PART

I

INTRODUCTION TO RACE AND THE SOCIAL MATRIX

1 RACE AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENCE

Black Lives Matter and other protests make us aware of racial inequities and point to solutions.

Credit: Ira L. Black/Corbis via Getty Images

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 Explain how the concept of race is socially constructed.

1.2 Summarize the operation of racism.

1.3 Analyze the relationship between social contexts and race.

In June of 2020, the deaths of African Americans at the hands of police triggered widespread social protests in every state, and around the globe. These racially motivated deaths, both recently and over the past decade, have not been isolated incidents. People around the world are recognizing that they are part of the larger historical, systemic oppression of African Americans and other people of color in a nation founded on White supremacy.

There are overwhelming problems that will not be changed quickly, and they are not new to us. In 1968, the Kerner Commission, as it became known, released their now infamous report declaring that the country was "moving toward two societies, one Black, one White— separate and unequal." The report identified actions to address institutionalized racism and change the path we were on. Unfortunately, few people heeded their warning. Now, more than half a century later, we find we are back in the same place. Former mayor of New Orleans Mitch Landrieu writes: "We cannot continue to go over, under or around the issue of race. We have to go through it." (2020).

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

History, the reality of our shared past, reflects a series of choices. These choices, once made, often take on a life of their own, but we should always remember that they were and continue to be choices. Nothing better demonstrates the accuracy of this assessment than the particular set of choices that served to shape our nation on questions of race.

Since human genes have changed, or mutated, over time, we must question if race is either natural or static. If race were indeed a fact of nature, it would be simple to identify who falls into which racial category, and we would expect racial categories to remain static across history and societies. Differences in physical features, such as skin color, hair color, eye color, and height, exist both within and between groups. Physical features can vary even within families. However, these differences are not due to an underlying biological basis of race. There is more biological variation within our so-called racial groups than there is between them. Race must derive from human interventions. These interventions reflect the social construction of race.

As a consequence, what social scientists and geneticists alike have come to understand is that race and any categorizations based on it are uniquely social creations that have been purposefully constructed. Specific rewards, privileges, and sanctions have been used to support and legitimate race. The systematic distribution of these rewards, privileges, and sanctions across populations through time has produced and reproduced social hierarchies that reflect our racial categorizations. We collectively refer to these systematic processes as the **social construction of race**.

Defining Terms

The term **race** refers to a social and cultural system by which we categorize people based on presumed biological differences. While the term has biological overtones, it has virtually nothing to do with biology and everything to do with society. Race exists as a system by which we, as a nation, have categorized various population groups. With these classifications have come a whole series of stereotypes, presumed attributes, behaviors, attitudes, and identities.

The very idea of race requires us to actively engage it, grant it its powers, and facilitate its presence throughout our society. We do all this through our various accepted societal rules and social structures. Institutions are both **norms** (or rules that govern behavior within society) and

Skin color exists along a continuum. Attempts to divide this range into a limited number of boxes is part of the construction of race.

Credit: iStock.com/LeoPatrizi

sustained social structures that serve to regulate our most basic roles and tasks such as family, politics, military, criminal justice, economy, health, and more.

Race operating both within and across these various institutions constitutes what we call a system. When this system of race operates to deny rewards, apply sanctions, and otherwise discriminate against some while rewarding others, we call such a system **systemic racism**. We recognize that systems of race do not operate alone, but in tandem with other systems such as sexuality and gender, class, ability, and age. These are the realities that shape our identities within and across institutions.

When we talk about race, and other major **identity** terminology (i.e., referring to specific socially constructed groups), we often reduce the idea to two opposites. Binary constructs typically present race, and other major categories, as two opposing realms:

- White/Black
- female/male
- gay/straight
- rich/poor
- young/old

These kinds of binary constructs oversimplify the realities of these various identities, and obscure and confound the multitude of identities that do not exist along this binary continuum. This is yet another reason why we utilize a matrix approach.

Our approach to all of these identities, while recognizing the multiple ways in which our various identities intersect, focuses on race. This primacy is more to facilitate our discussions, rather than an indication of the importance of race over any of the other categories. That being said, we recognize that if we were to start from a different identity category, our analysis would be different.

During our exploration of race, we will think about how race intersects with several identities, including but not limited to:

- **Gender**: A broad range of identities that reflect both social and cultural differences which include female, male, transgender, gender-neutral, nonbinary, agender, pangender, genderqueer, two-spirit, third-gender, some combination of all of these, or none of these.

- **Sexuality**: How a person identifies, who they are attracted to, how they define their sexual feelings, thoughts, and behaviors toward others, and how they conceive of themselves.

- **Class**: A set of categories that reflect wealth, occupation, and income. This identity defines an individual's economic position within society.

- **Ethnicity**: A designation that identifies a social group that shares a common cultural or national tradition.

Finally, we would like to comment on the terms we have elected to use in this book. We have decided to capitalize all racial and ethnic identity groups. Thus White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Latinx, and Asian, are all capitalized. We also recognize the distinctions between various Hispanic, Latinx groups and have struggled to be honest in the representation of that distinction. Part of the dilemma is that while Hispanic makes reference to a language group, Latinx makes reference to geographical groups. Making this even more complex, not all Latinx are Hispanic and not all Hispanics are Latinx. Then there are the various distinctions such as Latino/Latina and Latinx, which reflects both political and normative conventions that are continually in flux.

We have therefore decided to avoid presuming that one size fits all and have tried to use terms that reflect the specific identity that we are referencing. Therefore, when we are talking about the language group, both pan-ethnic and multiracial, as used by the U.S. Census, we use the broader term Hispanic. Alternatively, when we are referring to a specific group who originates from or identifies with a particular geographical area within Latin America, we use the designation Latinx. Similarly, when we are talking about those from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Caribbean, we use explicit designations. We also respect the terminology used by the authors of specific research that we discuss.

Constructing Race in the United States

In Chapter 2, we will discuss the extent to which the construction of race in the United States follows the pattern of European settler colonialism and imperialism. For now, we present a brief explanation of how racial categorizations became significant within the United States.

So, what does this racially constructed system look like in the contemporary United States? Try this exercise: First, create a list of the racial groups in the United States. Then, write down your estimate of the percentage of the U.S. population that is accounted for by each group.

When we ask our students to attempt this exercise, the answers we get are varied. Some list four races; some list ten. Some include Hispanics/Latinx, and some do not. Some include Middle Easterners, while some do not. Some include a category for multiracial identity. Race is something we assume we all know when we see it, but we may in fact be "seeing" different things. Race cannot be reduced to physical features like skin color—in fact, while skin tone is often the first item we "check off" on our racial checklist, we then move to other social and visual clues.

The United States Census

The U.S. Constitution requires that a counting of the nation's population be conducted every 10 years—a national census (see Figure 1.1). The purposes and uses of the census have both changed and expanded across the years. The census was originally necessary to

Each of us is part of a racial story that begins early in our lives, a racial story that has also been written long before we were born.

Credit: MBI/Alamy

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Census Categories Have Changed Over Time

CENSUS YEAR: 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020

CLASSIFICATION BY RACE

CLASSIFICATION BY HISPANIC ETHNICITY

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

For the first time, people who check one or both of these boxes are asked to write more about their origins, for example German, African American, Jamaican, etc.

People could choose two or more races

People could choose their own race

Multiracial: Two or more races

Mulatto: Definitions varied from census to census, but this term generally means someone who is black and at least one other race. Mulattoes, octoroons and quadroons were counted as single-race black, but today could be counted as multiracial.

Quadroon: Someone with "one-fourth black blood," according to census-taker instructions. **Octoroon:** Someone with "one-eighth or any trace of black blood."

Although **American Indians** living in white society were included in the census before 1890, the 1890 census was the first to include a complete count of American Indians on tribal land as well.

In 1910, the vast majority of the Other category were **Korean, Filipino and Asian Indian** (called Hindu).

Aleut: People who trace their ancestry to the Aleutian Islands in Alaska.

