continued and has been shared on all media, especially social media. Disparities remain for African Americans across most indicators, including education, employment, housing, incarceration, and health, among others. The toxic water in Flint, Michigan, is a notable example of systematic racism's impact on African Americans' health. Many other recent examples are discussed throughout this book.

While there are several troubling problems that continue to affect African Americans, there is some progress to report. The Black Lives Matter movement, formed in 2012 following the acquittal of Zimmerman in the Trayvon Martin case, has become a large social justice movement involving people of all racial and ethnic groups. The White supremacist terrorist attack in Charlottesville, Virginia, (August 2017) also brought together people of all races and ethnicities, religions, and ages and furthered the commitment of many to work against bigotry and racism. Barack Obama, the first African American president, served two terms (2009–2017) and moved the country out of a recession that started in 2007 and that had devastating effects on African Americans. While disparities remain, the economy and employment of African Americans are better than it was prior to Obama taking office. As of this writing, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is still in effect and continues to provide health care for many African Americans who otherwise would not have received it. While much more is needed, there have been some initiatives to address some of the concerns of specific African American populations (e.g., My Brother's Keeper Initiative on African American boys and adolescents). Understanding the psychology of African Americans is closely linked to understanding what is happening in the institutional systems in this country and is a continuing theme in this fourth edition.

Our purpose for writing this fourth edition largely remains the same as for the first edition. We wanted a text that would provide comprehensive and integrated coverage of the field of African American psychology. We also desired a book that would address and consider both African and American cultural perspectives. We also wanted this book to capture and reflect upon contemporary issues African Americans face. There have been notable advances and developments in African American psychology over the past several years, and these updates are included in this fourth edition.

Who should use this book? This book is for students interested in African American psychology. It is designed to be used as a semester-long textbook and covers 15 focal areas in African American psychology. The text can be used as a mid- to advanced-level undergraduate textbook and can also be used at the graduate level. In addition, those interested in understanding the psychology of African Americans may use the book in support of other courses and disciplines.

What are the unique aspects of this book? There are several unique features in this book. We begin each chapter with an African proverb that provides a perspective on the issue and a departure point for considering the material within the chapter. Proverbs enrich us with lessons, rules, and wisdom for living our lives. We also begin each chapter with a cover story that demonstrates the applicability of African American psychology to everyday life. The cover stories in this edition include blogs as well as articles from news outlets. Each chapter contains five to eight learning objectives that, if met, will provide the student with knowledge of key concepts and an overview of the research and literature on topics covered in the chapter. We also added a text box to each chapter that highlights a contemporary issue. The contemporary issues introduce the student to a new idea, an emerging area of research, and/or information that is interesting and relevant to African American psychology but that may not be covered in the psychological literature. In each chapter, we provide a historical context that includes relevant information and literature from Africa, during the enslavement period, and at other critical historical points in time. Because we believe in the concept of Sankofa—that it is important to look to the past to understand the present and consider the future—we relate the historical context of Africans and African Americans to the psychology of contemporary African Americans.

Each chapter begins with an introduction that defines terms and concepts. We have attempted to describe attributes of African and African American culture that impact the psychology of African Americans. Where applicable, we include research that covers Blacks throughout the diaspora. Each chapter has a research and methodological section that highlights methodological issues relevant to topics discussed in the chapter.

Each chapter also has a section on best practices or empirically supported practices. These sections recognize the importance of moving beyond discussions of research and literature to highlight effective ways and promising strategies to address problems and to improve well-being for African Americans. A section on critical analysis provides our insights on topics covered in each chapter. This section also includes discussion of noteworthy research, new and innovative ideas, and directions for future work.

The book is organized in four sections. The first four chapters provide an introduction to and a foundational framework for the remainder of the book. Chapter 1 focuses on African American psychology as a discipline and provides a historical account of African Americans in the larger discipline of psychology. Chapter 2 is on African-centered psychology, which provides the framework for the study of people of African descent. Chapter 3, on self and identity, is considered foundational to the psychology of African Americans, as self-attributes such as self-concept and ethnic identity define our thoughts and beliefs about who we are. Chapter 4, on race and racism, is also included as a foundational chapter because race and racism have an all-encompassing influence on every aspect of being African American.

The second section of the book focuses on social systems and structures and includes chapters on family, community, and educational and work institutions and related processes. Chapter 5 describes the African American family and kinship, the primary agents of socialization. Educational systems and processes, including schools and other institutions of learning, are discussed in Chapter 6 along with work and related topics, such as careers and employment. African Americans live, work, and go to school in neighborhoods and communities; this is the topic of Chapter 7.

The third section of the book covers individual and developmental processes and includes chapters on interpersonal and close relationships; cognition,

learning, and language; religion and spirituality; and life span development. Our relationships with others are central to who we are and how we function. Interpersonal relationships, including relationships with friends, romantic partners, and others, are the focus of Chapter 8. Chapter 9 describes unique features of cognition, learning, and language among African Americans and discusses the relevance of these to creating positive learning environments for African American youth. Religion and spirituality are central beliefs of people of African descent; this topic is covered in Chapter 10. Chapter 11 covers developmental issues of African Americans throughout the life span.

The fourth and final section of the book focuses on adjustment and adaptation and includes chapters on health, illness, and disability; psychosocial adaptation and mental health; drug use and abuse; and prosocial and antisocial behavior. Chapter 12 discusses health, illness, and disability from the perspective of African Americans attending to cultural and structural conditions that impact health conditions and how we adapt to chronic illness and disability. Psychosocial adaptation and mental health are the subjects of Chapter 13, which provides an assessment of mental health conditions, mental health functioning, and culturally congruent models of mental health and adaptation. Drug use and abuse have serious adverse consequences for African Americans. These consequences are discussed, along with strategies to prevent drug use and abuse, in Chapter 14. Chapter 15 focuses on both the positive aspects of prosocial behavior and the adverse consequences of antisocial behavior, such as aggression. The Kenyan proverb, "Having a good discussion is like having riches," exemplifies what we desire for the readers of this book. We hope that the readers of this book will have many riches as they read, review, challenge, and think about the materials in this book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Faye Z. Belgrave, PhD (University of Maryland), is professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and founder and director of the Center for Cultural Experiences in Prevention. Her programmatic and research interests are in the areas of HIV and substance abuse prevention. Her research focuses on the role of culture and context in preventive interventions and on issues of gender and women. Dr. Belgrave has published extensively and is an invited speaker on these topics. In collaboration with community partners, she has implemented several prevention programs targeting African American adolescents, young adults, and women. These programs have been beneficial in increasing cultural attributes and in preventing and/or decreasing drug use and associated negative behaviors. Dr. Belgrave serves as an expert advisor on several national committees and agencies, including the American Psychological Association, the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. She is the recipient of many national awards for her work with African American populations, including the Association of Black Psychologists's Distinguished Psychologists Award and the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Career Award for a distinguished career in psychology. Additionally, she is the recipient of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's (SAMHSA) Addie Jane Key Prevention Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to prevention, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Outstanding Faculty Award.

Kevin W. Allison, PhD (DePaul University), is senior assistant to the president of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and professor in the Department of Psychology and the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. He completed his undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Notre Dame and his graduate work in clinical-community psychology at DePaul University in Chicago. Prior to joining the VCU faculty, Dr. Allison worked at the Pennsylvania State University and served as the clinical director of City Lights in Washington, DC. Dr. Allison's work has focused on understanding and addressing processes that support positive developmental outcomes for African American children and youth. This has included the examination of life skills and culturally informed interventions for youth and work with community-based human services providers. In addition, Dr. Allison works extensively with nonprofit organizations and public agencies to use research and evaluation in strengthening programmatic and community-level change in urban neighborhoods.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

1

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

If you know the beginning well, the end will not trouble you.

—Wolof proverb

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To define and conceptualize African American psychology
- To become familiar with some of the historical events in African American psychology
- To become knowledgeable about critical events in the development of African American psychology
- To identify influential African American psychologists
- To identify the status of African American psychology today
- To identify methodological issues in studying African American psychology

ETHNICALLY IDENTIFIED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

The annual convention of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) has the cutting-edge workshops and networking opportunities that other psychology conventions offer. But it also offers an emphasis on African-American-focused research and practice too often ignored by so-called mainstream psychology, and a worldview steeped in African-American culture and traditions that might seem surprising at other psychology conferences, such as the pouring of libations, the honoring of elders and ancestors and other rituals rooted in African heritage.

(Continued)

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"The emphasis on tradition is a reminder of the importance of who we are and why that's important for our psychological well-being," says ABPsi member Kevin Cokley, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of Texas at Austin. That focus on African-American identity is also why Cokley and others consider the association their "professional home."

ABPsi is one of four ethnic-minority psychological associations. The three others are the Asian American Psychological Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists and the National Latina/o Psychological Association. Each group is invited to send a nonvoting delegate to the APA Council of Representatives; all of them except ABPsi send such a delegate.

What the organizations have in common are efforts to recruit and keep ethnic-minority students in psychology's pipeline, professional development activities and intimate networking opportunities. "Each of the associations has a different history, but in general they began in order for people to have a place to focus on the unique research, training and treatment issues related to ethnic-minority psychology," says APA President Melba J. T. Vasquez, PhD. "When these organizations were established, APA wasn't seen as a place that provided that. But even when APA started to become more open and inclusive, these associations have continued because they offer a unique place to address those issues."

You don't have to be a particular ethnicity to join any of these groups. "Ethnic-minority psychological associations tend to be welcoming of allies—people who share an interest in ethnic-minority psychology," Vasquez says.

But not enough psychologists and students know about the ethnic-minority psychological associations, says Cokley. "There needs to be more of an effort made," he says. "The ethnic-minority associations need to communicate to the world what we do, and APA and others need to try to get to know us and our work."

