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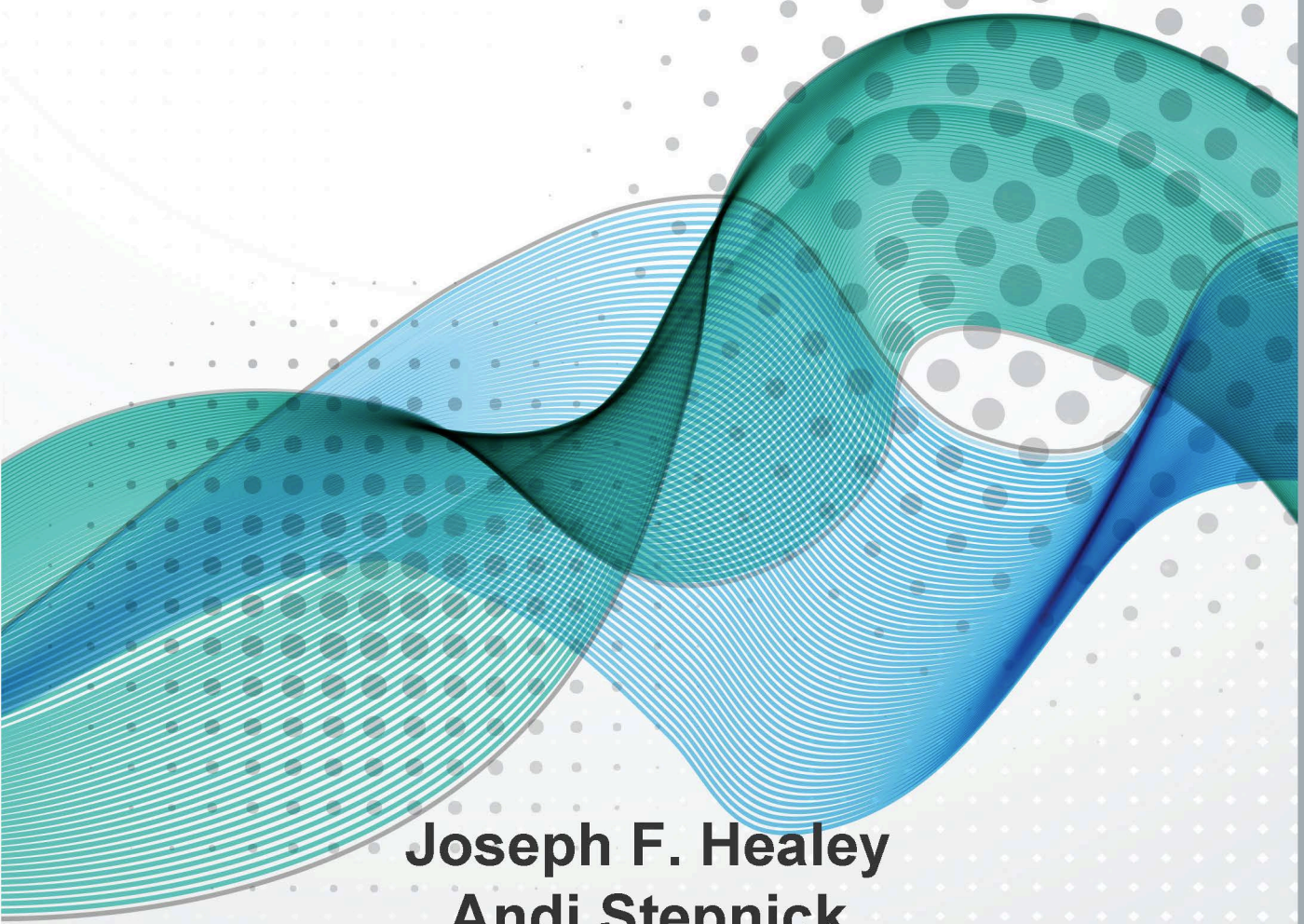
Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class

The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change

Eighth Edition



Joseph F. Healey
Andi Stepnick
Eileen O'Brien

NOT FOR RESALE

EIGHTH EDITION

RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, & CLASS

To Pat: "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be . . ."

—Joe

To D: For your unwavering love and companionship.
To the undergraduates reading this book: Be open and curious, be critically skeptical, work hard, and have faith. You are our hope for the future.

—Andi

To Kaya Faith and Kaden Robert, my amazing, beautiful children: You remind me every day what is important and give me hope for the future of this fragile world.

—Eileen

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EIGHTH EDITION

RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, & CLASS

The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change

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Only when lions have historians will hunters cease to be heroes.

—African Proverb

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

—James Baldwin

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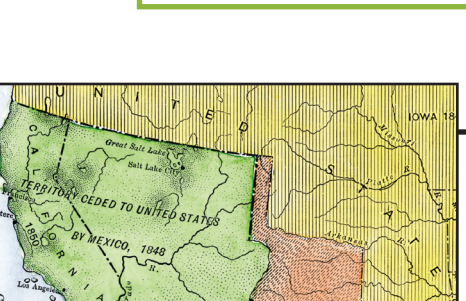

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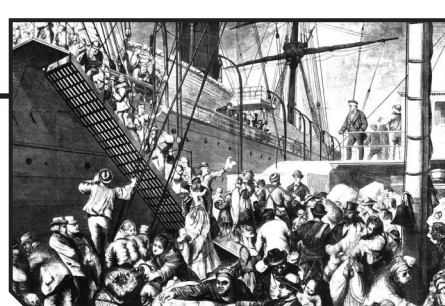

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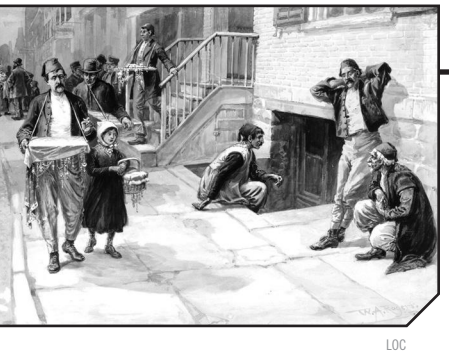

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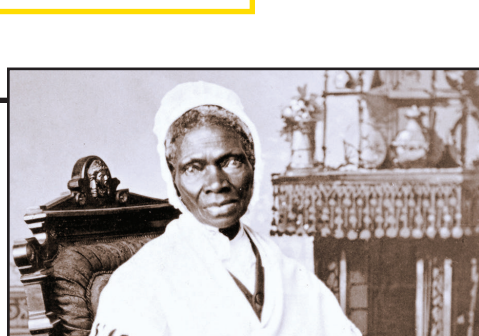