Hindu: Referred to Asian Indians, regardless of religion.

Pacific Islanders and Hawaiians were grouped with Asians from 1960–1990. Starting with the 2000 census, they became their own group.

This category included smaller racial groups not specified on the census form.

Mexicans were counted as a separate race in 1930 for the first and only time.

Chicano: A variation of "Mexican American" commonly used in Western and Southwestern states.

Race categories shown include: Free white males, Free white females; All other free persons; Slaves; Free colored males and females; White; Black; Mulatto; Black Slaves; Mulatto Slaves; Quadroon; Octoroon; Black (Negro or of Negro descent); Negro, or Black; Negro; Black, or Negro; Black, African American, or Negro; Black or African American; Indian; American Indian; Aleut; Eskimo; Indian (American); American Indian or Alaska Native; Chinese; Japanese; Filipino; Korean; Hindu; Asian Indian; Vietnamese; Other Asian; Hawaiian; Part Hawaiian; Native Hawaiian; Samoan; Guamanian; Guamanian, Chamorro; Chamorro; Other Pacific Islander; Asian or Pacific Islander; Other; Other race; Some other race

Hispanic ethnicity categories: Central or So. Amer.; Mexican; Chicano; Mexican, Mexican Amer., Chicano; Puerto Rican; Cuban; Other Spanish; Other Spanish/Hispanic; Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino; Another Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin

Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PH_15.06.11_MultiRacial-Timeline.pdf

determine voting representation, including the numbers of representatives states could elect to Congress, the allocation of federal and state funds, and more. Over time, the census categories of race and other cultural and language groups have changed to reflect the nation's evolving population as well as, importantly, the political interests and power relations of the time.

What have we discovered? Race is a social construction that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestry, culture, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs, desires, and relations of a society at a given historical moment (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 1997; Ferrante and Brown 2001). The U.S. Census Bureau, for instance, currently recognizes five racial categories, along with a "some other race" option (which was added in 2020 in response to public pressure). The five categories are as follows (derived from U.S. Census 2020):

1. *American Indian or Alaska Native* includes individuals that identify with the original population groups of North and South America (to include Central America) and who continue to maintain tribal affiliation or community. It includes such groups as Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, and Nome Eskimo Community.

2. *Asian* category refers to all individuals who identify with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups deriving from the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. It includes, but is not limited to, those who identify as Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese. Others included in this category are Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, Thai, Bengali, Mien, and others.

3. *Black or African American* includes all individuals who derive from or identify with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups that originate from any Black racial groups of Africa. This group includes African Americans, Jamaicans, Haitians, Nigerians, Ethiopians, and Somalis. It may also include those from Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, Kenyan, Liberian, and Bahamian backgrounds.

4. *Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander* includes all individuals that identify or originate from nationalities or ethnic groups from Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. This category also includes, but is not limited to, Native Hawaiian, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Saipanese, and Yapese.

5. *White* includes all individuals that identify with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. These groups may include, but are not limited to, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Polish, French, Iranian, Slavic, Cajun, and Chaldean.

Not only have our official designations for race and ethnic groups differed over time, but how people identify themselves has also shown a great deal of variability. For example, from the

2000 census to that of 2010, almost 10 million U.S. residents changed how they identified their race when asked by the Census Bureau (Linshi 2014). This clearly demonstrates the fluidity of racial identity.

Future Race and Ethnic Demographics

What will our country look like in the next 50 years? Projections of population growth indicate that minorities (including Hispanics, Blacks, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders) will make up slightly more than 50% of the U.S. population. The most significant changes will be seen in the reduced numbers of Whites and the almost doubling of the numbers of Hispanics and other minorities. We often read headlines predicting that Whites will become a minority. However, these are misleading. Whites will still be the single largest group in the United States, constituting 49.4% of the population in 2060 (Figure 1.2). The United States will become a minority-majority nation, which means that the total of all minority groups combined will make up the majority of the population. We may see little change in the dynamics of power and race relations, however, as the proportion of Whites will still be nearly twice that of any individual minority group.

FIGURE 1.2 ■ Population Growth Projections Over the Next Fifty Years Predict a Minority-Majority Nation
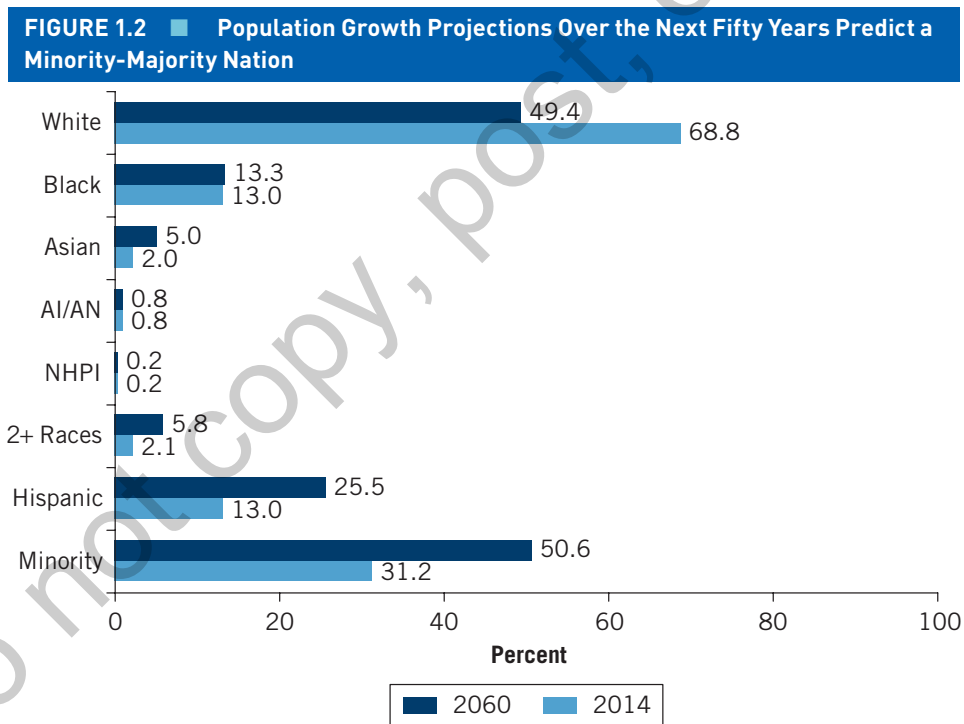
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population 2014-2060," Population Estimates and Projections, Current Population Reports, March 2015.

Critical Thinking

1. Explain why biology does not explain race. Why are simple, binary constructions of identity problematic?

2. History has shown that race and ethnicity are socially constructed. What do current trends suggest about how these social constructions may change in the future?

3. Can you trace your roots? What different racial and ethnic groups are in your family tree? What does this say about how we define racial and ethnic groups?

THE OPERATION OF RACISM

We have examined what race is, how it is constructed, and how it reproduced. We now shift our focus to the concept and operation of racism.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Anyone can be the victim of prejudice. **Prejudice** is a judgment of an individual or group, often based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, or other social identities. It is often shaped by, and also leads to, the promotion of **stereotypes,** which are assumptions or generalizations applied to an entire group. Even seemingly positive stereotypes put people in boxes, like the myth of Asian Americans as the "model minority," which includes the stereotype that all Asian Americans are gifted in math and science. How might this stereotype affect Asian American students who are not doing well in school? How does it prevent us from seeing the poverty that specific Asian American groups, such as the Hmong, Cambodians, and Thais, are more likely to experience (Takei and Sakamoto 2011)?

Prejudices and stereotypes are beliefs that often provide foundations for action in the form of **discrimination**—that is, the differential allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society, based on an individual's membership in a particular social category (Adams et al. 1997). Prejudices and stereotypes exist in the realm of beliefs, and when these beliefs guide the ways in which we treat each other, they produce discrimination. Anyone can be the victim of prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, including White people, and for a wide variety of reasons, such as clothing, appearance, accent, and membership in clubs or gangs. Put simply, discrimination is prejudice plus power.

Prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination are probably what first come to mind when we think about racism. But the study of racism goes far beyond these. Like sexism, racism is a system of oppression. **Oppression** is more than simply individual beliefs and actions—it involves the systematic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identity groups in contrast to a privileged norm (Ferber and Samuels 2010). Oppression is based on membership in socially constructed identity categories; it is *not* based on individual characteristics.

One sociologist describes racial oppression as a birdcage: an interlocking network of institutional barriers that prevents escape (Frye 2007). Alternatively, others point out the systemic racism. This view posits that core racist realities, values, and ideologies are manifested in all of the major institutions within society (Feagin 2001). Throughout this text we will demonstrate how race exists both historically and contextually as an ongoing form of inequality that pervades every major social institution, including education, employment, government, healthcare, family, criminal justice, sports, and leisure.

The Contours of Racism

Racism is a system of oppression by which those groups with relatively more social power subordinate members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power. This subordination is supported by individual actions, cultural values, and norms embedded in stock stories, as well as in the institutional structures and practices of society (National Education Association 2015). It is inscribed in codes of conduct, legal sanctions, and organizational rules and practices. Specifically, racism is the subordination of people of color by those who consider themselves White; by implication, the practice of racism defines Whites as superior and all non-Whites as inferior.

There are specific sets of responses typically associated with race:

- *Racial prejudice, or racial prejudgments*, reflect not only our fears but also our ignorance of racialized others and those that appear to racially identify like ourselves.

- *Racial identifications* are a set of attitudes, cultural and normative values, and presumed shared histories that establish group boundaries. These group boundaries are enforced by people both within and external to the group.

- *Racial boundary enforcements* are structural or institutional mechanisms that serve to preserve those boundaries, such as segregation (Frankenberg et al., 2017); marriage (Samuel and Whitehead, 2015); laws, police, and the courts (Steinmetz et al., 2017); and economics (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991; Marable, 2016).

- *Bigotry (intolerance toward those who are different from ourselves) and discrimination*, deriving their power from institutions, are the mechanisms by which racial hierarchies are developed and preserved.

Racism is systemic. It is not about isolated individual actions; individual actions take place within a broader, systemic, cross-institutional context. People of color may themselves harbor prejudices and discriminate on the basis of race; however, without the larger social and historical context of systemic differences in power, these individual actions do not constitute racism. While this may seem counterintuitive, keep in mind that we are looking at racism from a sociological perspective, focusing on the importance of social context, research, and group experience, rather than on individual behavior. Individual experiences of race and racism will vary. We find it less important to focus on "racists" than on the social matrix of racism in which we

live. Additionally, while White people do not experience racism, they may face oppression based on sexual orientation, class, or other social identities.

Racism in the United States is directed primarily against Blacks, Asian Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans. Some argue that the hatred and discrimination faced by Muslims should also be classified as racism, and that they are becoming a racialized group. Racism is the basis of conflict and violence in societies throughout the world, and the forms it takes are varied. Racism is practiced by Whites against Blacks, "Coloreds," and Indians in South Africa; by Islamic Arabs against Black Christians in the Sudan; by East Indians against Blacks in Guyana; by those of Spanish descent against those of African and Indian descent in Brazil and Paraguay; by White "Aryans" against Jews and Romani in Germany; by the Japanese against the Eta, or Burakumin, in Japan; and by Whites against Africans, Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus in Great Britain. Racism can take many forms, and it changes over time.

Formal and Informal Racism

Formal or overt racism occurs when discriminatory practices and behaviors are sanctioned by the official rules, codes, or laws of an organization, institution, or society. Many of the most obvious forms of racism are no longer legal or openly accepted in U.S. society. Such racist practices as slavery, or the harsh set of laws that came into being in the aftermath of the Civil War that stripped the newly freed slaves of their rights, or the act of Congress that stripped Native Americans of their land rights and forced them to relocate onto reservations, are now condemned (but also too conveniently forgotten). Debate is ongoing regarding whether or not other practices—such as immigration policy, the display of the Confederate flag, and the use of American Indian sports mascots—are racist in intent or impact.

Informal or covert racism is subtle in its application, and often ignored or misdiagnosed. It acts informally in that it is assumed to be part of the natural, legitimate, and normal workings of society and its institutions. Thus, when we discuss student learning outcomes we may talk about poor motivation, inadequate schools, or broken homes. We ignore that these characteristics are also typically associated with poor Black and Latinx neighborhoods (Coates 2011). Recent work has helped us to understand the many ways that these subtle forms of racism are manifested.

Implicit Bias

Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect how we perceive others, and their and our actions and decisions. It was not until 1998 that we began researching and documenting degrees and forms of bias. Almost all of us possess various form of bias. They reflect not our conscious values, but rather the cultural and social messages about race that we have unconsciously learned (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998). Implicit bias tests can provide a snapshot of those unconscious, learned beliefs, which can impact our behavior in ways we are not aware of.

Bias, prejudice, and discrimination are learned as part of the social environment that we live in. Therefore, despite the laws, expressed attitudes, and programs aimed at effecting change, we continually discover the problem shaping our everyday lives.

Tests have been developed to not only measure but track our attitudes and beliefs about other identities. These tests, called implicit bias or association tests, can also be mapped across the country, revealing geographical differences and a more nuanced variability.

The expression of implicit bias is a function of both the individual and certain situations that "encourage discrimination more than others, largely independently of the individual decision makers passing through those contexts" (Vuletich and Payne 2019, 859). In order to understand the basis of implicit bias, we must understand the situational context of the actions. Scholar Allan Johnson (2012) describes these as "paths of least resistance." He argues that most of the time, we follow the paths of least resistance, the patterns and processes that are already established within institutions. It makes sense; most of us do not want to make waves. He argues that to change people's behaviors, we need to alter the paths of least resistance. Rather than changing the attitudes of the majority of people within an institution, the rules of the game need to be changed. Individuals will then begin following a new playbook in order to succeed, whether at school, work, or in any organization.

White Privilege

When we study racism, we most often study the experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups. However, everyone's life is shaped by race. Privilege is the flip side of oppression—it involves the systemic favoring, valuing, validating, and inclusion of certain social identities over others. Whiteness is a privileged status. **White privilege** refers to how all Whites collectively benefit not only as individuals but as a group.

To be White is to have greater access to rewards and valued resources simply because of group membership. Because they exist in relationship to each other, oppression and privilege operate hand in hand; one cannot exist without the other. Just like oppression, privilege is based on group membership, not individual factors. We do not choose to be the recipients of oppression or privilege, and we cannot opt out of either one. A White person driving down the street cannot ask the police to pull her over because of her race. Experiences of racism can affect some people and not others independent of their desires and behaviors.

Making Whiteness visible by acknowledging privilege allows us to examine the ways in which all White people, not just those we identify as "racist," benefit from their racial categorization. Accepting the fact that we live in a society that is immersed in systems of oppression can be difficult, because it means that despite our best intentions, we all participate in perpetuating inequality. In fact, privilege is usually invisible to the people who experience it until it is pointed out. The reality is that White people do not need to think about race very often. Their **social location**—how a group or individual is represented across various social institutions that reflect privilege, status, and power—becomes both invisible and the assumed norm.

Research on White privilege has grown over the past three decades, along with the interdisciplinary subfield of **Whiteness studies**. Works by literary theorists, legal scholars, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, and sociologists alike have contributed to this burgeoning field (Brodkin 1998; Case 2013; Jacobson 1998; Haney López 2006; Moore, Penick-Parks, and Michael 2015; Morrison 1992). However, people of color have been writing about White privilege for a long time. Discussions of White privilege are found in the works of writers such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells.