Source: Clay (2011). Copyright 2002 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

African American psychology encompasses many topics. In this chapter, we provide definitions and discuss conceptual frameworks for studying and understanding African American psychology. We then examine historical influences on the study of African American psychology. The contributions of African American psychologists in defining and conceptualizing African American psychology are discussed in a section on self-determination. As noted by the cover story, the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) has been instrumental in defining and promoting the psychology of Black people. Following the section on "Self-Determination," we review the current status of African American psychology. Methodological issues are addressed, followed by a critical analysis. The chapter ends with a summary.

What Is African American Psychology?

Who Are African Americans and Other Racial/Ethnic Groups?

Prior to defining African American psychology, we define and provide data on African Americans and other racial/ethnic groups. The U.S. Census (2018b) defines *Black* or *African American* as "a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups

of Africa." It includes people who indicate their race as "Black, African American, or Negro" or who provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian. In this book, the term African American is generally used. However, in some cases, the term Black is used to retain the intent of authors in literature cited. African Americans may identify with other racial groups, and people of any race may be of Hispanic/Latino ethnic background.

Other racial/ethnic groups will be referred to in this book, and definitions of these groups are provided.

White—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa; American Indian or Alaska Native—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment; Asian—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. Hispanic refers to people whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries, or other Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race (U.S. Census, 2016b). See Table 1.1 for statistics on percentage of racial/ethnic groups in the United States. The terms "White," "Latino," and "Asian" will generally be used in this book. However, other terms (e.g., non-Latino White, Hispanic) may be used to retain the intent of authors in information cited.

Individuals may identify with two or more racial groups. The United States' biracial and multiracial population has grown over the past 20 years, and about 9 million Americans are considered multiracial, 2.1% of the population. However, Pew estimates about 6.9% of the population in the United States could be considered biracial and multiracial if the race/ethnicity of one's parents and grandparents were considered (Pew, 2015). Between 2000 and 2010, the number of White and African American biracial Americans more than doubled. Among African Americans with a multiracial background, 69% report that most people would view them as Black

TABLE 1.1 ■ Race and Ethnicity of Unites States Population	
Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White alone	77.1
Black/African American alone	13.3
Asian alone	5.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.2
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	.2
Two or more races	2.9
Hispanic/Latino	17.6

Source: United States Census (2016a).

or African American—and thus, their experiences, attitudes, and social interactions tend to be associated with the Black community. For example, African American multiracial individuals report experiencing discrimination to the same extent as those who are single-race African American. African American and White biracial adults are also 3 times as likely to report that they have a lot in common with people who are Black than they do with people who are White. It is important to note that African Americans are diverse and may identify as African American, Black, Black American, Afro-Caribbean, African, or some other designation. Research discussed in this book examines similarities and differences among Blacks based on whether they were born in this country or not.

African American Psychology Defined

African American, Black, and African psychology have been defined by several scholars. J. A. Baldwin (1986)—aka Kambon—defines Black psychology this way:

> African (Black) Psychology is defined as a system of knowledge (philosophy, definitions, concepts, models, procedures, and practice) concerning the nature of the social universe from the perspectives of African cosmology. Black psychology is nothing more or less than the uncovering, articulation, operationalization, and application of the principles of the African reality structure relative to psychological phenomena. (p. 242)

Fairchild (2000) defines African American psychology as follows:

> African American psychology is the body of knowledge that is concerned with the understanding of African American life and culture. . . . African American psychology focuses on the mental, physical, psychological, and spiritual nature of humanity. It is the collection of works that has been produced by African psychologists in the United States (African Americans) and throughout the world (p. 93).

African American psychology has been studied primarily from two perspectives. The first perspective is that psychological concepts and theories are universal and, thus, African Americans can be studied using universal laws and principles. Research on topics such as minority stress, stereotype threat, and identity assume that people across diverse cultural groups will exhibit similar behavior in similar situations and contexts. The second perspective, taken from African-centered scholars, is that African American psychology is the psychology of people of African descent and African beliefs and behaviors are central to the study of African Americans. In this book, we use a convergent approach that captures both perspectives.

Baldwin's definition encompasses an African-centered perspective. African-centered psychology is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. African-centered psychology considers core values, beliefs, and behaviors found among people of African descent that are central to understanding African Americans. Likewise, Azibo (1996) considers African American psychology to be African or Black psychology. He writes, "All human life processes including the spiritual, mental, biological, genetic, and behavioral constitutes African psychology" (pp. 6–7). In these definitions, Baldwin and Azibo do not make a distinction between African psychology and African American psychology, arguing that all people with origins in Africa are African.

One way of understanding the two perspectives in the psychology of African Americans is to consider differences between two schools of thought regarding

Black or African psychology (Azibo, 1996). One school of thought is pro-Black, and the other is African. In contrasting the two, Azibo notes that the pro-Black school of thought has focused on the African in the U.S. experience and has not used the African structure to provide the framework for interpreting the experience of African Americans. Although this Black school of thought has been useful in changing myths about African Americans based on a deficit model, it does not capture the core of the African experience. To capture the core of the African experience, Azibo advocates that an African-centered proactive school of thought be taken. This school takes the position that African philosophy is critical to understanding the psychology of Black or African people. To understand African American behavior, one must understand the behavior of Africans.

Baldwin similarly makes a distinction between Black psychology and African psychology (Baldwin, 1991). According to Baldwin, Black psychology was formed as a reaction to Western psychology. The Black psychological approach concerns itself with the psychological consequence of being Black in America. However, Baldwin argues that because African people existed before European people as a distinct cultural group, it follows that a distinct African psychology existed, irrespective of when and how it was articulated by social scientists. Baldwin makes the point that indeed Black psychology is African psychology.

Convergent Perspectives

There are convergent viewpoints in conceptualizing the psychology of African Americans. Both perspectives acknowledge that African American psychology is a science and, consistent with a Western conceptualization of psychology, it is organized and structured. This means that there is a systematic approach to understanding the psychology of African Americans, although there may be disagreement on the methods used for conducting scientific work. Both perspectives consider the scope and content of African or African American psychology to be fairly broad and diverse. African or African American psychology includes the study of behaviors as well as thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and social interactions. All perspectives underscore the importance of self-definition and self-determination. For example, from the perspective of African-centered scholars, self-knowledge is a requisite for achieving well-being. Similarly, other psychological perspectives emphasize that striving for self-determination is basic to human well-being (Bandura, 1982; Jenkins, 2005).

African and Western Psychology

African American psychology can be distinguished from Western psychology not only by the population studied (i.e., African Americans) but also by the nature of the discipline. Azibo (1996) distinguishes African psychology from Western psychology by its nature and essence. According to Azibo, the essence of African psychology was seen in the practice of the people from Kemet (i.e., ancient Egypt, the cradle of one of the first civilizations). The Kemet approach to understanding humans was through self-realization, whereas Western psychology's approach was through domination (Kambon, 1998).

One feature of Western psychology is the importance that is placed on observable behavior. Although Freud's influence made the unconscious a part of the scope of Western psychology, psychology has primarily focused on that which can be observed. The focus on observable behavior is attributed to the great weight that Western psychology has placed on prediction and control of the behavior of people.

African psychology considers self-knowledge and intuition to be as important as that which is observable (Grills, 2004; Myers, 1992).

In summary, there is no one definition of African American psychology. The definition depends on the perspective that is taken regarding the influence of African and American or Western cultures on the psychology of African Americans. We acknowledge both African and American or Western influences on behavior.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Origins of African Psychology

According to Azibo (1996), African American psychology began in ancient Kemet (now called Egypt), a civilization that began around 3200 BC. Azibo writes that African psychology can be traced to the period during which Africans produced an "organized system of knowledge (philosophy, definitions, concepts, models, procedures, and practice) concerning the nature of the social universe" (p. 4). From this perspective, African American psychology preexisted Western psychology. African psychology is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

On the other hand, Greek philosophy is credited as the origin of Western psychology. The word *psychology* is derived from the Greek work *psych*, which means "soul or mind" and *ology*, which means "study of."

European Scientists' Contribution to Racism

In 1976, Robert Guthrie published the seminal book *Even the Rat Was White.* A second edition was published in 1998. This book reviews the contributions of the European scientific community in influencing American psychology and beliefs about Blacks and how Blacks have been studied over the past two centuries. The book illustrates how scientific racism contributed to the perception of the inferiority of Blacks and provided justification for racism and oppression. Contributions from Guthrie's book are highlighted next.

Comparative Studies in Physical Anthropology

Studies by physical anthropologists in the late 18th century and in the 19th century compared differences in the physical attributes of Blacks and Whites (Guthrie, 1976/1998). These included skin color, hair texture, skull shape and size, facial structure, and posture. Observed differences were always found in favor of the superiority of Whites and the inferiority of Blacks. Studies that looked at skull size as an indicator of intelligence concluded that the Black man's skull and brain were smaller and therefore less complex than the White brain.

In 1898, the Cambridge Anthropological Society began a cooperative venture between psychology and anthropology. When scientists were sent to New Guinea to study the mental attributes of its residents, they concluded that the natives of the South Pacific were inferior to Westerners on all traits, including intelligence. This study was the beginning of studies of racial differences.

Darwin's Survival of the Fittest

In 1859, Darwin published his theory on the survival of the fittest. The key assumption of this theory was that only the strongest and most intelligent could survive. According to Guthrie (1976/1998), this doctrine greatly influenced American psychology by emphasizing individual differences, an assumption that currently underlies much of the work in psychology. The vast majority of research on African Americans within the field of psychology during the first half of the 20th century looked at individual differences in the psychological attributes of African Americans and Whites. The findings were generally used to support a perspective describing African Americans to be inferior on individual difference variables.