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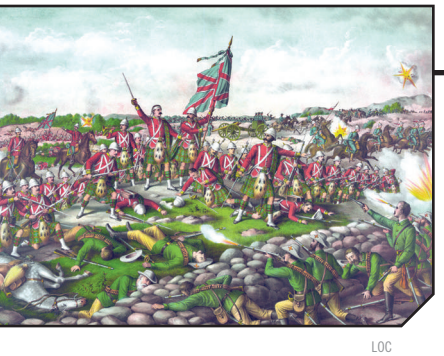

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PREFACE

Of the challenges confronting the United States today, those relating to dominant–minority group relations continue to be among the most urgent and the most daunting. The history of our country is, in part, a story of discrimination and the rejection of "others." Along with equality, freedom, and justice, prejudice, racism, and sexism seem to be some of our oldest values. Every part of our society, and virtually every item on the national agenda—"welfare" and health care reform, policing, crime and punishment, family, education, defense, foreign policy, and terrorism—have some connection with dominant–minority relations.

This textbook contributes to our ongoing national discussion by presenting information, raising questions, and deeply examining relevant issues. Our intent is to help you increase your knowledge, improve your understanding of the issues, and clarify your thinking about social inequalities related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation. We have written for undergraduate students—sociology majors and nonmajors alike. We assume little about your knowledge of history or sociological concepts, and we present the material in an accessible way. For example, we use a unified set of themes and concepts throughout the text, even as we examine multiple sociological perspectives and different points of view. We introduce most of the conceptual framework in the first four chapters. Then, in Chapters 5 through 13, we apply these concepts and analytical themes to a series of minority groups that we refer to as case studies. In the last chapter, we review our main points, consider present challenges, and speculate about the future.

Our analysis is, generally, macro and comparative. That is, we focus on large groups and social structures—such as social institutions and stratification system. We systematically compare and contrast the experiences of America's many minority groups over time. The book follows in the tradition of conflict theory, but it is not a comprehensive statement of that tradition. We introduce and apply other perspectives, but we do not attempt to explain everything, give equal attention to all current sociological paradigms, or include all possible viewpoints. Rather, our goals are (1) to present the sociology of minority-group relations in a way that you will find intellectually challenging but also understandable and (2) to address the issues (and tell the stories behind the issues) in a way that demonstrates the power and importance of sociological thinking.

To help tell these stories, Narrative Portraits in Chapters 1 through 12 explore the thoughts and experiences of a wide variety of people: minority group members including immigrants, journalists, sociologists, racists, and slaves, among others. These excerpts reinforce our sociological analysis personally, dramatically, and memorably. Comparative Focus features will help you think about these issues in relation to other societies. Additionally, photos throughout the text help document the experiences of minority groups and the realities of prejudice, racism, sexism, and discrimination. Timelines at the start of each chapter provide a brief overview of key events related to the chapter topic.

In addition to examining diversity across minority groups (e.g., Native Americans and Hispanic Americans), we stress the diversity of experiences *within* each minority group (e.g., Puerto Ricans and Cubans). Additionally, we use an intersectional perspective to explore the ways race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and sexual orientation influence one another, creating ever-shifting constellations of dominance and subordination. We give unique attention to gender as it relates to social beliefs, values, norms, and social structures. For example, we pay attention to how enslaved women in the antebellum South were oppressed in unique ways as a result of their gender and race.

Finally, we stress the ways American minority groups are inseparable from the American experience—from the early days of colonial settlements to the present day. The relative success of our society is due to the contributions of minority groups as well as those of the dominant group. The nature of the minority-group experience has changed as U.S. society has changed. To understand America's minority groups is to understand some elemental truths about America. To raise the issues of difference and diversity is to ask what it means, and what it has meant, to be an American.

The issues we face will not disappear; nor will they be resolved easily or quickly. People's feelings about these issues can be intense, and controversy, indifference, and bitterness can overshadow objective analysis and calm reason. We have little hope of resolving our nation's dilemmas until we address them openly and honestly. This book explores topics that involve conflict between groups. That history is tinged with pain. We discuss topics that can be challenging to learn. And, at times, we quote directly from sources that use language that may be offensive or painful to hear. We have included it because we cannot seek to understand (or change) things we do not face.

CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

This edition of *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class* retains and updates popular features from our earlier editions, including the following:

- *Opening Vignettes* foreshadow the chapter content and stimulate student interest.
- *Learning Objectives* focus student attention on what they will know and be able to do after learning the chapter material.
- *Questions for Reflection* guide an analysis of the material.
- *Questions to Consider* help apply chapter concepts to each Narrative Portrait and Comparative Focus feature.
- *Applying Concepts* activities use key ideas in easy, creative ways.
- *Chapter Summaries* help students identify major points.
- *Key Terms* are defined and offset within the text for ease of reference.

In addition, the authors have thoroughly revised the text to make it fresher, more relevant, and more accessible to undergraduates. This edition incorporates the latest and best research and more than 100 new and updated tables, maps, and figures and more than 90 new photos that clearly illustrate sociological concepts. In addition to new content on gender and sexual orientation, the authors emphasize an intersectional approach to provide a more complex understanding of social inequalities related to race, ethnicity, gender, and class. To broaden students' awareness of dominant–minority group relations in the United States and around the world, each chapter incorporates relevant current events and offers examples of social change.

A sample of new or expanded topics in this edition are:

- Racial discrimination in the criminal justice system (e.g., policing and violence)
- Social policy changes including the proposed border wall, DACA/DREAMers, and the proposed ban on transpersons in the U.S. military
- The rise of the "alt-right" and trends in hate crimes, including those against Muslim, immigrant, and LGBT+ Americans
- Activism including Black Lives Matter, bended-knee protest at NFL and other sporting events, the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protest, and hashtag activism (e.g., #metoo/sexual assault)
- Women's participation in social movement activism (e.g., Delores Huerta, Rosa Parks)
- The social construction of race over time and place (e.g., U.S. Brazil, Puerto Rico, Australia, South Africa)

CHANGES IN CONTINUING FEATURES

Internet Activities (by Andi Stepnick) and Public Sociology Assignments (by Linda Waldron). Many sociologists have called for a more "public sociology," a sociology that is engaged in the community, the society, and the world. Although not all sociologists would endorse a call for activism and involvement, the study of American race relations will, for many people, stimulate an impulse to address social problems directly and personally. To facilitate that involvement, we have developed a number of projects for students that will lead them into their communities and the larger society and provide them with opportunities to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

The projects are presented at our website (edge.sagpub.com/healey8e), and each assignment is keyed to a specific chapter.