Peggy McIntosh's (1988) classic article "White Privilege and Male Privilege" was one of the first attempts by a White person to document the unearned advantages that Whites experience on a daily basis. For example, White privilege means being able to assume that most of the people you or your children study with in school will be of the same race; being able to go shopping without being followed around in the store; never being called a credit to your race; and being able to find "flesh-colored" bandages to match your skin color. McIntosh also identifies a second type of privilege that gives one group power over another. This conferred dominance legitimates privileges that no one should have in a society that values social justice and equity, such as the right to "own" another human being.

Most of us are the beneficiaries of at least one form of privilege, and often many more. Recognizing this often leads people to feel guilt and shame. However, privilege is derived from group membership; it is not the result of anything we have done as individuals. We are born into these systems of privilege and oppression; we did not create them. Once we become aware of them, though, we must be accountable and work to create change. We can choose whether to acknowledge privilege as it operates in our lives, and whether to use it as a means of creating social change. As scholar Shelly Tochluk (2008, 249–50) notes, this requires that we "begin with personal investigation. If we are going to take a stand, we need to feel prepared to deal with our own sense of discomfort and potential resistance or rejection from others."

Color Blindness

Many people claim **color blindness** in regard to race and ethnicity—that is, they assert that they do not see race or ethnicity, only humans—and the idea of color blindness informs many of our most prevalent stock stories today. According to this ideology, if we were all to embrace a color-blind attitude and just stop "seeing" race, race and its issues would finally become relics of the past. This approach argues that we should treat people simply as human beings, rather than as racialized beings (Plaut 2010). In fact, White people in the United States generally believe that "we have achieved racial equality," and about half believe that African Americans are doing as well as, or even better than, Whites (Bush 2011, 4). But pretending race does not exist is not the same as creating equality.

As we have learned, a new form of racism has shifted the more overt forms of racism to the more covert forms (those racial discrimination/actions that are often hidden or subtle that serve to marginalize racialized individuals or groups). One of the leading elements of these more subtle forms of racism are associated with **microaggressions**, the verbal and nonverbal behaviors that insult persons or groups that can be both intentional and unintentional. This new racism is much less overt, avoiding the use of blatantly racist terminology. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2018) has labeled this ideology **color-blind racism**. According to Bonilla-Silva, color-blind ideology has four components:

- *Abstract liberalism*: Abstract concepts of equal opportunity, rationality, free choice, and individualism are used to argue that discrimination is no longer a problem, and any individual who works hard can succeed.

The subtle insults known as microaggressions are common in everyday interactions, like at the post office, even when things seem fine on the surface.

Credit: Education Images/UIG via Getty Images

- *Naturalization*: Ongoing inequality is reframed as the result of natural processes rather than social relations. Segregation is explained, for example, as the result of people's natural inclination to live near others of the same race.

- *Cultural racism:* It is claimed that inherent cultural differences serve to separate racialized groups.

- *Minimization of racism:* It is argued that we now have a fairly level playing field, everyone has equal opportunities to succeed, and racism is no longer a real problem.

While many embrace color blindness as nonracist, by ignoring the extent to which race still shapes people's life chances and opportunities, this view actually reinforces and reproduces the subtle and institutional racial inequality that shapes our lives. Throughout this text, we will examine the extent to which racial inequality is still pervasive, as well as many stock stories in circulation today that make it difficult for us to see this reality. We will challenge those stories by exploring concealed and resistance stories, and by considering the possibilities for constructing transformative stories.

Color-blind ideology leads to the conclusion that we've done all we can in regard to racial inequality. Many Whites invoke the election of Barack Obama to the presidency as confirmation of their assumptions of a color-blind nation (Bonilla-Silva 2018; Cunnigen and Bruce 2010). The concealed story revealed by sociology, however, is that racial inequality has been and remains entrenched in the United States.

Credit: Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

Critical Thinking

1. What are some of the ways that race operates?

2. Racism is dynamic across geographic and social places and across historical periods. Consider some recent events either in the news or at your university: How do they reflect these dynamic processes? (*Hint:* Do you believe that the same types of events would have taken place, say, 50 years ago?)

3. Consider some common stereotypes about athletes, academics, or other professionals. Can you identify any racial stereotypes about which groups might be better at certain sports, disciplines, or professions? What might account for the prevalence of these stereotypes? Do you believe that those stereotypes have changed over time, or that they differ geographically? Would they be similar to those in, say, England or Nigeria? What may account for either the similarities or the differences you observe?

4. At your institution are there any student groups that appear to have greater access to rewards and resources than other groups do? If so, what might account for their privilege?

THE SOCIAL MATRIX OF RACE

Diversity is a process, not an event, and inclusion is an action, not a slogan. Many of you have likely heard both these words—diversity and inclusion—often. Many public organizations offer multiple "diverse" and "inclusive" events. These programs, which frequently face resistance, have traditionally focused on recognizing and appreciating diversity and creating a climate where marginalized individuals feel included and welcome. Yet as hard fought as many of these programs have been, they are frequently limited. Our intention is not to blame or shame anyone.

Our goal is to do more than superficially examine diversity and inclusion. We want to give you the tools to understand why, how, and under what circumstances our diverse society has come into being. In the process, we hope to help you alter both the conversations around race and the structures that preserve the hierarchies that differentially reward and punish individuals solely due to classifications of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

We focus particularly on race and the way it shapes our identities, society, and its institutions, and prospects for change. But we also examine race within the context of gender, class, and other social identities that interact with one another and reflect the way we live as social beings.

For example, college-educated women of color between the ages of 18 and 26 are more likely to have different experiences within political, economic, educational, or sport institutions than, say, older White males with only a high school education. Therefore, within the matrix, using the lens of race, in this example we would be concerned with how the intersections of gender, class, and age impact one's ability to obtain an education, participate in political campaigns, or participate in sport.

A number of scholars have embraced the image of racial identity as a matrix (Case 2013; Collins 2000; Ferber, O'Reilly

A camera has several lenses and potentially filters. Imagine that the camera is the matrix, the framework for our realities. Depending on what lens, or identity (race, gender, etc.), we use as our vantage point, our subject will look different. Different types of filters, or intersections, highlight differences in perceptions, actions, and outcomes.

Credit: Borges Samuel/Alamy

Herrera, and Samuels 2009). Generally, a **matrix** is the surrounding environment in which something (e.g., a value, cell, or human) originates, develops, and grows. The concept of a matrix captures the basic sociological understanding that contexts—social, cultural, economic, historical, and otherwise—matter. Figure 1.3 is our visual representation of the social matrix of race, depicting the intersecting worlds of identity, social institutions, and cultural and historical contexts, connecting with one another on the micro and macro levels.

In this text we center the concepts and experiences of race within the context of our many shifting social identities and systems of inequality. As we learned earlier, our social identities are the ways in which our group memberships, in such categories as race, class, and gender, help define our sense of self. While we often assume a concrete or single group identity, the reality is that identity is seldom so simple. For example, while many of us identify as being White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, few of us are racially or ethnically homogeneous. Consequently, how we derive our racial identity is actually a result of both historical and contemporary social constructions.

The same can be said regarding our social status, class, gender, and other identities. We also recognize that these identities interact in ways that produce extremely nuanced and complex, dynamic identities. The third ring of the social matrix of race consists of the social institutions in which we live and interact. **Social institutions** are patterned, structured sets of roles and behaviors centered on the performance of important social tasks within any given society. These institutions help order and facilitate social interactions. That being so, many of our activities happen within social institutions such as marriage and family, education, sports, the military, and the economy. In Figure 1.3 we have included only the social institutions we examine in this text; this is not an exhaustive list. Finally, all of these systems are shaped by place and time.

To support an understanding of race within the context of a social matrix, in the following sections we introduce the five key insights about race that we will develop throughout this text (see Table 1.1).

Race Is Inherently Social

We have already introduced the argument that race is a social construction. As race theorists Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer (2010, 51) put it, "You do not come into this world African or European or Asian; rather, this world comes into you." If races are constructed, it makes sense then to ask: When does this happen, and why? The creation of "races" occurred at a specific point in time to advance specific relations of inequality. The classifications were invented by those they were created to serve, not by those who came to be defined as "Others" by Whites. We will examine this history in Chapter 2.