Galton's Eugenics

Galton's work in the 19th century also contributed to promoting a belief in the racial inferiority of Blacks. Galton's theory was that intelligence and other personality attributes were inherited. If intelligence was inherited, then one would not expect those of lower intelligence to improve in ability (Guthrie, 1976/1998). Galton's theory of eugenics was promoted to improve the race through selective mating and sterilization. The improvement of the human race could be achieved by genetic control of those who were of inferior intelligence and those who were social deviants. The application of eugenics resulted in Blacks and other ethnic minorities being disproportionately included among those who were inferior and unfit. Recent effort by a nonprofit organization, Project Prevention, to pay certain groups of women to submit to sterilization or to use other long-term forms of birth control is considered by some to be eugenics. These women are targeted supposedly because they are addicted to drugs, but they are usually poor and African American (Project Prevention, n.d.).

American Scientists' Contributions to Scientific Racism

Like their European counterparts, American scientists also conducted research to support the intellectual inferiority of African Americans (Guthrie, 1976/1998). The implication of this research on social policy has adversely affected African Americans.

Jensen's (1969) work on intelligence encouraged the belief that some people were genetically inferior to others. According to Jensen, intelligence was essentially determined at birth, and genetics or inheritance accounted for about 80% of intelligence. This theory is notably similar to that of eugenics. In regard to public policy, using a theory that intelligence is predetermined works to adversely affect people who may need environmental and social supports to improve their conditions. For example, compensatory programs such as Head Start were designed to provide economically disadvantaged children an academic boost prior to beginning school. However, if the reasoning is that intelligence is fixed at birth, there is little that can be done to change one's ability, and compensatory programs are not likely to do much good.

Research on the intellectual inferiority of African Americans is seen in more contemporary times in Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) book, *The Bell Curve*. These authors presented data suggesting that intelligence differs among racial groups and that African Americans are at the lowest end of the bell curve. A major point of their book is that most social problems, especially those found among economically and socially marginalized people, cannot be solved because they are linked to intelligence, which is mainly inherited. Therefore, environmental supports put

in place to solve these problems will not be useful if the social problem is due to intelligence. A broad implication of *The Bell Curve* is that the poor, the uneducated, and the unemployed—among whom African Americans constitute a sizable percentage—will live unproductive lives. Social programs cannot help these individuals, due to their lower intelligence (Haynes, 1995). Another implication of *The Bell Curve* is that people who are socially and intellectually inferior cause many of the social problems in this country.

The Bell Curve has been subject to intense scrutiny and criticism because of its erroneous assumptions and methodological flaws (Fairchild, 1994; Haynes, 1995). The inference of causality based on correlational data is a major methodological flaw, as is the importance given to what an intelligence test means. That is, to assume that lower intelligence scores cause social problems is erroneous when cross-sectional correlational data are used to make these assumptions. Also, the assumption that an intelligence test score is the best indicator of intelligence, adaptability, and general life success is flawed.

Intelligence Testing

Intelligence testing, according to Guthrie (1976/1998), was an important factor in perpetuating scientific racism during the first part of the 20th century. Binet and Spearman's work contributed to scientific racism in that intelligence testing was used to show intellectual differences between Blacks and Whites.

In 1904, Alfred Binet, a French physician, developed the Simon-Binet Scale, the forerunner of the Stanford-Binet test of intelligence that is still in use today. Charles Spearman developed the two-factor theory of intelligence that says that mental tests measure two factors: a general factor and a specific factor. The assumption is that the general factor measures general intellectual capability. The problem with this conception of a general factor of intelligence is that it emphasizes the general intellectual capacity while deemphasizing other mental attributes that may be more contextual or culturally specific (Williams, Williams, & Mitchell, 2004).

The earliest test of racial differences in intelligence was done using the Binet scales in 1912. In this study, Alice Strong measured the intelligence of 225 White children and 1,125 Black children. Black children were also categorized according to skin color (dark, medium, and light). Strong (as quoted in Guthrie, 1976/1998) noted that the "colored children excelled in rote memory. . . . However, they are inferior in aesthetics judgment, observation, reasoning, motor control, logical memory, use of words, resistance to suggestion, and in orientation or adjustment to the institutions and complexities of civilized society" (p. 64). In other words, the Black children were inferior to Whites on conceptual and intellectual attributes.

In 1916, G. O. Ferguson published a study titled *The Psychology of the Negro: An Experimental Study*. This study was considered a classic. It reported that the Negro had deficits in abstract thinking but was very capable in sensory and motor abilities. Given capacity in these types of skills, Negroes should be useful for doing manual work. Overall, much of the early work of American scientists perpetuated the myth of Black inferiority.

Intelligence testing of African American youth continues to be a debated topic, especially considering that African American children are overrepresented in special education for intellectual disabilities (Graves & Nichols, 2016). See Chapter 6 for more discussion of intelligence testing.

STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

In American psychology, studies of Negroes, Coloreds, Blacks, Afro-Americans, and African Americans have been conducted throughout the last century in the United States. Often, theories and conceptual frameworks that may be useful for Western psychology have been erroneously applied to the psychology of African Americans. For example, consider the concept of *self-esteem*, a frequently studied topic in Western and American psychology. In understanding what self-esteem is from an African and Western perspective, one must understand the difference between Western and African conceptions of the self. Using a Western perspective, self-esteem can be defined as a feeling of liking and regard for one's *self*. From an African-centered perspective, the personal self is indistinguishable from the self that is derived from membership in the African community (Nobles, 1991). Therefore, one's affiliation with one's group defines one's view of self. The African proverb, "I am because we are, and because we are, I am," characterizes this notion of the self. Thus, the conceptualization of people of African descent may be different from that of Whites, and it also may function differently for African Americans than how it functions for Whites (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion).

Another approach taken by American psychology has been to use information gathered from White populations as the norm and then to compare African Americans with Whites. This approach is seen with the use of measures that have been developed to assess individual difference traits. For example, continuing with the example of self-esteem, a measure of self-esteem that does not include the collective nature of self-esteem may not be relevant for some African Americans. Given the problem of non-normative data, it is important to include African Americans and other ethnic and cultural groups within normative samples when measures are developed. Fortunately, this is changing, and more contemporary research recognizes the importance of including diverse racial/ethnic groups when measures are developed. For example, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) requires researchers to include information about the inclusion of ethnic/racial minority groups in its application package (NIH, 2016). Alternatively researchers have developed culturally specific measures for African Americans (Belgrave, Abrams, Hood, Moore, & Nguyen, 2016; Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2000).

A related problem is when methods that are based on Western psychology are used to study African Americans. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the method for acquiring knowledge may differ for different cultural groups. According to Africentric scholars, self-knowledge is the most important type of knowledge and is the basis for all knowledge. Self-knowledge then is more important than knowledge that is acquired from the external environment. In this regard, understanding how a person who participates in a research project perceives himself or herself may be just as important as seeing how he or she responds to external stimuli. Within American psychology, the preferred methodology for conducting research has been the experiment. Experiments are believed to be superior to other research methods in producing valid and factually correct information. Experiments also provide a context in which predictions—and subsequently, control—can be more exact. Yet experimentation may not be the best way to obtain information about African Americans. Other, more naturalistic methods, such as interviewing and systematic observations, may be more useful singularly or in conjunction with experimental approaches. A large percentage of studies done in American psychology have focused on differences

between African Americans and Whites. During the first part of the 20th century, most of the research conducted on African Americans involved comparative studies that contrasted African Americans and Whites on individual difference traits (Guthrie, 1976/1998).

This focus on differences led to African Americans being viewed as having deficits on many psychological characteristics. And in fact, as stated previously, much of the earlier work in psychology focused on deficits among African Americans when compared with Whites. Studies that examine within-group differences among African Americans are just as important to aid us in understanding why some African Americans do well and others do not. In the next section, we provide an overview of earlier comparative studies done on African Americans.

Comparative Studies

The vast majority of the studies conducted by psychologists on African Americans during the first half of the 20th century were studies that compared Coloreds, Negroes, and Blacks with Whites. For the most part, these studies examined differences between African Americans and Whites on intelligence, mental ability, and personality. Studies were conducted with children, adolescents, and adults. Studies on intellectual differences employed standard individual intelligence tests such as the Stanford-Binet, as well as group tests to assess mental functioning. One test used was the Army Classification Battery (ACB). The ACB was developed by the Army to assess soldiers' aptitude on different assignments. The ACB test was used in several studies that examined differences in mental ability and intelligence between African Americans and Whites. One study that examined differences between Negroes and Whites on the ACB found that Negroes scored lower than Whites on intelligence (Roen, 1961).

Other studies conducted during the first half of the 20th century investigated differences between African Americans and Whites on personality attributes, traits, and temperaments. Findings from representative studies are reviewed next. The methods used to carry out these studies were influenced by the social and political climate of the time, with most findings reflecting negatively on African Americans. These studies, which almost always found inferior traits among African Americans, contributed to the climate of racism and discrimination against African Americans.

A study published in the 1920s is illustrative of the studies of this era. Peterson (1923) tested White and Negro children using several group intelligence tests and individual learning tests. He found significant race differences, with White children scoring higher on both group and individual tests. He noted in his findings that the White 8-year-old children scored higher than the Negro 10-year-old children. Peterson pointed out that these differences were especially salient because of the fact that 60% of the White 8-year-old children came from poor sections of the city, whereas 97% of the 10-year-old Negro children came from one of the best Negro schools in the city. He reported that about 83% of the Whites were smarter than the Negroes, and that only 15% to 18% of the Negroes were as smart as the Whites. According to Peterson, differences between the two groups were most striking on tasks that required abstract and logical thinking. In making recommendations stemming from his findings, he suggested that there be less abstract and conventional types of education for Negro children. Peterson did not mention that even though the Negro children may have attended one of the best Negro schools in town, these schools had substantially fewer resources than the poor White schools. In addition, access to community resources beyond the school might have been more available to White than Negro children.