These assignments should be regarded as outlines and suggestions, and participants will likely have to improvise and respond to unanticipated challenges as they arise. Nonetheless, these assignments will allow students to bridge the (sometimes large) gap between the classroom and the community and to develop and practice their own public sociology. Each assignment could be the basis for a semester-long project for individual or teams of students.

OTHER CHANGES

- Research findings and data have been updated. This edition relies on the latest information from the U.S. Census Bureau, among other sources.
- There is an increased intersectional emphasis, particularly in Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12. For example, Chapter 4 addresses the experiences of enslaved women that result from interlocking systems of racial and gender oppression. The Chapter 8 Narrative Focus features gay Latino men.
- There is an increased emphasis on immigration, particularly in Chapter 1 and Chapters 8 through 10.
- Several new Narrative Portraits have been added to Chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 to make this feature more current. Others have been updated.
- The Comparative Focus and Applying Concepts features have been updated.
- The Internet Research Projects have been updated in Chapters 2, 4, and 6 through 10.
- More than 40 new Internet activities encourage students to apply chapter concepts to the "real

world" by exploring oral history archives, viewing online art exhibits, applying concepts to YouTube videos, TED Talks, and more.

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- **Public Sociology Assignments** encourage students to go beyond the classroom and engage with people, organizations, and resources in their local communities to learn more about minority groups and issues.
- **Internet Research Projects** refer students to selected public websites, or direct them on guided Internet research, in order to gather data and apply concepts from the chapter.
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—Joseph F. Healey

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—Andi Stepnick

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— Eileen O'Brien

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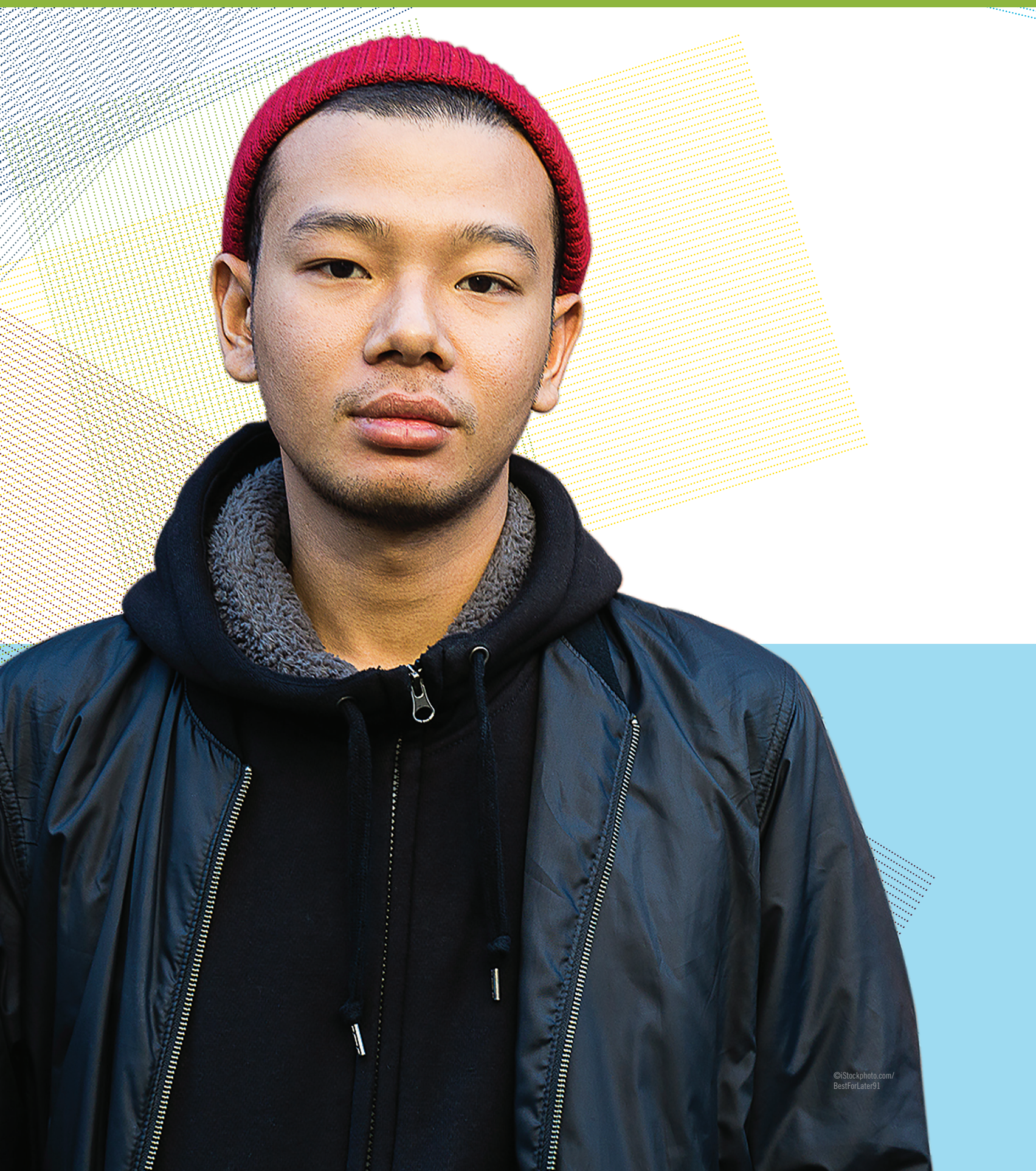

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PART i

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MINORITY GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Chapter 1 Diversity in the United States: Questions and Concepts

Chapter 2 Assimilation and Pluralism: From Immigrants to White Ethnics

Chapter 3 Prejudice and Discrimination

The United States is a nation of groups as well as individuals. These groups vary in many ways, including their size, wealth, education, race, culture, religion, and language. Some groups have been part of U.S. society since colonial days while others have formed fairly recently.