We have already demonstrated the range of ways that reveal to us the constructed nature of race. In the next chapter, we will discuss at length the idea that race and racial meanings are constructed through narrative, and the many different stories we tell about race. Here, we will discuss the other three dimensions of this Social Matrix.

FIGURE 1.3 ■ Race Intersects with Cultural and Historical Context, Social Institutions, and Other Identities
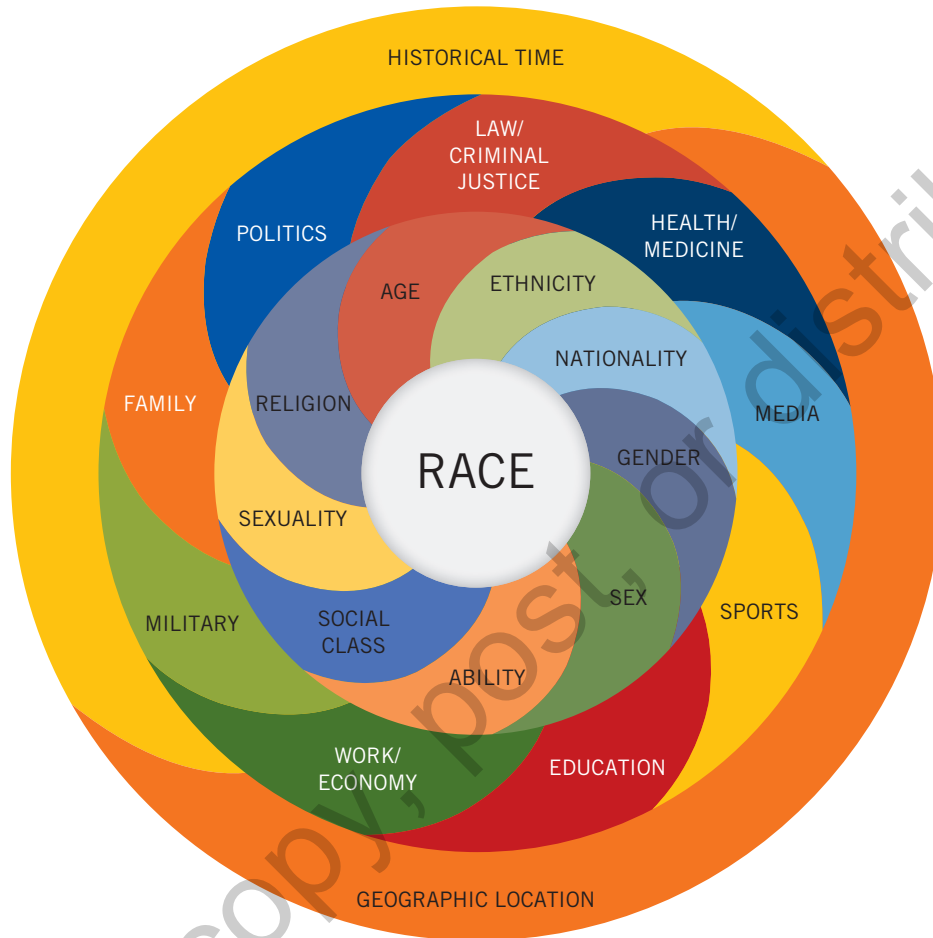
Source: Copyright Rodney D. Coates, Abby L. Ferber, and David Brunsma.

Race Is a Narrative

Too many people believe that **diversity**, the amount of social variability within a specific social context, is a binary construct. Diversity is actually a multilevel, multidimensional, multidirectional highway with many on- and off-ramps. We are not either/or; our realities are more complex than us/them. This journey starts by understanding that race, as part of our collective stories, is a kind of narrative.

As we have established, race is not real; it is a fiction with very real consequences. Because it is fictional, scholars across many disciplines have used the language of storytelling to discuss race. For example, perhaps one of the most dominant stories we hear today is that race is a taboo

TABLE 1.1 ■ Five Key Insights about Race	
Race is inherently social.	Race has no biological basis, and it varies both cross-culturally and historically.
Race is a narrative.	We learn narrative story lines that we draw on to interpret what we see and experience, and these stories become embedded in our minds as truth, closing off other ways of seeing and sense making.
Racial identity is relational and intersectional.	Our racial identity is defined in our relationships to others, based on interactions with them and our reactions to our experiences and socialization. Further, our racial identity is shaped by, and experienced in the context of, our other social identities, such as gender, class, sexuality, ability, and age.
Race is institutional and structural.	Independently and together, various institutional structures, including family, school, community, and religion, influence our actions and beliefs about race.
We are active agents in the matrix.	We move among a variety of social institutions, and as we do, we contribute to their reproduction. We make choices every day, often unconsciously, that either maintain or subvert racial power dynamics and inequality.

topic. When children ask their parents about racial differences, they are often hushed and told not to talk about such things in public. Perhaps the most significant racial narrative is the story that races exist in nature. We have just shown that this is not true. Yet until we are taught otherwise, most of us go through life assuming that biological racial differences exist. This is the power of narrative in our lives as social beings.

In her important book *Storytelling for Social Justice* (2010), educator and activist Lee Anne Bell provides a model for analyzing stories about race. She argues that there are essentially four different kinds of stories that we encounter in our lives: stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and transforming stories.

- **Stock stories**: "Stock stories are the tales told by the dominant group," but they are often embraced by those whose oppression they reinforce (Bell 2010, 23). They inform and organize the practices of social institutions and are encoded in law, public policy, public space, history, and culture. Stock stories are shaped by the White racial frame.

- **Concealed stories**: We can always find concealed stories if we look closely enough. These consist of the data and voices that stock stories ignore, and they often convey a very different understanding of identity and inequity. In the case of concealed stories, "we explore such questions as: What are the stories about race and racism that we don't hear? Why don't we hear them? How are such stories lost/left out? How do we recover these stories? What do these stories show us about racism that stock stories do not?" (24).

- **Resistance stories**: Narratives that directly challenge stock stories are resistance stories. They speak of defying domination and actively struggling for racial justice

and social change. "Guiding questions for discovering/uncovering resistance stories include: What stories exist (historical or contemporary) that serve as examples of resistance? What role does resistance play in challenging the stock stories about racism? What can we learn about antiracist action and perseverance against the odds by looking at these stories?" (25).

- **Transforming stories**: Once we examine concealed and resistance stories, we can use them to write transforming stories that guide our actions as we work toward a more just society. "Guiding questions include: What would it look like if we transformed the stock stories? What can we draw from resistance stories to create new stories about what ought to be? What kinds of stories can support our ability to speak out and act where instances of racism occur?" (26).

Racial Identity Is Relational and Intersectional

As philosopher Elizabeth Spelman (1988) points out, we often think about our various identities—race, gender, sexuality, class, ability—as though they are connected like a necklace made of pop beads. But unlike the beads of the necklace, our separate identities cannot just be popped apart. They intersect and shape each other; they are relational and intersectional (Crenshaw 1991).

The **relational aspects of race** are demonstrated by the fact that categories of race are often defined in opposition to each other (for example, to be White means one is not Black, Asian, or Native American) and according to where they fall along the continuum of hierarchy. We also construct and reconstruct racial meanings and views through our relationships with others—whether of the same race or of a different race. Our first knowledge of race usually comes from our relationships with our immediate family members. We develop a sense of our own racialized self, and many come to discover, through their relationships with others, that their ascribed racial identity is different from their self-identification. Through these interactions, people often expect multiracial people to choose one identity, or even tell them that their own self-definition is wrong. President Obama often spoke about his White mother who raised him, but that he still saw himself as Black, because he was Black to the rest of the world.

Our cross-racial interactions with each other frequently have the effect of disrupting some of our stereotypes about the other. For example, because we live such segregated lives, for many students, college is the first time they really experience diversity and spend time with people from different racial groups. Race is also relational in its intersections with other social identities, such as gender and class.