Findings of inferior functioning among African Americans were also seen in early studies on personality traits. Roen (1961) found that Negroes in his study lacked self-confidence more than was the case with Whites. Furthermore, low self-confidence among Negroes was associated with lower intelligence test scores. Roen speculated that the lack of pride in historical achievement, coupled with a negative socioenvironmental context, led to internalized, intellectually defeating personality traits that contributed to lower intelligence scores.

Many studies found that African Americans had elevated scores for problem behaviors. For example, Hokanson and Calden (1960) found even when Negroes and Whites both came from predominantly Northern working-class settings, Negroes had personality deficits higher in several areas of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). The authors suggested that special norms be developed for Negro and White subjects. Regarding general adaptation to society, studies found that White and Negro adolescents of similar mental ability differed in personal and social adjustment (Pierce-Jones, Reid, & King, 1964).

In a review of psychological studies published between 1943 and 1958, Dreger and Miller (1960) found that Whites were superior to Negroes on several attributes, including psychophysical, psychomotor, intelligence, and temperament traits (i.e., neuroticism). They noted that differences between Negroes and Whites were smaller among young children. In none of these studies did the authors find superior performance among African Americans.

Given the findings from psychological studies, it is no wonder there was an assumption of African American racial inferiority during most of the 20th century. These studies were conducted by researchers at prestigious universities who had the authority of their position and "scientific" credibility for their work (Guthrie, 1976/1998).

In spite of the reports of inferior psychological attributes found in most psychology publications, some scholars as early as the 1940s were questioning the racial bias of psychological tests, especially intelligence tests. In commenting on why test items that differentiate between Blacks and Whites should be replaced, Pastore (1946) pointed out that test items that differentiate between boys and girls are eliminated because they are unfair. However, items that differentiate between Whites and Blacks have not been eliminated in intelligence testing. He concluded that this leads to no differences being seen between boys and girls but differences being seen between Negroes and Whites. Such item selection procedures in this early work systematically support the finding of differences between racial groups and are based on values and other attitudinal assumptions regarding race and intelligence.

A large amount of research on African Americans published during the first half of the 20th century was concerned with whether the results of differences between Blacks and Whites were due to genetic inferiority or the environment. Studies were cited to provide evidence for both positions. Those who made the argument that the environment was the cause of inferior performance among African Americans presented evidence that African Americans could learn when provided an opportunity to do so. Witty (1945) argued that the scores for the Army General Classification test, a test of intelligence, were associated with educational opportunities for soldiers within their local communities. To support this argument, Witty provided evidence that Negroes improved in performance when given the opportunity. In a special training unit, people who were illiterate were given an 8-week course to develop fourth-grade skills. The essential skills were attained by 87% of the Negroes and 84% of the Whites. He concluded that these findings showed evidence that Negroes are equal to Whites in the ability to learn.

In accounting for environmental influences on low Negro self-concept, Grambs (1965) wrote,

> It does not take much imagination to understand what generations of being
> told one is unworthy will do to a group's own validation of its worth. . . .
> The self-esteem of the Negro is damaged by the overwhelming fact that
> the world he lives in says, "White is right; black is bad." The impact on the
> Negro community is to overvalue all those traits of appearance that are most
> Caucasian. Evidence is clear that in almost every Negro family, the lighter
> children are favored by the parents. (p. 14)

The first part of the 20th century saw much work devoted to justifying the inferior-
ity of Blacks within American psychology. However, during the second half of the
century some began to question this assumption.

Contemporary Research in African American Psychology

Contemporary writings and research on African American psychology are diverse,
as will be seen throughout this book. Some topics have received more attention (e.g.,
racial identity, racism) than others. The methods used to conduct research are varied
and include both quantitative and qualitative studies and studies with college, com-
munity, work, and clinical samples. Several studies have included national representa-
tive samples (e.g., National Survey of Black Americans) and have examined U.S.-born
African Americans and Blacks born in other countries. Notably, more recent studies
focus on within-group differences among African Americans rather than comparing
African Americans with other racial/ethnic groups. More recent research has also
focused on identifying strengths and resiliencies that promote well-being.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Several critical events provided the impetus for the development of a contemporary
psychology of African Americans. A pivotal assumption was that African Americans
had to define for themselves what constitutes the psychology of African Americans.
The emergence of a voice among African American psychologists (albeit few in number)
occurred during the sociopolitical struggles of the 1960s for civil rights and equality
in all aspects of life. The demand for civil rights was seen in all institutions, includ-
ing educational institutions. Black Nationalism and the Black Power movement
were also driving forces for self-determination during the 1960s. These sociopolitical
movements set the stage for self-determination.

African American Psychologists in the Early 20th Century

During the first part of the 20th century, a few African Americans were begin-
ning to enter the field of psychology. Despite many obstacles, African Americans
managed to become psychologists (Guthrie, 1976/1998). Two of the major obstacles
for African Americans were geographical location of graduate programs in psychol-
ogy and the cost of graduate school. Most graduate-level universities in the South,
where the majority of African Americans lived, did not admit African Americans.
This meant that African Americans had to go North in order to attend graduate
school. However, out-of-state tuition was expensive, as were travel costs to get there.
This situation, along with the low incomes of most African Americans during this
period, made it very difficult for African Americans to go to graduate school even if
they were accepted.

At this time, most African Americans attended predominantly Black colleges. White universities required African Americans who had received their bachelor degree from a predominantly African American university to complete an additional year of undergraduate school to demonstrate that they had the ability for graduate school. This resulted in a longer period of matriculation for African Americans than for Whites (Guthrie, 1976/1998).

Despite these obstacles, a few African Americans managed to obtain a doctoral degree (PhD) in psychology during the first quarter of the 20th century. Francis C. Sumner was the first Black to receive a PhD in psychology in the United States; he received it in 1920 from Clark University in Massachusetts. Because of this distinction, Sumner is referred to as the "Father of Black Psychology." Sumner conducted his dissertation research on the psychoanalysis of Freud and Adler. He became chair of the Department of Psychology at Howard University in Washington, DC. Howard became a leading university for providing training in psychology to African Americans at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Charles Henry Thompson was another early recipient of the PhD in psychology. He received his PhD in educational psychology from the University of Chicago in 1925. Dr. Thompson conducted his dissertation research on teacher curriculums. In 1933, Inez Beverly Prosser received a PhD in educational psychology from the University of Cincinnati and became the first Black female to receive a doctorate in psychology. In 1938, Herman Canaday at West Virginia State College convened Black professionals interested in Black psychology and established a Black psychologists committee within the American Teachers Association (ATA). The ATA was the professional organization for Black educators.

The Association of Black Psychologists

The Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) is featured in the cover story and is the membership organization for people interested in Black psychology. ABPsi is now 50 years old and was organized in 1968 when African American psychologists attending the predominantly White American Psychological Association (APA) conference reacted to what they felt were nonsupportive, if not racist, positions regarding ethnic minority concerns. A group of African American psychologists met during the 1968 APA meeting in San Francisco and generated a list of demands (Guthrie, 1976/1998). The reactionary position of African American psychologists at this meeting was consistent with the self-determination and protest ideology of the 1960s. African American psychologists were tired of being ignored and were fed up with research, policies, and programs that were discriminatory to African Americans.

The demands that African American psychologists made included the following:

1. The APA must integrate its own workforce with more African Americans.

2. The APA should work to gain the admittance of more African Americans in psychology graduate schools.

3. Racist content found in APA journals should be eliminated.

4. The APA should establish programs so that concerns specific to each minority group can be addressed.

Following the 1968 meeting, African American psychologists in attendance decided to form their own organization rather than to try to effect change within the APA. Robert Williams, one of the founding fathers of ABPsi chronicled the history

of the organization in a book published on the *History of the Association of Black Psychologists* (Williams, 2008). The thrust of ABPsi today remains similar to that articulated 50 years ago. See http://www.abpsi.org for more information on ABPsi. Some of the agendas of the ABPsi today are as follows: One, to provide training and support to African American psychology students. The ABPsi encourages and promotes the professional development of African American undergraduate and graduate students through scholarships, support of students in their research activities, and publications directed at assisting students in their graduate education. The student committee (known as the Student Circle) of ABPsi provides support to and a forum in which students can address important topics facing them, the universities they attend, and communities in which they live. The Student Circle of ABPsi has been especially beneficial to students who attend predominantly White universities, as it introduces them to African American psychologists.

Two, ABPsi has been engaged in strong advocacy against racist and discriminatory practices within the discipline of psychology, as well as in other arenas. The ABPsi has emphasized the need for culturally competent practices, treatment, and services. As early as 1969, the year after the formation of ABPsi, African American psychologists were arguing against the use of culturally biased tests. Robert Williams, then president of ABPsi, asked for an end to using tests that were not standardized on African Americans, arguing that they were not valid. To illustrate what he perceived as cultural bias in testing, Williams developed a test labeled the "Bitch" test: the Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity. Williams showed that when the Bitch test was administered to White samples, they fared poorly in comparison with African Americans. The discriminatory nature of testing as it affects African Americans continues to be one of the major issues addressed by ABPsi.

A more recent example of ABPsi's advocacy is its criticism of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) discriminatory policies that result in African American researchers being less likely than any other ethnic and racial group to obtain funding (Psych Discourse, 2011). The NIH is the United States' premier federal agency for funding and conducting research, including psychological research. Citing a study published on race, ethnicity, and NIH research awards (Ginther et al., 2011), ABPsi wrote in a position statement,

> In considering the potential for research funding to contribute heavily to the body of scholarly work, it is of utmost importance for the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) to respond to alarming new evidence suggesting inherent racial bias within the funding process of the NIH. The researchers discussed findings that illustrated a significant difference in the racial/ethnic make-up of individuals receiving R01 research grants, even after all other factors had been controlled for. (Psych Discourse, 2011)

ABPsi offers several suggestions to remediate this disparity. ABPsi and/or its members have articulated positions on several other practices that are discriminatory against Black people and have promoted agendas that aid in improving the mental, physical, social, economic, and political status of all people of African descent. In this regard, ABPsi has developed position papers and press releases and has provided information to the public on racist research, practices, and policies. For example, a special issue of the official journal of ABPsi, the *Journal of Black Psychology*, was dedicated to exposing the fallacies found in the book *The Bell Curve*, which promoted racial inferiority (*Journal of Black Psychology*, 1995). A 2004 issue of the *Journal of Black Psychology* was

devoted to HIV/AIDS epidemiology, prevention, and treatment for people of African descent (*Journal of Black Psychology*, 2004).