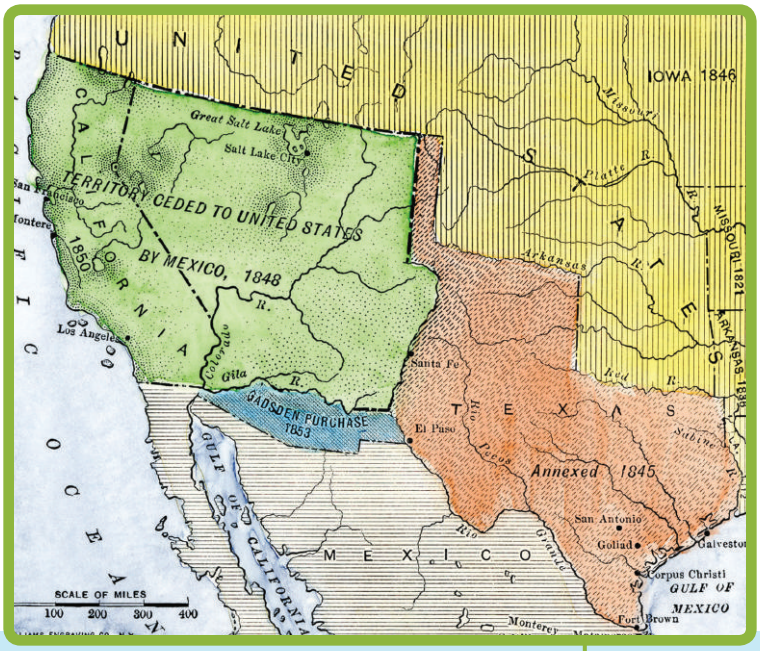
Questions of unity and diversity are among the most pressing issues facing the United States. How should groups relate to one another? Should we preserve the many cultural heritages and languages that currently exist and embrace our diversity? Should we encourage everyone to adopt Anglo-American culture and strive to become more similar? Who should be considered American?

We begin to address these issues in Chapters 1 and 2. Our goal throughout the text is to help you develop a broader, more informed understanding of the past and present forces that have created and sustained the groups that make up U.S. society.

Chapter 3 addresses prejudice and discrimination—feelings, attitudes, and actions that help maintain and reinforce the dividing lines that separate us into groups. How and why do these negative feelings, attitudes, and actions develop? How are prejudice and discrimination related to inequality and competition between groups? How can we reduce or eliminate them?

1 DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Questions and Concepts



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LOC

timeline

1790
The first naturalization law passes, restricting immigration to "free white persons" and excluding American Indians, indentured servants, slaves, free blacks, and Asians.

1798
Alien and Sedition Acts allow for the deportation of "dangerous aliens."

1819
First federal immigration legislation requires reporting of all entries.

1830
Indian Removal Act leads to the deportation of 100,000 Native Americans to west of the Mississippi.

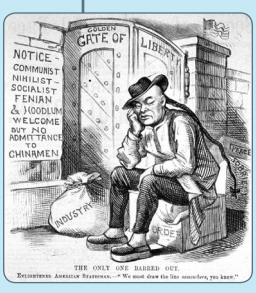
1848
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo expands the U.S. borders to the Pacific. Mexican residents are given the option of declaring U.S. or Mexican citizenship.

1868
Fourteenth Amendment grants citizenship to African Americans born in the U.S.

1882
Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits entry of Chinese immigrants for 10 years.

1924
Johnson-Reed Act creates annual immigration quotas to limit the numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia.

1790 1820 1835 1865 1880 1925



LOC

Who am I? . . . Where do I fit into American society? . . . For most of my 47 years, I have struggled to find answers to these questions. I am an American of multiracial descent and culture [Native American, African American, Italian American, and Puerto Rican]. In this aspect, I am not very different from many Americans [but] I have always felt an urge to feel and live the intermingling of blood that runs through my veins. American society has a way of forcing multiracial and biracial people to choose one race over the other. I personally feel this pressure every time I have to complete an application form with instructions to check just one box for race category.

—Butch, a 47-year-old man[1]

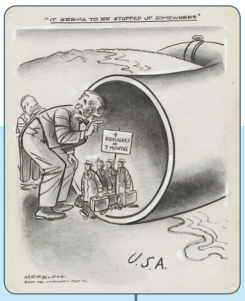
Actually, I don't feel comfortable being around Asians except for my family . . . I couldn't relate to . . . other Asians [because] they grew up in [wealthier neighborhoods]. I couldn't relate

[1] Schwartzbaum, Sara E., and Anita J. Thomas. 2008. *Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling: A Life Story Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, p. 92.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- **1.1** Explain the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the United States.
- **1.2** Understand the concept of a minority group.
- **1.3** Explain the sociological perspectives that will guide this text, especially as they relate to the relationships between inequality and minority-group status.
- **1.4** Explain how race and gender contribute to minority-group status.
- **1.5** Comprehend four of the key concepts in dominant–minority relations: prejudice, discrimination, ideological racism, and institutional discrimination.
- **1.6** Apply a global perspective to the relationship between globalization and immigration to the United States.



LOC

1952
The Immigration and Nationality Act establishes limited quotas for Asian countries and other areas from which immigrants had been excluded.

1986
The Immigration Reform and Control Act provides a method for undocumented aliens to legalize their status.

2002
Terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, led to the Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act. In addition to adding Border Patrol agents, schools must report foreign students.

2012
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protects people who entered the U.S. as undocumented minors for deportation.

1940 1955 1985 2000 2010 2015 2020

1942
The Bracero Program begins, allowing Mexican citizens to work temporarily in the United States as a source of low-cost labor. The program ends in 1964.

Public domain/ N/A

1990
Immigration Act of 1990 increases the diversity of the immigrant flow by admitting immigrants from underrepresented countries.

1996
Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act creates more stringent immigration laws pertaining to admission and deportation.

2008
Barack Obama is the first African American to be elected president.

Wikimedia

2016
Donald Trump is elected president after campaigning to "Build a Wall" on the U.S-Mexico border and crack down on immigration.

Wikimedia

to the whole "I live in a mansion" [attitude]. This summer, I worked in a media company and it was kind of hard to relate to them [other Asians] because we all grew up in a different place . . . the look I would get when I say "Yeah, I'm from [a less affluent neighborhood"] they're like, "Oh, Oh" like, "That's unfortunate for your parents, I'm sorry they didn't make it."

—Rebecca, a 19-year-old
Macanese-Chinese-Portuguese woman[2]

Yeah, my people came from all over—Italy, Ireland, Poland, and others too. I don't really know when they got here or why they came and, really, it doesn't matter much to me. I mean, I'm just an American . . . I'm from everywhere . . . I'm from here!

—Jennifer, a 25-year-old
white American woman[3]

What do the people in the chapter opening have in common? How do they differ? They think about their place in U.S. society in very different ways. All are connected to a multitude of groups and traditions but not all find this fact interesting or important. One feels alienated from the more affluent members of her group, one seeks to embrace his multiple memberships, and one dismisses the issue of ancestry as irrelevant and is comfortable being "just an American."