Intersectional theories argue that race, gender, and other salient social identities are intertwined and inseparable, and cannot be comprehended on their own. Sociologist Ivy Ken offers a useful metaphor. If we think about race as sugar, gender as flour, and class as baking soda, what happens when we mix them and a few other ingredients together? If we are lucky, we end up with cookies; we "produce something new—something that would not exist if that mixing had not occurred" (Ken 2008, 156). When these ingredients are combined, they are changed in the process.

David J. Connor (2006), a special education teacher in New York City, provides an example. He wondered why his classes were filled overwhelmingly with African American and Latino

males despite the fact that learning disabilities occur across class, race, and gender. Connor found that he needed an intersectional perspective to understand: "I noticed that the label [learning disabled] signified different outcomes for different people. What seemed to be a beneficial category of disability to middle-class, White students, by triggering various supports and services—served to disadvantage Black and/or Latinx urban youngsters, who were more likely to be placed in restrictive, segregated settings" (154). Here, race, class, and dis/ability intersect to produce different consequences for differently situated youth.

As this example demonstrates, sources of oppression are related, and interrelated, in varied ways. There is no single formula for understanding how they work together. We are all shaped by all of these significant constructs, whether they privilege us or contribute to our oppression; we all experience specific configurations of race, class, and gender that affect our subjectivities, opportunities, and life chances.

Although its name is new, intersectional theory has a long history. Early theorists like Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and Anna Julia Cooper struggled with the ways race divided the women's suffrage movement, and the ways gender inequity limited Black women's participation in the antislavery movement. Decades later, women of color waged battles for full inclusion within the civil rights and women's movements. African American sociologists like Belinda Robnett (1999) and Bernice McNair Barnett (1995) have examined the ways in which the foundational leadership activities of Black women in many civil rights organizations have been ignored or written out of history (becoming concealed stories). Vicki Ruiz (1999) has examined similar dynamics in her research on the work of Chicanas in the Chicano movement. We can find many resistance stories in the lives of women of color who have refused to direct their energies toward just one form of oppression, arguing that their lives are shaped by their race and their gender simultaneously.

An intersectional approach does not require that we always examine every form of inequity, and it certainly does not suggest that it is merely a result of adding categories. Instead, we need to recognize that intersectionality permeates every subject we study, and that even when we choose to focus on a single system of inequality, such as race, we must bring an intersectional lens to the work so we are inclusive of everyone in the group, people of every gender, gender identity, sexual identity, class, and more. If not, we will end up with only a limited picture of the experiences and dynamics of race.

Over the past few decades, research involving explicitly intersectional analysis has accelerated. Sociologists and others have examined the ways our various social locations intersect and interact in shaping our lives and society at every level. These represent interconnected axes of oppression and privilege that shape all of our lived experiences (Collins 2000).

Race Is Institutional and Structural

To say that race is institutional is to recognize that it operates alongside and in tandem with our dominant social institutions. For instance, education is a social institution in which there are roles (e.g., teachers and students) and expected behaviors (e.g., teaching and learning) that come together as a social structure to educate. But schools also contribute to other important social

tasks, including socialization and social control (with differential impact on students based on race and other social identities) (Spade and Ballantine 2011).

Our institutional focus reflects our view that while race is often described in its outcomes such as bigotry, prejudice, and other biased behaviors and reactions, these behaviors and reactions operate within specific social and structural settings. Institutional structures normalize racial boundaries through various laws, codes of conduct (both implicit and explicit), and other boundary maintenance mechanisms.

Boundaries

How we define the other, in relation to ourselves, is essentially a means of establishing boundaries. Us/them, family/non-family, citizen/foreigner, as well as all of our racial, ethnic, gender, class, age, and sexual categories are essentially boundaries. **Boundaries** are socially constructed and contentious social spaces which are used to identify "others." Once established, we often forget that these boundaries and the identities they define are social constructions and appear to be fixed and unmoving. The reality is that identities are constantly in flux, hence the constant conflict associated with maintaining their boundedness. Racial classifications are types of boundaries.

Racial Classifications

Anthropologist Audrey Smedley (2007) has identified some of the key features of our dominant racial narrative. From this worldview, racial classifications are constructed as follows:

1. They are exclusive, discrete classifications.

2. They involve visible physical differences that reflect inherent internal ones (such as intelligence, disposition, morals).

3. They are inherited.

4. They are unchanging, determined by nature and/or God.

5. They are valued differently and ranked hierarchically (in terms of superiority, beauty, degree of civilization, capacity for moral reasoning, and more).

This narrative makes clear that the ideology of race privileges some groups by dividing people into artificial, hierarchical categories to justify inequitable access to resources.

Racial Framing

The ideology of race is part of what Joe Feagin (2010) identifies as the "White racial frame." In societies characterized by racial hierarchies, **racial frames** are constructed from the ideological justifications, processes, procedures, and institutions that define and structure society. According to Feagin (2010, 10–11), a racial frame consists of the following:

1. racial stereotypes (a beliefs aspect)

2. racial narratives and interpretations (integrating cognitive aspects)

3. racial images (a visual aspect) and language accents (an auditory aspect)

4. racialized emotions (a "feelings" aspect)

5. inclinations to discriminatory action

The repetition of the White racial frame over generations, in fact, since the founding of the United States, is the key to its power. When the same messages are repeated over and over, they appear to be part of our social being; they become "natural" to us.

This means that efforts to eliminate racial structures must do more than attack the racial attitudes and behaviors associated with bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination. While such work is admirable, the racialized structural components of institutions require structural transformations to effectively reduce or eliminate racial outcomes. These structural transformations, often fueled by both individual efforts but also social movements, will also be evidenced throughout this course.

We Are Active Agents in the Matrix

While constructs of race and ethnicity shape us, we also shape them. Once we realize that race is socially constructed, it follows that we recognize our role as active agents in reconstructing it— through our actions and through the stories we construct that inform our actions (Markus and Moya 2010, 4). Emphasizing the concept of agency is also essential to creating social change. If race is something we *do,* then we can begin to do it differently.

Agency

Agency is the ability of an individual to effect change, to make choices, to act independently. Some individuals, because of their social, economic, or political status, might have more formal agency than others. Such formal agency, deriving from their position, allows them access to greater resources and a greater range of choices. The principal purposes and outcomes of discrimination, prejudice, and exploitation are to reduce the choices available to some individuals and groups based on arbitrary, socially defined characteristics such as race, gender, or sexuality. Consequently, such individuals and groups become creative in the use of informal agency. Rule norm breaking, failure to comply, sabotage, and more characterize **informal agency**. Many examples of informal agency have occurred throughout our history.

- During slavery there were frequent reports of slaves breaking tools and sabotage, as well as enslaved people running away and engaging in openly hostile actions.

- Throughout history, many immigrants have disregarded national borders.

- LGBTQ individuals have used "outing" as a means of highlighting the discrimination and problems faced by their members.

- Activists, even those locked up in prisons, have individually utilized hunger strikes as a means of effectively getting the attention of wider audiences.

Individual agency demonstrates that regardless of levels of isolation, resources, and status, individuals can and do effect change both within their individual circumstances and within the wider society for themselves and others. It is because we, too, embrace the concept of agency that we have written this text. We hope to make visible the stock stories that perpetuate racial inequality, and to examine the ways in which those narratives govern the operations of organizations and institutions. All of us, as individuals, play a role in reproducing or subverting the dominant narratives, whether we choose to or not. While we inherit stories about race that help us to explain the world around us, we can also seek out alternative stories. All of us, as individuals, play a role in the reproduction of institutional structures, from our workplaces to our places of worship to our schools and our homes.

Social Movements

Social movements are forms of collective actions, either informal or within formal organizations, which aim to alter our specific structures, institutions, practices, or behaviors, or our society as a whole. Social movements may use a variety of tactics or strategies to accomplish these goals. These tactics can range from things as simple as holding a candlelight vigil to more coordinated activities that make specific demands and force specific responses from authorities.