Three, ABPsi has been active in addressing social, psychological, and health problems found among people of African descent through training, education, and programs at the local, state, and national levels. Training in topics related to mental health, substance abuse, inequity in the criminal justice system, HIV, and children and families are offered by local chapters, at the national convention, and by members throughout the country. ABPsi and its members provide health screenings, mental health assessments, expert testimony, consultation to agencies, and other activities in communities throughout the United States.

Four, ABPsi has promoted an awareness of the problems and concerns facing Blacks throughout the Diaspora. A related mission is to increase connections and collaborations among Blacks throughout the world. For example, ABPsi has publicized racial apartheid in South Africa, tribal conflict, and famine in African countries. Annual national conferences of the ABPsi have included Blacks from other countries, and there have been collaborative activities with Blacks from other countries, including those in the Caribbean, Africa, and South America. Two ABPsi annual conferences have been international conferences, one held in Jamaica and one held in Ghana.

Toward a Black Psychology

A seminal message that contributed to the recognition of the field of Black psychology was articulated by Joseph White (1970) in an *Ebony* magazine article titled "Toward a Black Psychology." (An update of this article appeared as a chapter in the fourth edition of Reginald Jones's book *Black Psychology* [2004].) In this article, Dr. White, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, explained how it was difficult, if not impossible, to understand the psychology of Black people using theories that were developed by White psychologists to examine White people (Guthrie, 1976/1998). In this article, White strongly advocated a Black psychology defined by Blacks.

This article received a lot of attention from the public. Some felt that Joseph White's position was polarizing for African Americans. Others felt that this position dichotomized psychology into Black and White disciplines. Still others felt that a psychology formulated from the experiences of Blacks would marginalize Black psychology. The perspective that Black psychology was in some way different from White psychology was perceived by some as creating a lower-class psychology for Blacks. Others felt just as strongly as Professor White that it was time for Black psychology to be formulated for the authentic experiences of Blacks.

Over the next several years (until present), several books on Black psychology or African American psychology were written. Some of the earlier books included Reginald L. Jones's *Black Psychology* (1972), Lawrence Houston's *Psychological Principles and the Black Experience* (1990), and White and Parham's (1990) *The Psychology of Blacks*. *The Handbook of African American Psychology* was published in 2008 (Neville, Tynes, & Utsey, 2008).

The Journal of Black Psychology

The *Journal of Black Psychology* is the official journal of the ABPsi. The journal began in 1974, 6 years after the formation of the ABPsi, and has grown from publishing issues twice a year to publishing issues four times per year. In addition,

special issues that focus on specific topics are published on a periodic basis. Some of the more recent special issue topics have included sickle cell disease, racial identity, African American children, African American girls, HIV prevention, substance abuse prevention, and health disparities. The *Journal of Black Psychology* publishes contributions within the field of psychology that are directed toward the understanding of the experience and behavior of Black populations. The major disciplines of psychology are represented in the journal, including clinical, counseling, social, educational, organizational, and cognitive psychology. Journal articles tend to be empirical but also include theoretical reviews, commentaries, case studies, and book reviews. The authors relied on the *Journal of Black Psychology* extensively in gathering research and literature for this book.

Studies of African Americans in Other Journals

There have been an increasing number of studies on African Americans published in journals other than the *Journal of Black Psychology*. This includes journals whose focus are on Blacks or African Americans (e.g., *Journal of Black Studies*), journals with an ethnic minority focus (e.g., *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*), and journals that are not targeted specifically to African Americans (e.g., *Journal of Counseling Psychology*). This increase has been partially due to the increase in African American psychologists, as well as to an increasing awareness of cultural diversity. Publications have expanded the knowledge of African Americans and informed the psychological community on culturally congruent approaches to studying African Americans. Recent writings have also focused on understanding African American behaviors from a positive, culturally appropriate framework rather than a negative, culturally deviant framework.

Influential African American Psychologists

Several African American psychologists have influenced the field of African American psychology. Next, we highlight individuals who have made important contributions. We selected these individuals based on several considerations: (a) These individuals were the first African Americans to obtain a doctorate in psychology or the first in other accomplishments, (b) they developed new theories and conceptual frameworks, and (c) they have conducted research that has impacted social policy and improved conditions for African Americans. Some have been influential because they have advanced theories that have been a catalyst for others who have followed them; still others have had a large impact because of how prolific they were. Some are listed because they have directly and indirectly influenced our teachings and writings.

Francis C. Sumner

Sumner, the first African American to receive a PhD in psychology in the United States (in 1920), is regarded as the "Father of Black Psychology" (Guthrie, 1976/1998). This accomplishment is noteworthy because at the time he received his degree, only 11 Blacks out of a total of 10,000 recipients had earned a PhD between 1876 and 1920 in the United States. Working against many barriers, Francis Sumner earned his degree at Clark University in Massachusetts. At the age of 15, he enrolled as a freshman at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania after having passed an examination in lieu of a high school diploma. He enrolled in Clark College in 1915 and also received a degree in English. Sumner joined the faculty at Howard University,

Washington, DC, in 1928 and was chair of the Department of Psychology from 1928 to 1954. During this period, he established strong graduate and undergraduate programs in psychology. Under his leadership, the department produced many influential Black psychologists and provided training, especially at the bachelor's and master's levels. Both Mamie Clark and Kenneth Clark, two other influential African American psychologists, received training at Howard University.

Inez Beverly Prosser

Inez Beverly Prosser, born in 1895, was the first African American woman to receive her PhD in psychology. She obtained a doctorate in educational psychology in 1933 from the University of Cincinnati. Her dissertation, which received much recognition, was titled *The Non-Academic Development of Negro Children in Mixed and Segregated Schools*. It was one of the earliest studies that examined personality differences in Black children attending either voluntarily segregated or integrated schools. Dr. Prosser concluded that Black children were better served in segregated schools. This research was one of several studies in the 1920s and 1930s that was part of the debate on segregated schools as maintained in the United States under the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* concerning school environments of African American children (Warren, 1999). Inez Prosser is included because her achievement is notable and inspiring considering the immense barriers during her era for women and Blacks in education. Dr. Prosser served in teaching and administrative positions at Tillotson College in Austin, Texas, and Tougaloo College, in Tougaloo, Mississippi. Her influence would have been even greater had she not been killed in a tragic accident in 1934 at the age of 39.

Mamie Clark and Kenneth Clark

This husband-and-wife team is best known for their work on racial preferences among Black children. Their classic doll studies were published in the 1930s and early 1940s (Clark & Clark, 1939, 1947). In these studies, Black children were shown Black and White dolls and told to choose the one that looked like them, the one they preferred, the one that was a good doll, and the one that was a bad doll. The Clarks concluded from their findings that Black children preferred White dolls. This classic study led the Clarks to argue that Black children who attended segregated schools had low self-esteem. The findings were used in arguments against racial segregation, the most famous of which was the 1954 landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*. Prior to this, Blacks had received inferior education in segregated schools. The *Brown v. Board of Education* landmark decision ruled that separate but equal education was unconstitutional. That is, schools could not be separate and equal at the same time. Although there were several subsequent methodological criticisms of the Clark and Clark doll studies, they continue to be classic studies of racial identity and preferences. Kenneth Clark was the first African American to be president of the APA.

William E. Cross

William Cross's model of the development of racial and ethnic identity has generated a considerable amount of work over the past four decades and continues to do so today. Cross's model was labeled a nigrescence model. (Nigrescence, a word with Latin roots, means to become black.) Nigrescence models accounted for the progression of African Americans through sequential stages to arrive at a mature racial identity (Cross, 1978, 1991). These stages were subsequently labeled as pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization commitment.

Each stage is characterized by certain affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions. Racial identity theory is discussed more extensively in Chapter 3. Cross's model has been revised and augmented by several other scholars, including Janet Helms (also included as an influential psychologist) and Thomas Parham. Dr. Cross is also known for his book, *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American Identity* (Cross, 1991). His model provided a framework for other models of identity development (e.g., Native American identity, women's identity, gay-lesbian identity, Asian identity). Dr. Cross is professor emeritus at the City University of New York. He spent many years on faculty at Cornell University and Penn State University.

Reginald L. Jones

Reginald Jones is included as an influential psychologist because of the large amount of work he published on African American or Black psychology. Jones published more than 20 books on African American psychology and related topics, and his books have provided comprehensive coverage of Black psychology. Many of his works are edited volumes that include a variety of authors, perspectives, and topics. His book on Black psychology was the first to be published on the topic. The first edition of *Black Psychology* was published in 1972, and the fourth edition was published in 2004. *Black Psychology* includes chapters on several topics, including African philosophy, personality, assessment, intelligence assessment, counseling, racism, racial identity, cognition, and language. We frequently consulted all editions of Jones's *Black Psychology* while writing this book.

Some of the other books on African American psychology that R. Jones edited include *African American Identity Development* (1998b); *Advances in African American Psychology* (1999); *African American Children, Youth, and Parenting* (1998a); *African American Mental Health* (1998c); *Black Adolescents* (1989); and *Handbook of Tests and Measurement for Black Populations* (1996). The books authored and edited by Dr. Jones have been used in African American psychology classes and similar courses throughout the country. Dr. Jones died in 2005 while a professor emeritus at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia.