Today, the United States is becoming more diverse in culture, race, religion, language, and other ways. The number of Americans who can connect themselves to diverse cultural traditions is increasing, as is the number of Americans of mixed race. Where will this lead us? Will increasing diversity lead to greater tolerance and respect for one another? Can we overcome the legacies of racism and inequality that stretch back to colonial days? Will we fragment along these lines of difference and dissolve into warring ethnic enclaves (the fate of more than one modern, apparently unified nation)?

This text raises a multitude of questions about the past, present, and future of group relationships in U.S. society. What historical, social, political, and economic forces shaped those relationships in the past? How do racial and ethnic groups relate to each other today? What kind of society are we becoming because of immigration? What kind of society can we become? What is an American? •

The United States is a nation of immigrants and groups. Today, about 13% of the U.S. population was born in some other nation. Some states (e.g., California) are more than 25% foreign-born, and some cities (e.g., New York) are more than 35% foreign-born. Since the infancy of our society Americans have been arguing, often passionately, about inclusion and exclusion and about unity and diversity. Every member of our society is, in some sense, an immigrant or the descendant of immigrants. Even American Indians migrated to this continent, albeit thousands of years ago. We are all from somewhere else, with roots in other parts of the world. Some Americans came here in chains; others came on ocean liners, on planes, busses, and even on foot. Some arrived last week, while others have had family here for centuries. Each wave of newcomers has altered the social landscape of the United States. As many have observed, our society is continually being created.

Today, the United States is remaking itself yet again. Large numbers of immigrants are arriving from all over the world, and their presence has raised questions about who belongs, what it means to be an American, who should be granted U.S. citizenship, and how much diversity is best for society. How do immigrants affect the United States? Are they bringing new energy and revitalizing the economy? Are they draining resources such as school budget, health care, and jobs? How do they affect African Americans, Native Americans, and other groups? Are they changing what it means to be an American? If so, how?

In 2008, Americans elected Barack Obama to become our nation's first African American president. To some, this victory suggested that the United States has finally become what people often claim it to be: a truly open, "color-blind" society where one succeeds based on merit. In 2016, Americans elected Donald Trump to the presidency. Some see the rise of racist and xenophobic speech and actions that emerged during our most recent election season as a kind of backlash—not just against Democrats or the political system, but against diversity initiatives that expanded under the Obama administration.

Even as we debate the implications of immigration, other long-standing issues about belonging, fairness, and justice remain unresolved. American Indians and African Americans have been a part of this society since its start, but they have existed largely as outsiders—as slaves, servants, laborers, or even enemies—to the mainstream, dominant group. In many ways, they have not been treated as "true Americans" or full citizens, either by law or custom. The legacies of racism and exclusion continue to affect these groups today and, as you'll see in the chapters to come, they and other American minority groups continue to suffer from inequality, discrimination, and marginalization.

Even a casual glance at our schools, courts, neighborhoods, churches, corporate boardrooms—indeed, at any

[2] O'Brien, Eileen. 2008. *The Racial Middle: Latinos and Asian Americans Living Beyond the Racial Divide*. New York: New York University Press, p. 45.

[3] Personal communication, June 2009.

nook or cranny of our society—reveals pervasive patterns of inequality, injustice, and unfairness and different opportunities. So, which is the "real" America: the land of acceptance and opportunity or the one of insularity and inequity?

Some of us feel intensely connected to people with similar backgrounds and identify closely with a specific heritage. Others embrace multiracial or multiethnic identities. Some people feel no particular connection with any group or homeland. Others are unsure where they fit in the social landscape. Still, elements of our identity influence our lives and perceptions. The groups to which we belong affect our understanding of many social and political issues. Group membership including our race or ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation shape how we think about U.S. society, the world, and ourselves. Additionally, group membership shapes the opportunities available to us and to others in our society.

Department of Labor/Wikimedia

New Americans celebrating at a naturalization ceremony.

How do we understand these contrasts and divisions? Should we celebrate our diversity or stress the need for similarity? How can we incorporate all groups while avoiding fragmentation and division? What can hold us together as a nation? The United States may be at a crossroads. Throughout this book, you have an opportunity to reexamine the fundamental questions of citizenship and inclusion in our society. This chapter reviews the basic themes to help you do that effectively.

SOME AMERICAN STORIES

To illustrate the range of these group memberships, consider each person described in the following paragraphs. They represent millions of other people, and each exemplifies part of what it means to be an American.

- *Kim Park* is a 24-year-old immigrant from Korea. He arrived in New York City three years ago to work in his uncle's grocery store. Kim typically works a 12-hour shift, six days a week. His regular duties include stocking and cleaning, but he operates the register when necessary and is learning how to do the bookkeeping. Instead of wages, Kim receives room and board and some spending money.

Kim is outgoing and gregarious. His English is improving, and he practices it whenever possible. He has twice enrolled in English language classes, but the demands of his job prevented him from completing the courses. Eventually, Kim wants to become a U.S. citizen, bring his siblings to America, get married and start a family, and manage the store when his uncle retires.

Over the years, many different minority groups have called Kim's neighborhood home. As recently as the 1950s, the area was almost exclusively Jewish. The Jewish residents have since died or moved, and were replaced by African Americans and different Hispanic and Asian groups. Today, the neighborhood continues to change.

- One of Kim's regular customers is *Juan Yancy*, who is about Kim's age. Juan works in maintenance at a downtown hotel. Since the unemployment rate in the neighborhood is high, he considers himself lucky to have a job. Despite Kim's halting English, the two men usually exchange greetings and neighborhood news when Juan shops at the grocery store.

Juan's mother is Puerto Rican. His father is Filipino and African American. In terms of ethnicity, Juan thinks of himself mostly as Puerto Rican but he also identifies with his father's ancestry. He resents the pressure from the larger society—on employment applications and other administrative forms, for example—to choose a single group membership.

- Juan lives in the apartment building where *Shirley Umphlett*, an African American, spent much of her childhood. In the 1920s, Shirley's family moved from Alabama to New York in search of work. Her grandfather and father were construction workers, but because most labor unions and employers were "white-only," they had no access to the better paying, more stable jobs and were often unemployed. Shirley's mother worked as a house cleaner to help meet family expenses. Shirley did well in school, attended college on scholarship, and is now a successful executive with a multinational corporation. She is in her 40s, married, and has two children. She is committed to helping other African

Americans and poor Americans, in general. She volunteers in several community action programs and maintain memberships in three national organizations that represent and serve African Americans.