Contemporary social movements (including #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #TimesUp, #DACA, #MuslimBan) have become increasingly popular with the advent of social media and the internet. They have fostered activism associated with labor, civil rights (for example, among

Social movements define our realities and redefine our identities.

Credit: Samuel Corum/Getty Images

Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ people), peace, counterculture, and White supremacy.

We shall see throughout this book that both agency and social movements have been vital as transformative processes throughout our history. In fact, agency and social movements provide us hope for the future, and are central to understanding and embracing our collective and individual stories.

Writing Our Own Stories: Asking the Hard Questions

Each of the key insights that inform our framework is essential. Racial attitudes and racialized social structures need to be examined in relationship to one another. For example, many scholars have argued that economic insecurity and resource scarcity often fan the flames of race prejudice. Critical knowledge is gained when we understand how dominant discourses and ideology preserve and perpetuate the status quo. Understanding how these dominant discourses are framed and how they are buttressed by our institutional practices, policies, and mechanisms allows us to see not only how these patterns are replicated and reproduced but also how they can be replaced (Bush 2011, 37).

This knowledge also helps us understand our own place in the matrix. The enduring stock story of the United States as a meritocracy makes it difficult for us to see inequality as institutionalized (McNamee and Miller 2014). The news and entertainment media bombard us with color-blind "depictions of race relations that suggest that discriminatory racial barriers have been dismantled" (Gallagher 2009, 548). It's no wonder that individuals often experience some cognitive dissonance when confronted with the concept of privilege. We often turn to our familiar stock stories to explain how we feel, countering with responses like "The United States is a meritocracy!" or "Racism is a thing of the past!" Table 1.2 lists some common responses, informed by our stock stories, to learning about privilege (Ferber and Samuels 2010). Do you share any of these feelings?

While our stock stories serve the interests of the dominant group, they are perceived as natural, normal, and the way of the world. It is easy to forget that these stories were created at specific moments to justify specific sets of interactions. Race, as part of our structured social system, has become realized as residential segregation, differential educational outcomes, income gaps, racially stratified training and occupational outcomes, social stigmas, and restrictions on social relationships (Smedley 2007, 21–22).

It is only through a deliberate process of critical inquiry that we can deconstruct these seemingly normal relationships to reveal the intentional and unintentional processes of construction and their underlying context. Critical sociological inquiry into the creation and maintenance of difference helps make the familiar strange, the natural unnatural, and the obvious not so obvious, and, in a world where things are often not what they seem, it allows us to see more clearly and deeply.
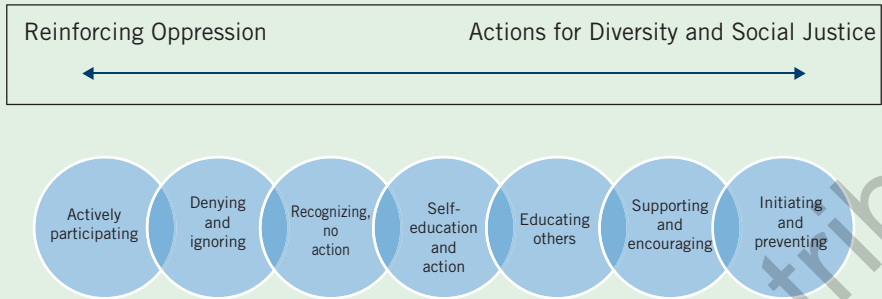
As we learn to understand ourselves and others, we can break down the divisions between us and build a foundation for transformative stories and new relationships. Our goal is not only to share information and knowledge about the dynamics of race and racism but also to connect this knowledge with our individual lives.

TABLE 1.2 ■ Feeling Race: Understanding Privilege	
"I don't feel privileged, my life is hard too!"	This is an example of minimizing or denying privilege (Johnson 2006). We often focus on our oppressed identities as a means of ignoring our privilege.
"My family didn't own slaves!"	As historians have documented, "Into the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Whites—in the elites and among ordinary folk—either participated directly in slavery or in the trade around slavery, or did not object to those who did so" (Feagin 2001, 15). The economies of many northern cities were based almost entirely on the slave trade, and generations of Whites have reaped "undeserved enrichment" from the forced labor of slaves, the cheap labor of other minority group members, and the land and resources taken, often violently, from Native Americans and Mexicans. These practices contribute directly to today's tremendous racial wealth gap.
"I treat everyone the same!"	This type of response shifts the focus to prejudiced and bigoted individuals and allows us to ignore systemic oppression and privilege, and our own role in their reproduction.
"Anyone could succeed if they would just try harder!"	This adherence to the myth of meritocracy attributes the failures of an individual solely to that individual, without considering systemic inequalities that create an unfair system. It is a form of blaming the victim (Johnson 2006).
"We need to move on! If we would just stop talking about it, it wouldn't be such a big problem!"	Systemic inequalities exist and ignoring them will not make them go away. As Justice Harry Blackmun stated in his opinion in the U.S. Supreme Court case of *University of California v. Bakke* (1978), "In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way" (para. 14).
"Stop being so sensitive! I didn't mean it."	Speaking in a derogatory manner about a person or group of people based on social group memberships can have a devastating impact (Sue 2010). Disconnecting our own language or actions minimizes the indiscretion and sends the message that anyone who challenges the language or behavior is simply being overly sensitive.
"I am just one person; I can't change anything!"	Seeing ourselves as incapable of creating change is a means of excusing ourselves from accepting any responsibility and denies agency.

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Before we begin our learning journey, let's start by examining ourselves. The action continuum shown in Figure 1.4 encourages us to consider our current beliefs and actions around oppression and privilege. Our focus here is on race and racism. This is a personal exercise; be honest. Do not feel ashamed or proud of where you place yourself. Simply acknowledge where you feel you fit. Keep in mind that this is not a straight line moving directly from one

FIGURE 1.4 ■ Action Continuum

Reinforcing Oppression   Actions for Diversity and Social Justice

Actively participating | Denying and ignoring | Recognizing, no action | Self-education and action | Educating others | Supporting and encouraging | Initiating and preventing

end to the other. We all move back and forth, and may jump from one stage to another, over the course of our lives, and in our daily experiences. Save your response so you can reflect back on your position throughout the course.

- **Actively participating:** Telling derogatory jokes, putting down people from targeted groups, intentionally avoiding targeted group members, discriminating against targeted group members, verbally or physically harassing targeted group members.

- **Denying:** Enabling discrimination and injustice by denying that targeted group members are oppressed; not actively discriminating or oppressing, but by denying that oppression exists, contributing to its reproduction.

- **Recognizing, no action:** Aware of oppressive actions by self or others and their harmful effects but taking no action to stop this behavior. This inaction is the result of fear, lack of information, and confusion about what to do. Experiences discomfort at the contradiction between awareness and action.

- **Educating self and taking action:** Aware of oppression and injustice, recognizes oppressive actions of self and others and takes action to stop them. Taking actions to learn more about oppression and privilege, and the life experiences affected by unjust social relations by reading, attending workshops, seminars, cultural events, participating in discussions, joining organizations or groups that oppose injustice, attending social actions and change events.

- **Educating others:** Moving beyond only educating self to questions and dialogue with others. Rather than only intervening against prejudice and discrimination, also engaging people in discussion to educate.

- **Supporting, encouraging:** Supporting others who speak out against injustice or who are working to be more inclusive of targeted group members by backing up others who speak out, forming an allies' group, joining a coalition group, and so on.

- **Initiating, preventing:** Working to change individual and institutional actions and policies that discriminate against targeted group members, planning educational programs or other events, working for passage of legislation that protects excluded groups from discrimination, being explicit about making sure members of historically marginalized groups are full participants in organization or group. Working to create change in organizations and other spheres of influence. (Adapted from Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007)

Critical Thinking

1. Examine your identity using the matrix. How might it vary based on time and place (the outer ring)?

2. What accounts for racial categorizations? What are the basic components of this characterization?

3. Explain the different types of stories and their relevance to the matrix.

4. Describe the types of actions you can take to foster change.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1.1 Explain how the concept of race is socially constructed.