James M. Jones

James Jones is included as an influential African American psychologist for two reasons. First, his book on *Prejudice and Racism*, originally published in 1972 and revised in 1997, is a classic examination of prejudice and racism. In this book, Jones provides an analysis of the different types of racism—that is, individual, institutional, and cultural. A more recent book on the topic is *The Psychology of Diversity: Beyond Prejudice and Racism* (with Jack Dovidio and Deborah Vietze) (Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze, 2013).

Second, Dr. Jones substantially impacted African American psychology in his role as the director of the APA's Minority Fellowship Program for over 30 years. In this position, Dr. Jones was responsible for managing a program to increase the number of African American and other ethnic minority scholars who obtain doctorates in psychology. The mission of the minority fellowship program is to improve the quality of mental health treatment and research on issues of concern among ethnic minority populations in psychology by offering financial support and by providing guidance and training in becoming a psychologist. More than 1,500 students of color have benefitted from this program. The minority fellowship program began in 1974 with Dalmas Taylor as the first director. James Jones became director in 1977 and directed the program for many years. Dr. Jones is professor of psychological and

brain sciences and director of the Center for the Study of Diversity at the University of Delaware.

Janet E. Helms

Janet Helms is an influential African American psychologist because of her vast contributions to multiracial counseling, race relations, and racial identity theory and development. Dr. Helms has written prolifically on the topics of race, racial identity, and multicultural counseling. She developed the Racial Attitude Identity Scale (RAIS), which is one of the most widely used measures in psychology. Her book, *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research and Practice*, published in 1990, was one of the first published books on racial identity and is considered a classic. Other books include, *A Race Is a Nice Thing to Have* (Helms, 2008) and *Using Culture in Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theory and Process* (Helms & Cook, 1999).

Dr. Helms was on the faculty of the University of Maryland College Park for 20 years, where she trained more than 40 doctoral students who have become influential psychologists in their own right. In 2000, Teachers College, Columbia University, established an award in her name, the Janet E. Helms Award, in recognition of her mentoring. In 2000, she joined the faculty at Boston College and founded the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture. Dr. Helms is a professor in the Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology. She continues to write and publish on topics in counseling psychology, including racial identity.

Margaret Beale Spencer

Margaret Beale Spencer has played a significant role in supporting our understanding of the development of African American children and adolescents. Dr. Spencer graduated from the University of Chicago's Child and Developmental Psychology Program, where her studies included the replication of the Clark and Clark doll studies. This work further clarified our understanding that children as young as 3 years of age are influenced by and have awareness of societal racial bias but that early in development, knowledge of these societal attitudes is unrelated to African American children's sense of self.

Dr. Spencer is known for the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST), which uses a strength and resiliency framework to understand African American youth. Her work largely focuses on issues of identity, resiliency, and adaptive development within challenging developmental contexts. This has included work measuring the influence of neighborhood factors on the development of African American adolescents, as well as examining the ways in which the social ecology of African American youth plays a role in their construction of meaning and in their developmental outcomes (see discussion of PVEST, phenomenology, and ecological systems theory in Chapter 11). Her recent work focuses on the use of incentive programs for low- and high-achieving high school students and the role of skin tone in self-perception. Dr. Spencer is the Marshall Field IV Professor of Urban Education at the University of Chicago. Prior to this she was a professor within the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

Claude M. Steele

Claude Steele is best known for his work on stereotype threat and how it affects performance among minority groups beginning with his classic study, "Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans" (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Stereotype threat occurs when a person believes that he or she is at risk of confirming a negative stereotype of his or her social group. The anxiety arising from stereotype threat can undermine performance of a task that may be viewed as nondescriptive of one's group. This classic study showed that Black students underperformed on an achievement test when their race was made salient. When race was not salient, there was no difference in the performance of Black and White students. This study has been replicated with other cultural groups (e.g., women, Latinos, Asians) and stereotypes (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). Dr. Steele has also conducted research on self-affirmation and self-image and the role of self-regulation in addictive behaviors. His book, *Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us* summarizes research on stereotype threat and the underperformance of minority students in higher education (Steele, 2010).

Dr. Steele is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley where until recently he was the executive vice chancellor and provost for the University of California, Berkeley. He held leadership positions at several other universities including dean of the School of Education at Stanford (from 2011–2014) and provost of Columbia University (2009–2011). Dr. Steele has taught at several other universities, including the University of Utah, the University of Washington, and the University of Michigan.

Jennifer Lynn Eberhardt

Jennifer Eberhardt has made significant contributions to understanding how the race of African Americans impacts their treatment in the criminal justice system. Her research has shown that police officers are more likely to classify African American faces than White faces as criminal. She has further shown that the race–crime association implicitly leads people to attend more closely to crime-related images. In an experiment, people who were exposed to Black faces subsequently were more quickly able to identify a blurry image as a gun than those who were exposed to White faces or no faces (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004). Dr. Eberhardt's research has also demonstrated the impact of Africentric facial features. Her research showed that among defendants convicted of murdering a White victim, defendants whose appearance was more Africentric (e.g., darker skinned, with a broader nose and thicker lips) were more likely to be sentenced to death than if their features were less Africentric. A study on juveniles and sentencing found that simply bringing to mind a Black (versus a White) juvenile offender led them to view juveniles in general as more similar to adults and therefore deserving of more severe punishment (Rattan, Levine, Dweck, & Eberhardt, 2012). Finally, Dr. Eberhardt's work has considered how dehumanizing African Americans (i.e., implicit association as ape-like) alters judgments in criminal justice contexts (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008). Dr. Eberhardt has applied her research by working with police departments to recognize and address racial bias. She is professor of psychology and law at Stanford University. She was awarded the MacArthur "genius" award in 2014 for her work on stereotypes and criminal sentencing.

African-Centered Psychologists

Beginning in the 1970s, several African American psychologists began writing and educating people about the importance of understanding African philosophy as a basis for understanding African American psychology. These include Na'im Akbar, Asa Hilliard, Wade Nobles, Joseph Baldwin (aka Kobi Kambon), Daudi Azibo, Amos Wilson, Linda James Myers, Cheryl Grills, and Shawn Utsey. The work of these psychologists is often published in the *Journal of Black Psychology*. Chapters were also published in Reginald Jones's edited book *Black Psychology* (1972, 2004)

and Neville et al.'s (2008) edited book, *Handbook of African American Psychology*. Several of these psychologists are highlighted in Chapter 2.

African Americans' Presence Within the American Psychological Association

The APA is a membership organization of approximately 116,000 members. The mission of APA is to advance the creation, communication, and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives (APA, 2017a). Divisions within APA operate that are geared to disciplines and interests of APA members.

Several components of APA represent the professional interests of African American psychologists. APA's Division 45, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, encourages research on ethnic minority issues and the application of psychological knowledge to address issues of ethnic minority populations. One distinction between APA's Division 45 and the ABPsi is that APA's Division 45 supports issues of all ethnic minority groups while ABPsi is more specifically focused on Black issues. The official journal of Division 45 is *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology.*

The Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs at APA seeks to increase the scientific understanding of how culture pertains to psychology and how ethnicity influences behavior. It also focuses on promotion, recruitment, retention, and training opportunities for ethnic minority psychologists, increasing the delivery of appropriate psychological services to ethnic minority communities, and promoting better inclusion of ethnic minorities in organized psychology (APA, 2017b).

STATUS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

Teaching African American Psychology

Today, African American psychology is taught at many colleges and universities. The course is often cross-listed with African American studies. Increased interest in African American psychology is attributed to several factors. These include the growing appreciation for cultural diversity, increased enrollment of African American students, recognition of the contributions of African American psychology to general psychology, and increases in the number of African American faculty who can teach this course.

African American Psychologists

African Americans and other racial- or ethnic minority groups compose a relatively small percentage of the active psychology workforce (APA, 2015). The active psychology workforce is defined as psychologists with doctoral or professional degrees. In 2013, the racial and ethnic distribution of active psychologists was as follows: White (83.6%), Black/African American (5.3%), Hispanic (5%), Asian (4.3%), and other racial or ethnic groups (1.7%). While African Americans and other racial minorities compose a relatively small percentage of the active psychology workforce, there has been some improvement over the past eight years. African American psychologists doubled in the workforce from 2.7% in 2005 to 5.4% in 2013.

A large gender disparity exists among African American psychologists, and this disparity is greater than for other racial or ethnic groups. Among African American active psychologists, for every male there are 5.8 females. Among active psychologists of all racial and ethnic groups, females outnumbered male psychologists such that for every male there are 2.1 females. Among active psychologists, 66.1% are female, and 32.2% are male.

African American males are fairly rare in psychology. Only 5.3% of the psychology workforce is African American, and African American men compose a small percentage of this group. These statistics highlight a great need for African American male psychologists. One of the reasons for this disparity is that males do not pursue graduate studies in psychology at the rate of females. African American males are less likely than females to obtain a bachelor's degree, a prerequisite for enrolling in a doctoral program (Turner & Turner, 2015).

African American Faculty and Graduate Students in Graduate Departments of Psychology

African American Faculty

The presence of African American faculty in psychology departments, specifically graduate departments, is important. Graduate departments provide training at the doctoral level. African American faculty are important insofar as they generally tend to encourage research on issues of concern to African Americans, assist in recruitment and retention of African American students, and teach classes and integrate material on African Americans in the curriculum of courses taught. An APA survey of departments of psychology gathered demographic data on faculty and graduate students (Hart, Wicherski, & Kohout, 2011). From 2010 to 2011, out of the 520 U.S. graduate departments of psychology that responded to an APA-administered survey, fewer than 14% of their total full-time faculty were ethnic minority (Hart et al. 2011). Because all ethnic minority faculty are included in this figure, the number of African American faculty is much lower.