- Shirley's commitment to service is partly a response to the fate of her nephew, *Dennard Umphlett*. When he was 16, Dennard was convicted of possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute and was sentenced to a prison term of 20 years to life. Now, at age 22, he languishes in prison. He can't imagine spending another 14 more years—or longer—in prison. Dennard is losing all hope for life, but hangs on because of support from Shirley and a few other family members.
- Shirley's two children attend public school. One of their teachers is *Mary Farrell*, a fourth-generation Irish Catholic. Mary's great-grandparents came to New York as young adults in the 1880s. Her great-grandfather found work on the docks, and her great-grandmother worked as a housekeeper before marrying. They had seven children and 23 grandchildren, and Mary has more than 50 cousins living within an hour of New York City. Each generation of Mary's family tended to do a little better educationally and occupationally. Mary's father was a firefighter, and her sister is a lawyer.

Several years ago, Mary's relations with her family were severely strained when she told them that she was a lesbian and would be moving in with her long-time partner, Sandra. Mary's parents, traditional Catholics, found it difficult to accept her sexual orientation, as did many of her other relatives. She brought Sandra to several family gatherings, but they both found the tension too unpleasant to bear. Mary now either attends family events alone or skips them altogether. While she has been open with her family (much to their discomfort), she mostly stays "in the closet" at work, fearing the potential repercussions from parents and administrators. Still, she and Sandra are planning to marry soon.

- *George Snyder* was one of Mary's fourth-grade students. He is a young Native American born on a reservation in upstate New York, but his family moved to the city when he was a baby, driven away by the high unemployment rate. Mary kept in touch with George's family after he left elementary school. George and his parents stopped by occasionally to visit Mary. Then, when George reached high school, he became rebellious and his grades began to slip. He was arrested for shoplifting and never finished school. The last time they met, Mary tried to persuade him to pursue a GED, but she got nowhere with him. She pointed out that he was still young and there were many things he could do in the future. He responded, "What's the use? I'm an Indian with a record—I've got no future."
- George's parole officer is *Hector Gonzalez*. Hector's parents came to the United States from Mexico. Every year, they crossed the border to join the stream of agricultural migrant laborers and then returned to their village in Mexico at the end of the season. With the help of a cousin, Hector's father eventually got a job as a cabdriver in New York City, where Hector was raised. Hector's mother never learned much English but worked occasionally in a garment factory in her neighborhood.

With the help of his parents, Hector worked his way through college in seven years, becoming the first member of his family to earn a bachelor's degree. Hector thinks of himself as American but is interested in his parents' home village back in Mexico, where most of his extended family still lives. Hector is bilingual and has visited the village several times. His grandmother still lives there, and he calls her once a month.

Hector is married and has a child. He and his wife are very close and often refer to each other as "best friends." Hector is bisexual and has had relationships with men in the past, a fact that his wife accepts but that he keeps hidden from his parents and grandmother.

- Hector regularly eats lunch at a restaurant around the corner from his office. Two of the three managers of the restaurant are white, most of the servers are black, and the kitchen workers are Latino. One of the kitchen helpers who often clears Hector's table, *Ricardo Aldana*, is in the country illegally. He left his home village in Guatemala five years ago, traveled the length of Mexico on freight trains and on foot, and crossed the border in Texas. He lives in a tiny apartment with five others and sends 40% of his wages to his family in Guatemala. He enjoys living in the United States but is not particularly interested in legalizing his status. His most fervent wish is to go home, get married, and start a family.
- The restaurant is in a building owned by a corporation headed by *William Buford III*, a white American. William invests the bulk of his fortune in real estate and owns land and buildings throughout the New York metropolitan area. The Bufords have a three-story luxury townhouse in Manhattan but rarely go into town, preferring to spend their time on their rural Connecticut estate. William attended the finest private schools and graduated from Harvard University. At age 57, he is semiretired, plays golf twice a week, vacations in Europe, and employs a staff of five to care for himself and his family. He was raised a Mormon but is not religious and has little interest in the history of his family.

These individuals belong to groups that vary along some of the most consequential dimensions within our society—ethnicity, race, immigration status, social class, sexual orientation, gender, and religion—and their lives have been shaped by these affiliations (some more than others, of course). Some of these statuses (such as William's membership in the upper class) are privileged and envied, while

others (e.g., Ricardo's undocumented status) are disadvantaged and can evoke rejection and contempt from others.

Each person's statuses are mixed. For example, in spite of his elite status, William has occasionally felt the sting of rejection because of his Mormon background. Dennard and George rank low on race and class but enjoy some of the advantages of being a man, while Mary's chances for upward mobility in the school system are reduced by her gender and sexual orientation. Each of these individuals is privileged in some ways and limited in others—as are we all.

Finally, note that each of our group memberships can affect how we perceive others, our opportunities, the way we think about ourselves, and our view of American society and the larger world. They affect our perception of what it means to be American.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Clearly, William—the wealthy, white real-estate mogul—is the highest-ranking person in this group. How would you rank the others from high to low? Which would weigh more in such a ranking: class, gender, sexual orientation, or race and ethnicity?
2. Taking your own gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic background, and social class into account, where would you rank yourself relative to these nine people? At this stage of your life, are you more "privileged" or more "disadvantaged"? Would you rank yourself higher or lower than your parents and grandparents and why?

MINORITY GROUPS: TRENDS AND QUESTIONS

The group memberships discussed in the previous section can shape the choices we make in the voting booth and in other areas of social life. Members of different groups will evaluate these decisions in different ways due to their divergent experiences, group histories, and present situations. The debates over which direction our society should take are unlikely to be meaningful or even mutually intelligible without some understanding of the variety of ways someone can be an American.

INCREASING DIVERSITY

The choices about our society's future are especially urgent because the diversity of U.S. society is increasing dramatically, largely due to high rates of immigration. Since the 1960s, the number of immigrants arriving in the United States each year has more than tripled and includes groups from all over the globe.

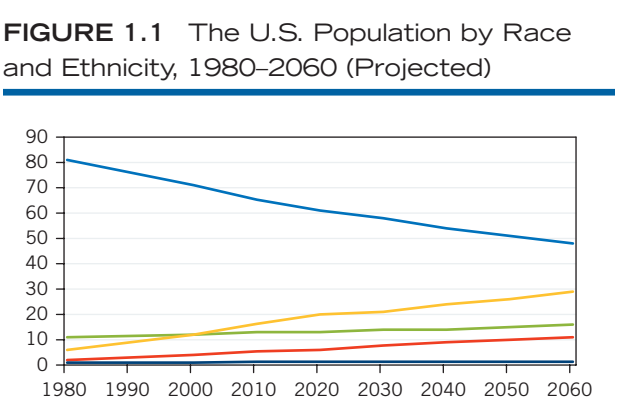
People's concerns about increasing diversity are compounded by other unresolved issues and grievances. For example, charts and graphs in Part 3 of this text document continuing gaps in income, poverty rates, and other measures of affluence and equality between minority and dominant groups. In fact, in many ways, the problems of African Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans today are just as formidable as they were a generation (or more) ago. How can our society successfully incorporate people from diverse cultures?