History, the reality of our shared past, reflects a series of choices. These choices, once made, often take on a life of their own, but we should always remember that they were and continue to be choices. There is more biological variation within our so-called racial groups than there is between them. Race must derive from human interventions. These interventions reflect the social construction of race. Our approach to all of these identities, while recognizing the multiple ways in which our various identities intersect, focuses on race. This primacy is more to facilitate our discussions, rather than an indication of the importance of race over any of the other categories. That being said, we recognize that if we were to use a different identity, our analysis would be different.

1.2 Summarize the operation of racism.

Racism is a system of oppression by which those groups with relatively more social power subordinate members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power. This subordination is supported by individual actions, cultural values, and norms embedded in stock stories, as well as in the institutional structures and practices of society. Racism in the United States is directed primarily against Blacks, Asian Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans. Some argue that the hatred and discrimination faced by Muslims should also be classified as racism, and that they are becoming a racialized group. Bias, prejudice, and discrimination are learned as part of the social environment that we live in. Therefore, despite the laws, expressed attitudes, and programs aimed at change, we continually discover the problem shaping our everyday lives

1.3 Analyze the relationship between social contexts and race.

We focus particularly on race and the way it shapes our identities, society and its institutions, and prospects for change. But we also examine race within the context of gender, class, and other social identities that interact with one another and reflect the way we live as social beings. Our institutional focus reflects our view that while race is often described in its outcomes such as bigotry, prejudice, and other biased behaviors and reactions, these behaviors and reactions operate within specific social and structural

settings. Institutional structures serve to normalize racial boundaries through various laws, codes of conduct (both implicit and explicit), and other boundary maintenance mechanisms. There are essentially four different kinds of stories that we encounter in our lives: stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and transforming stories.

KEY TERMS

Agency	Implicit bias	Racism
Boundaries	Informal agency	Relational aspects of race
Class	Informal racism	Sexuality
Color blind racism	Intersectional theories	Social institutions
Color blindness	Matrix	Social location
Discrimination	Microaggressions	Stereotypes
Diversity	Norms	Systemic racism
Ethnicity	Oppression	White privilege
Formal racism	Prejudice	Whiteness studies
Gender	Race	
Identity	Racial frames	

REFERENCES

Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, eds. 2007. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook.* New York: Routledge.

Balibar, Etienne and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identities.* London: Verso.

Barnett, Bernice McNair. 1995. "Black Women's Collectivist Movement Organizations: Their Struggles during the 'Doldrums.'" In *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement,* edited by Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bell, Lee Anne. 2010. *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching.* New York: Routledge.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2018. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States.* 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brodkin, Karen. 1998. *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Bush, Melanie E. L. 2011. *Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race in a "Post-racial" World.* 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Case, Kim. 2013. *Deconstructing Privilege: Teaching and Learning as Allies in the Classroom.* New York: Routledge.

Coates, Rodney D. 2011. "Covert Racism: An Introduction." In *Covert Racism: Theories, Institutions, and Experiences,* edited by Rodney D. Coates. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Connor, David J. 2006. "Michael's Story: 'I Get into Such Trouble Just by Walking': Narrative Knowing and Life at the Intersections of Learning Disability, Race, and Class." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39, no. 2: 154–65.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6: 1241–99.

Desmond, Matthew, and Mustafa Emirbayer. 2010. *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Feagin, J. R. 2001. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge.

Feagin,J. 2010. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-framing*. New York: Routledge.

Ferber, Abby L., Christina M. Jiménez, Andrea O'Reilly Herrera, and Dena R. Samuels. 2009. *The Matrix Reader: Examining the Dynamics of Oppression and Privilege.* Boston: McGraw Hill.

Ferber, Abby L., and Dena R. Samuels. 2010. "Oppression without Bigots." SWS Factsheet, Sociologists for Women in Society. Accessed April 4, 2017. https://www.socwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/fact_3-2010-oppression.pdf.

Ferrante, Joan, and Prince Brown Jr. 2001. *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States.* 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., Diem, S. 2017. "Segregation by District Boundary Line: The Fragmentation of Memphis-Area Schools." *Educational Researcher,* 46(8), 449–463.

Frye, Marilyn. 2007. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory.* Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.

Gallagher, Charles. 2009. "Color-Blinded America or How the Media and Politics Have Made Racism and Racial Inequality Yesterday's Social Problem." In *The Matrix Reader: Examining the Dynamics of Oppression and Privilege,* edited by Abby L. Ferber, Christina M. Jiménez, Andrea O'Reilly Herrera, and Dena R. Samuels, 548–51. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Haney López, Ian. 2006. *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race.* Rev. ed. New York: New York University Press.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. 1998. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Johnson, Allan G. 2006. *Privilege, Power, and Difference.* 2nd ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Ken, Ivy. 2008. "Beyond the Intersection: A New Culinary Metaphor for Race-Class-Gender Studies." *Sociological Theory* 26, 152–72.

Landrieu, Mitch. 2020."The Price We Have Paid for Not Confronting Racism." *The New York Times*. Accessed online at https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/opinion/george-floyd-protest-racism.html)

Linshi, Jack. 2014. "10 Million Americans Switched Their Race or Ethnicity for the Census." *Time,* August 7. Accessed April 7, 2017. http://time.com/3087649/census-race-ethnicity-report.

Marable, Manning. 2016. *Beyond Black and White: From Civil Rights to Barack Obama.* London: Verso.

Markus, Hazel Rose, and Paula M. L. Moya. 2010. *Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21st Century.* New York: W. W. Norton.

McIntosh, Peggy. 1988. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies." Working Paper 189, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.

McNamee, Stephen, and Robert K. Miller Jr. 2014. *The Meritocracy Myth.* 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Moore, Eddie, Jr., Marguerite W. Penick-Parks, and Ali Michael, eds., 2015. *Everyday White People Confront Racial and Social Injustice: 15 Stories.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Morrison, Toni. 1992. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* New York: Vintage Books.

National Education Association. 2015. "Ensuring Safe Schools for All Students." Accessed August 3, 2015. http://www.nea.org/tools/30437.htm.

Perry, Samuel L., and Andrew L. Whitehead. 2015. "Christian nationalism and white racial boundaries: examining whites' opposition to interracial marriage." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(10): 1671–1689. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2015.1015584

Plaut, Victoria C. 2010. "Diversity Science: Why and How Difference Makes a Difference." *Psychological Inquiry* 21, no. 2: 77–99. doi:10.1080/10478401003676501.

Robnett, Belinda. 1999. *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ruiz, Vicki L. 1999. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smedley, Audrey. 2007. *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview.* 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Spade, Joan Z., and Jeanne H. Ballantine. 2011. *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Spelman, Elizabeth V. 1988. *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Steinmetz, K. F., Schaefer, B. P., and Henderson, H. 2017. "Wicked overseers: American policing and colonialism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(1): 68–81. DOI: 10.1177/2332649216665639

Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Takei, Isao, and Arthur Sakamoto. 2011. "Poverty among Asian Americans in the 21st Century." *Sociological Perspectives* 54, no. 2: 251–76.

Tochluk, Shelly. 2008. *Witnessing Whiteness: First Steps toward an Antiracist Practice and Culture.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

U.S. Census. 2020. "Questions asked on the form." Accessed online at URL: https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html?cid=23759:   2020%20census%20questions:sem.ga:p:dm:en:&utm_source=sem.ga&utm_medium=p&utm_campaign=dm:en&utm_content=23759&utm_term=2020%20census%20questions questions:sem.ga questions:sem.ga

Vuletich, H. A., Payne, B. K. 2019.Stability and Change in Implicit Bias. *Psychological Science* 30(6): 854–862. doi:10.1177/0956797619844270