African American Graduate Students

Ethnic and racial diversity among graduate students is also important. In addition to being trained as a psychologist, graduate students fulfill many other roles. They are teaching assistants and instructors in courses; they advise and mentor undergraduate students around careers and personal and professional issues; in doctoral programs, they engage and train undergraduate students in conducting research; they work with faculty to conduct research; and they serve as role models for ethnic minority undergraduate students. Many African American graduate students, especially those in doctoral programs, study issues that are directly related to African American psychology. Our graduate students have been involved in HIV and substance abuse prevention programs and education in the local community, conducting research on eliminating health disparities, and conducting research on cultural attributes (e.g., racial identity, gender roles) and youth well-being.

Similar to faculty, the number of students enrolled in graduate programs is not representative of the racial and ethnic group representation in the United States. APA conducted a survey of 520 psychology departments with graduate programs (Cope, Michalski, & Fowler, 2017). Racial and ethnic minorities composed about 30% of the graduate students in psychology, and African Americans composed about 9.1% (see Figure 1.1). There was an increase among all ethnic and racial minorities in graduate programs from 2005 to 2015, from 26.3% in 2005 to 30% in 2015. African Americans in graduate programs

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Race/Ethnicity of Graduate (Masters and Doctoral) Students in Psychology
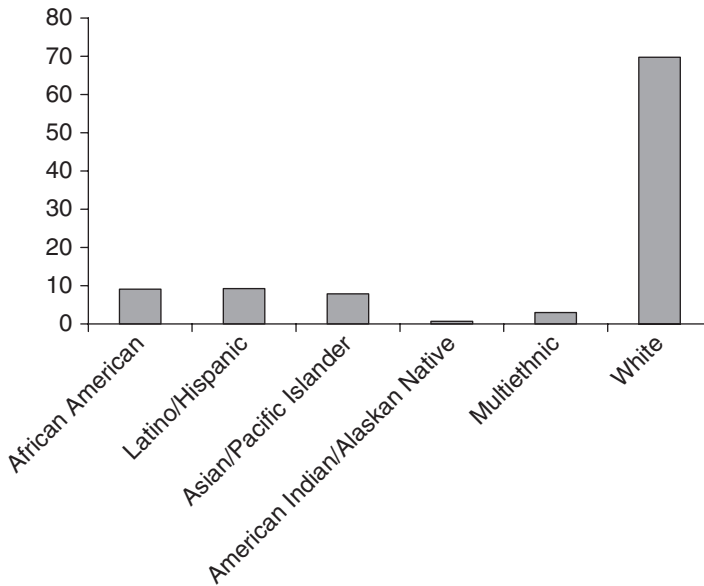
Source: Cope, Michalski, and Fowler (2017).

increased by 14% over this time period. Consistent with faculty, there were more women enrolled than men; 75% of graduate students were female, and 25% were male.

One of the barriers to the enrollment of African Americans in doctoral programs in psychology is the lack of mentoring at the undergraduate level in preparation for graduate school. When undergraduate students are not mentored or advised by faculty (or graduate students), they may not realize until it is too late (usually their senior year) what they need to do to gain admission to a doctoral program. Requirements for a master's program are generally not as competitive. Undergraduate students also may not have been involved in research experiences that are often required for graduate school.

Once enrolled in doctoral programs in psychology, African American students face several barriers; some of which are similar to and some of which differ from those faced by other racial and ethnic groups. Some of the barriers include microaggressions (i.e., everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to people based on racial or ethnic group membership) (Sue et al., 2007), lack of culturally competent and culturally sensitive faculty who can mentor African American students, lack of faculty with expertise in topics related to African American psychology, and the lack of peers who share values and lifestyle.

METHODOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH ISSUES

Some of the methodological issues that were historically problematic in studying African Americans remain while there has been a shift in others. The best methods for studying African American populations may differ from the methods for studying

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
WHY DO WE NEED MORE AFRICAN AMERICAN FACULTY?

When we have argued for more African American faculty who represent the student body, the community, and the "subject/participant" population, colleagues, particularly those who are not faculty of color, have reacted with surprise and challenged our assumption that African American faculty and researchers should be representative of the people studied, taught, and worked with. This is not to imply that those who are not of African descent cannot do good research, programming, teaching, and so forth with people of African descent but that people of African descent bring a lived perspective that is likely to inform research, teaching, and other aspects of behavior and interpersonal relationships. Still others in academia view African American psychology as a subfield of multicultural psychology and argue that attentiveness should be directed toward all diversity and multicultural issues rather than African American psychology specifically. While multiculturalism and attentiveness to diversity are important and indeed increase openness and appreciation for all cultural groups, a basic premise of multiculturalism is to know yourself and those with whom you are working. As the statistics in this chapter point out, the field of psychology has significantly fewer African American psychologists than are represented in the population. There are also significantly fewer African American graduate students than White graduate students who are studying to become psychologists. This is partially attributable to the low number of African American faculty at graduate training universities in the country. As will be seen throughout this book, African American researchers and teachers bring experiences and perspectives that are meaningful to the training of all students. All students, not just African American students, benefit from a diverse and representative faculty.

other ethnic groups. For example, the experimental method is the favored method in psychology and has been considered the gold standard for conducting research. However, it may not always be the best way to arrive at an understanding of the psychology of African Americans. Other methods, such as interviewing and observation, may be more appropriate, depending on what is being studied. African psychology (discussed in Chapter 2) considers self-knowledge and intuition to be as important a source of knowing as observable data. Self-knowledge is derived from asking people about themselves, not from observing them under experimental conditions.

Another methodological consideration is the relevance of the constructs that are being examined. A construct may not hold the same meaning for African Americans as for other ethnic groups. An earlier example we used was how the concept of self-esteem is used. For people of African descent, the concept of self includes the collective as well as the individual self. From a Western psychological perspective, the self is individualized. Another construct that may differ is that of the family. Who constitutes the African American family, and where are its boundaries? What is effective family functioning? The answers to these questions for African Americans may be different from answers for other groups. More research is needed to better understand when constructs are universal and when constructs are culturally specific to African Americans.

Another major concern in many studies, past and present, involves the issue of defining and sampling African Americans. When studies are presented focusing on African Americans, who are the individuals in the sample? Are they college students? Urban children, youth, and their families living in challenged communities? Suburban youth attending integrated schools? Recently migrated children or youth

living in segregated communities with variable access to educational resources? First-generation African immigrants? A person's self-identification as Black, African American, or Afro-American also may impact study findings. Understanding, identifying, and describing the experience, history, and context of African Americans as a diverse group and considering this variability within our research samples is critically important in strengthening our understanding of the psychology of African Americans. From an Africentric perspective, this also raises questions regarding whether there is the need for pan-African psychology that includes, integrates, and compares work involving participants from the United States, Africa, and other settings relevant to the Diaspora.

The relatively low percentage of African American psychologists contributes to some of these methodological issues. The problems and questions of interest are often identified and studied by those least affected and who may not understand the right questions to ask and the methods to use. We return to methodological and conceptual issues throughout this book, pointing out how these issues affect the validity and practicality of studies conducted on African Americans.

Another methodological issue concerns the actual researcher or investigator. We all hold values about what is important to study. The investigator is, in a sense, an independent variable. Acknowledging what these values are is a necessary step in conducting research. For example, our values have been to focus more on positive attributes of African American psychology, not on negative attributes. This may be considered a reactionary stance given that we have seen so much published on negative attributes. At the same time, the range of functioning among African Americans is negative as well as positive.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

We offer our analysis on several perspectives in African American psychology, including where we see the need for more research and writings.

The divergent perspectives on whether African American psychology should be based on African-focused or Western-focused psychology is long standing; this book will not resolve those perspectives. At the same time, we believe there is much to be gained by generating more theoretical literature and research concerning how both perspectives can continue to inform our understanding of African Americans, including areas where convergence and the integration of these perspectives is useful. Research on positive psychology may provide an area of convergence as this area of research focuses on topics of interests to Western- and African-centered psychology (i.e., prosocial behavior, spirituality, gratitude, and so on).

Within the field of African American psychology, a considerable amount of work has been done in the area of identity—ethnic identity, racial identity, and other aspects of the self. We have devoted a chapter in this book to the topic of identity. Several of the African American psychologists we consider influential (e.g., K. B. Clark, M. K. Clark, W. E. Cross, J. E. Helms) are best known for their work on identity. At the same time, we can also study the identity of the discipline of African American psychology. The same questions that are asked regarding individual identity development can be extended to the identity of African American psychology. What were key milestones in the development of African American psychology? What were the socioenvironmental and political factors that contributed to the development of African American psychology? What are some of the core topics that the discipline is concerned with? What will the discipline look like 20 years from now? It is our

expectation that these and other questions will be addressed as African American psychology develops and maintains its identity.

Another issue concerns the influence of African American psychology on Western psychology. Just as Western psychology has had an influence on African American psychology, African American psychology has made a contribution to Western psychology. A core premise of African American psychology is that consideration must be given to understanding the values, culture, and ways of being of a group of people. This is certainly true, whether the group differs racially and ethnically or by age, disability and socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. African American psychology has insisted on the acknowledgement of ways of being that are fundamental to our cultural group. Other groups can also benefit from this perspective.

Although Western psychology is sometimes criticized for its emphasis on universal perspectives and reductionistic strategies that ignore culture and context, it is also important that African American and Africentric psychological perspectives critically consider these factors in their psychological perspective on African Americans. To what extent and in what ways are other disciplinary perspectives on culture and context, especially history, important, made explicit, and integrated in our work in understanding African Americans? To what extent are interdisciplinary social science perspectives and strategies critical to pushing forward our knowledge base?

As we will see throughout this book, much of the study of African American psychology has been the study of differences between African Americans and Whites. In fact, we report many of these differences in this book. However, we need more research on how African Americans have survived and thrived individually, as groups, and as a people. We need more research on optimal functioning of individuals, families, and communities. We have attempted to highlight some of the areas where more research is needed throughout the book.