To gauge the dimensions of diversity in our nation, consider the changing makeup of U.S. society. Figure 1.1 presents the percentage of the total U.S. population in each of five largest groups. First, we will consider this information "on its face" and analyze some of its implications. Then, we will consider (and question) the framing of this information.

The figure reports the relative sizes of the groups from 1980 through 2010 and it offers the projected relative sizes of each group through 2060. The declining numbers of non-Hispanic whites reflect increasing diversity in the United States. As recently as 1980, more than 8 out of 10 Americans were non-Hispanic whites but, by the middle of this century, non-Hispanic whites will become a numerical minority. Several states (Texas, California, Hawaii, and New Mexico) already have "majority-minority" populations. And for the first time in history, most babies born in the United States (50.4%) are members of minority groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a).

African Americans and Native Americans will grow in absolute numbers but are projected to remain about the

FIGURE 1.1 The U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980–2060 (Projected)



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2015a).

NOTE: "Hispanics" may be of any race.

same in terms of relative size. Hispanic American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander populations, on the other hand, will grow dramatically. Asian American and Pacific Islander groups together constituted only 2% of the population in 1980, but that will grow to 10% by midcentury. The most dramatic growth, however, will be among Hispanic Americans. This group became the largest minority group in 2002, surpassing blacks, and is projected to make up almost 30% of the U.S. population by 2060.

Projections about the future are just educated guesses based on documented trends; but, they suggest profound change. Our society will grow more diverse racially and culturally, becoming less white and less European, and more like the world as a whole. Some people see these changes as threats to "traditional" white, middle-class American values and lifestyles. Other people view them as an opportunity for other equally legitimate value systems and lifestyles to emerge. Which of these viewpoints are most in line with your own and why?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Let's take a moment to reflect on the categories used in Figure 1.1. The group names we used are arbitrary, and none of these groups have clear or definite boundaries. We use these terms because they are familiar and consistent with the labels used in census reports, much of the sociological research literature, and other sources of information. So, while such group names are convenient, this does not mean that they are "real" in any absolute sense or equally useful in all circumstances. In fact, these group names have some serious shortcomings. For example, group labels reflect social conventions whose meanings change from time to time and place to place. To underscore the *social construction* of racial and ethnic groups, we use group names interchangeably (e.g., blacks and African Americans; Hispanic Americans and Latinos). Further issues remain.

First, the race/ethnic labels suggest groups are largely homogeneous. However, while it's true that people within one group may share some general, superficial physical or cultural traits (e.g., language spoken), they also vary by social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and in many other ways. People within the Asian American and Pacific Islander group, for example, represent scores of different national backgrounds (Japanese, Pakistanis, Samoans, Vietnamese, and so forth), and the category "American Indian or Alaska Native" includes people from hundreds of different tribal groups. If we consider people's other social statuses such as age and religious affiliation, that diversity becomes even more pronounced. Any two people *within* one of these groups (e.g., Hispanics) might be quite different from each other in some respects while being similar to people from "different" racial/ethnic groups (e.g., whites).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

3. Savannah is a white, 27-year-old woman who was raised in Georgia but now lives in South Dakota. She is an Episcopalian, has a degree in computer science, and makes $60,000 a year. She is married to Tom, her "college sweetheart." Winona is a 40-year-old woman and a member of the Lakota nation. She was raised in South Dakota, but moved to California to pursue her career as a pharmacist. She is married to Robert and they have one child. Although the census would classify Savannah and Winona as belonging to different racial/ethnic groups, they are similar in many ways. In what ways are their similarities more significant than their differences?

Second, people do not necessarily use these labels when they think about their own identity. In this sense, the labels are not "real" or important for all the people in these racial/ethnic groups. For example, many whites in the United States (like William Buford, mentioned in the "Some American Stories" part of this chapter) think of themselves as "just American." A Hispanic American (like Hector Gonzalez or Juan Yancy) may think of themselves more in national terms, as Mexicans or Cubans or, even more specifically, they may identify with a particular region or village in their homeland. Gay or lesbian members within these groups may identify themselves more in terms of their sexual orientation than their race or ethnicity. Thus, the labels do not always reflect the ways people think about themselves, their families, or where they come from. The categories are statistical classifications created by researchers and census takers to help them organize information and clarify their analyses. They do not grow out of or always reflect the everyday realities of the people who happen to be in them.

Third, even though the categories in Figure 1.1 are broad, several groups don't neatly fit into them. For example, where should we place Arab Americans and recent immigrants from Africa? These groups are relatively small (about 1 million people each), but there is no clear place for them in the current categories. Should Arab Americans be included as "Asian," as some argue? Should recent immigrants from Africa be placed in the same category as African Americans? Should there be a new group such as Middle Eastern or North African descent (MENA)? Of course, we don't need to have a category for every person, but we should recognize that classification schemes like the one used in Figure 1.1 (and in many other contexts) have boundaries that can be somewhat ambiguous.

A related problem with this classification scheme will become increasingly apparent in the years to come: there is no category for the growing number of people who (like Juan Yancy) are members of more than one racial or ethnic

group. The number of "mixed-group" Americans is relatively small today, about 3% of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2015a). However, the number of people who chose more than one racial or ethnic category on the U.S. Census to describe themselves increased by 32% (from 2.4% to 2.9% of the total population) between 2000 and 2010 (Jones & Bullock, 2012) and is likely to continue to increase rapidly because of the growing number of marriages across group lines.

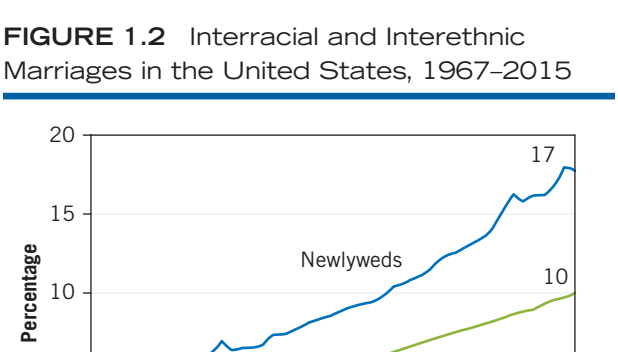
To illustrate, Figure 1.2 shows dramatic increases in the percentage of "new" marriages (couples that got married in the year prior to the survey date) and all marriages that unite members of different racial or ethnic groups (Livingston & Brown, 2017). Obviously, the greater the number of mixed (racial or ethnic) marriages, the greater the number of "mixed" Americans. One study estimates that the percentage of Americans who identify with "two or more races" will more than double between 2014 (when it was 2.5%) and 2060 (when it will be 6.2%) (Colby & Ortman, 2015, p. 9).