Summary

The proverb at the top of this chapter suggests that when the beginning is understood, the end will be successful. This chapter was written to inform the reader about African American psychology, its origins, and historical events and people. By so informing the reader of the history, we hope that the reader will be successful in learning about this field of psychology.

The origin of the study of African American psychology can be traced to Kemet: It is during this period that Black people produced a systematic body of knowledge. European theories, including Darwin's survival of the fittest doctrine and Galton's doctrine of eugenics, contributed to the belief in the inferiority of Blacks. This belief perpetuated discrimination and racism. Contemporary scientific work on racial inferiority is seen in Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) *The Bell Curve*.

During the first half of the 20th century, the study of African Americans in American psychology was largely comparative, and findings showed African Americans to be inferior to Whites on intelligence, personality, and general adaptation. Obtaining a PhD in psychology was very difficult for Blacks. Francis Sumner obtained his degree in 1920 and is known as the "Father of Black Psychology" because of this achievement. In 1968, a period of self-determination began. The ABPsi was formed by African American psychologists who felt that the predominantly White APA did not address the concerns of Black people. Since then, there has been an increase in culturally appropriate publications within APA and in general. There has also been an increase in the number of African American psychologists and an increase in awareness of cultural diversity in psychology. The APA has offices (e.g., the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs) and programs targeted at African American professionals and students. More college students are becoming familiar with African American psychology because many colleges and universities teach courses in it.

2

AFRICAN-CENTERED PSYCHOLOGY

Wood may remain ten years in the water,
but it will never become a crocodile.

—Zarian proverb

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To define and understand African-centered psychology
- To understand the origins of African psychology
- To understand worldview dimensions found among people of African descent
- To appreciate the contributions of African-centered psychologists
- To become familiar with research in African-centered psychology
- To become familiar with programs that use an African-centered approach

ON THE NEED FOR EUROCENTRICS ANONYMOUS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE JULY 2000 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY HALFORD FAIRCHILD

On July 31, 2000, Dr. Asa G. Hilliard provided the Keynote Address to the Annual International Convention of The Association of Black Psychologists in Accra, Ghana. At one point in the address, he suggested that Africans need a 12-Step Program to solve our addiction to Eurocentric thinking. We need a "Eurocentrics Anonymous."

Hilliard magnificently encapsulated the mission of Black psychologists: to rescue and

(Continued)

(Continued)

reclaim the African mind. His historically con-textualized address relied on novelist Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons*, which suggested that the struggles of African people—throughout the world—have stretched through the millennia.

Hilliard makes no distinction between con-tinental Africans and those throughout the Diaspora: We are one people—united in our history, in our struggles, and in our (eventual) liberation. Africans have been at war with invaders who sought to invalidate their human-ity. Africans have endured many forms of genocide—physical onslaughts (murder, cap-tivity, enslavement), and the destruction of cul-ture. The cultural genocide robbed Africans of their names, religions and memories. Because of Divide and Conquer, Africans learned to hate each other and themselves.

And yet, despite the odds, Africans have survived. Hilliard celebrated the return of Africans from America through the "Door of (No) Return." But the emphasis on overcoming historical oppression isn't about the past, it is about the future.

The Sankofa symbol—a bird with its head turned toward the rear, with an egg in its beak—has future generations in mind. To acknowledge the tens of thousands of years of African devel-opment is to reclaim the past in order to chart a future course. As Marcus Garvey said, "Up you mighty race! What you have done before, you can do again!"

Hilliard illustrated that the liberation psy-chology literature already exists—in the works of Akbar, Nobles, Ani, Wright, Kambon, Armey, Garvey, Woodson—it is up to us to read it. We must study the success stories of African liberation: the Haitian revolution (and Toussaint L'Overture), Marcus Garvey (and the United Negro Improvement Association), Steve Biko (and the ANC [African National Congress]), Septima Clark (and literacy training), and others.

As Biko said, "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed." What we need, Hilliard intones, is to break the chains of conceptual incarceration. We need Eurocentric Anonymous.

Source: Fairchild (2011). Used with permission of Psych Discourse.

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN-CENTERED PSYCHOLOGY AND THE AFRICENTRIC WORLDVIEW

The news story that opens this chapter provides an assessment by Dr. Halford Fairchild of how Dr. Asa Hilliard, a prominent Africentric psychologist, encour-aged Black psychologists to reclaim their African identity by ridding themselves of Eurocentric thinking.[1] The focus on African-centered psychology is on African val-ues and on ways of thinking and behaving that are indigenous to Blacks through-out the Diaspora. In this chapter, we discuss the influence of African culture and the Africentric worldview on the psychology of African Americans. The terms *African-centered*, *Africentric*, *African*, and *Black* psychology are used interchange-ably in this chapter according to the usage by scholars cited. Likewise, the terms *Africentric* and *Afrocentric* are used interchangeably, following the spelling used by the scholar cited. In this chapter, we begin with a definition of African psychology followed by a discussion of *worldview*, including the Africentric worldview and its origins. We then describe the contributions of several African-centered psycholo-gists. Africentric worldview dimensions are discussed next, and the question as to

whether an Africentric worldview can exist among contemporary African Americans is addressed. In the section on African-centered research, we discuss two areas of research: (1) research on differences between African and European Americans on Africentric dimensions and (2) studies on the relationship between Africentric values and other variables. Methodological and research issues are addressed, including a review of some Africentric measures, followed by a discussion of empirically based programs. We then raise issues relevant to African-centered perspectives and contributions in our critical analysis. The chapter concludes with a summary.

What Is African Psychology?

Grills (2004) conceptualized African psychology by its focus on defining psychological experiences from an African perspective. According to Grills, African psychology consists of African values, ways of accessing knowledge, ways of defining reality, ways of governing and interpreting behavior, social relations, and designing environments to sustain healthy, adaptive functioning among people of African descent. African psychology is rooted in African culture and based on philosophical assumptions indigenous to African-descent people (Utsey, Belvet, & Fischer, 2009). African-centered psychology is a discipline whose purpose is to address the mental health needs of people of African descent from a self-empowering perspective (Obasi & Smith, 2009). Although these conceptualizations reflect some variation, the underlying and primary consensus reflected in these ideas is that African culture undergirds the behavior of people of African descent. African American psychology, in contrast, has been traditionally limited to understanding the values, beliefs, and behavior of Blacks in the United States. This book encompasses both African-centered and African American psychology.

What Is a Worldview?

A *worldview* is a way of thinking that organizes all aspects of one's life, including intra- and interpersonal thoughts and behaviors and one's functioning in social systems and institutions in the community (e.g., family, school, job, religious institutions) and in larger society. Intrapersonal thoughts refer to one's attitudes, beliefs, values, and expectations. Interpersonal behaviors refer to one's interactions with others. Worldviews provide us with guidelines for living: They affect our perceptions, thoughts, feelings, inferences, and behaviors and how we experience the external world. Simply put, a worldview provides us with a framework for interpreting events and understanding the world.

An Africentric worldview finds its base and foundation in the worldview of African peoples. It consists of the values, beliefs, and behavior of the indigenous people of Africa and those in the Diaspora who share in this cultural heritage. Butler (1992) characterizes the African worldview as follows:

> It represents a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality. It is how someone makes sense of their world and their experiences—it determines which events are meaningful and which are not and provides the process by which those events are made harmonious with their lives. (p. 29)

Asante (2003) defines Afrocentricity as an attitude and actions that promote the well-being of people of African descent. "Afrocentricity is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives

dominate. . . . It is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena" (p. 2).

The Africentric worldview has been contrasted with a Eurocentric worldview that is derived from European culture. The Africentric worldview differs from a Eurocentric worldview along several dimensions, including spirituality, interdependence and collectiveness, time orientation, death and immortality, and kinship (Akbar, 1991a; Nobles, 1991, 2015). These dimensions will be discussed later. In general, the Eurocentric worldview provides a cultural template for people of European descent, whereas the Africentric worldview provides a cultural template for people of African descent. Worldviews are, of course, not limited to people of African and European descent but exist among all ethnic and cultural groups.

It is important to note that there are variations across Africentric and other worldviews, and individuals may function along a continuum, with some people of African descent holding some Eurocentric worldview beliefs and some people of European descent having some Africentric worldview beliefs. However, from an African-centered perspective, it is expected that Africentric worldview dimensions will be found, in some degree, among most people of African descent.

Beginnings and Current State of African-Centered Psychology

African-centered psychology in the United States, as a topic and a perspective, is fairly recent. Most literature on African-centered psychology has been published within the past 50 years. However, the study of African psychology as an organized and systematic study of African people has existed since Kemet (3400–600 BCE) (Azibo, 1996). Although much of the scholarship on the Africentric worldview has come out of African studies, several African American psychologists have also contributed significantly to our understanding of the Africentric worldview.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, African American psychologists began to write about African-centered psychology and the Africentric worldview and how it could be used to understand the psychology of African Americans (Azibo, 1983; Nobles, 1976, 1986; White, 1972, 1984). These early writings coincided with other historical events such as the civil rights movement and the Black Power movement. Much of this earlier work focused on articulating what the Africentric worldview was and how it differed from the Eurocentric worldview.

Over the past 40 years, there has been considerable theoretical and empirical work directed at better understanding the Africentric worldview. African American scholars from various academic disciplines have contributed. Much of the work produced by African American psychologists has been published in the *Journal of Black Psychology*, the official journal of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi). Other sources of information on African-centered and Africentric psychology include journals such as the *Western Journal of Black Studies* and the *Journal of Black Studies*. Several books have also been written. A notable work is Molefi Asante's classic book, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, first published in 1980 and updated in 2003. Azibo's (1996) *African Psychology in Historical Perspective and Related Commentary* was an earlier addition to the understanding of Africentric psychology. Kobi Kambon's book *African-Black Psychology in the American Context: An African-Centered Approach* (1998) also contributed to African-centered psychology. Representative African-centered research will be discussed later in the chapter.