Finally, we should note that these categories and group names are **social constructions**,[4] created in particular historical circumstances and reflective of particular power relationships. For example, the group called "American Indians" today didn't exist prior to the period of European exploration and colonization of North America. Before the arrival of Europeans, hundreds of separate indigenous societies lived across the North American continent, each with its own language and culture. American Indians thought of themselves primarily in terms of their tribe and had little or no awareness of the other groups spread across the vast expanse of the North American continent. However, European conquerors constructed them as one group that was similar: the enemy. The fact that people today often view Native Americans as a single group reflects their historical defeat and subordination by white European colonists. This outcome led to their status as a minority group in a largely white society.

In the same way (although through different processes), African, Hispanic, and Asian Americans came to be seen as separate groups as the result of an unequal interaction with white Americans. These groups have become "real" because they are seen as real from a particular perspective—that of the dominant group in U.S. society: white Americans. We use these familiar group labels to facilitate our discussion of complex topics throughout this book (e.g., see the chapter titles in Part 3), rather than as a reflection of some unchangeable "truth" or reality regarding racial or ethnic groups.

Social constructions are perceptions shared by a group. These perceptions become real for the people who share them.

FIGURE 1.2 Interracial and Interethnic Marriages in the United States, 1967–2015



SOURCE: Livingston and Brown, 2017.

[4]The boldface terms in the text are defined in the glossary at the end of the book.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

4. If you were asked for your group membership, which of the groups listed in Figure 1.1 (if any) would you choose? Do you feel that you belong to just one group or several? How important are these groups in your self-image? Do you think your group membership affects your view of the world or shapes your circle of friends? Explain your answers.

5. Over the past 5 to 10 years, what signs of increasing diversity have you seen in your home community or high school? How has increasing diversity enriched everyday life in these areas? What problems or issues have arisen from rising diversity?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE, SOCIOLOGY, AND THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK

Although the labels in Figure 1.1 reflect social constructions, the trends displayed there have important implications for the future of the United States. What kind of society are we becoming? What does it mean to be American? At its inception, the law only recognized white Anglo-Saxon Protestant men of elite classes as full citizens with specific rights (e.g., voting) and opportunities for success (e.g., college education). As our nation has changed, others have gained access to those rights and opportunities, at least to some degree. Given the changing U.S. population, how inclusive should the definition of an "American"

NARRATIVE PORTRAIT

On Being American

Carla, now in her 20s, is the adopted daughter of an affluent white family. She grew up in the suburbs and enjoyed a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. She has never met her birth parents but knows that her biological mother was Korean American, and just 16 years old at the time of her birth. She knows nothing about her birth father. Carla is beginning to reconcile herself to how most Americans perceive her.

For much of her life, Carla has felt caught between her biological heritage and that of her adopted family. She often hesitates when people ask about her family or where she is from. Is she Asian American, in the terms of the U.S. Census (Figure 1.1)? Or, should she identify herself to people (or when she fills out employment applications) as "non-Hispanic white" because the only lifestyle she has ever known is white, suburban, middle class? For her, the social construction of race is very real and, at the same time, false.

Here is part of what she has to say about her identity:

When I was growing up, my parents would try to teach me about my Korean heritage. We would read books about Korean history and culture, my mom learned to prepare some Korean dishes, and we even discussed taking a trip to Korea—but never did. Looking back, I really appreciate what they were trying to do, but it all felt foreign to me, you know? Like we were discussing Bolivia or Kenya . . .

But then, someone would make assumptions about me based on my looks. They would think that I was good at math or nerdy or couldn't speak English. I can't tell you how many times someone has asked me, "Where are you from?" When I said, "I'm from here," most people wouldn't believe me and would ask, "No, where are you *really from*?"

Sometimes I tried to "be Korean" and even attended some meetings of the Asian Student Association when I was in school, but it felt wrong—it just wasn't me. But then, something would happen. . . . Like one time I was just walking through the mall, and some old white guy came up and said, out of the clear blue sky, "You people are ruining this country!" I mean, who did he think I was?

So, yeah, it took a long time to make peace with who I am and how others perceive me. But, now I think that I'm just me, you know? People can look at me one way and put me in all those different categories, but that's their problem. It's not who I am. It's not me!

SOURCE: Personal communication to the authors. Carla's name and exact circumstances have been fictionalized to preserve her privacy.

Questions to Consider

1. Is Carla's confusion about her identity a result of her social and physical characteristics? Or, does is it result from how other people see her? Explain.
2. How might Carla's situation change if she were a man? What if her birth mother were Hispanic or black?

be? Who "counts"? At what point, could diversity threaten societal cohesion? Could narrow definitions of what it means to be an American unjustly and unnecessarily stifle cultural diversity? Should our nation stress unity or celebrate diversity? Can we do both?

We've raised a lot of complex questions in these first few pages. The answers are not obvious or easy to come by. Indeed, there is no guarantee that we, as a society, will be able or willing to resolve all the issues related to intergroup relations in the United States. However, we will never make progress unless we confront the issues honestly and with an accurate base of knowledge and understanding. Certainly, these issues will not resolve themselves or disappear if we ignore them. The purpose of this book is to help you develop thoughtful, informed positions on these issues.

In the course of our inquiry, we will rely on sociology and other social sciences for concepts, theories, and information to gain a greater understanding of the issues. The first three chapters introduce and define many of the ideas that will guide our investigation. Part 2 explores how relations between the dominant group and minority groups have evolved in American society. Part 3 analyzes the current situation of U.S. racial and ethnic minority groups. In Part 4, we examine group divisions based on gender and sexual orientation, and patterns of group relationships around the globe. In Part 5, the final section of the book, we explore many of the challenges and issues facing our society (and the world) and see what conclusions we can glean from our investigations and how they might shape the future.

WHAT IS A MINORITY GROUP?

A common vocabulary will help us understand and discuss the issues. We begin with the term **minority group**. The mathematical connotation of this term is a bit misleading because it implies that minority groups are small. In reality, a minority group can be quite large and can even be a numerical majority of the population. Women, for example,

A **minority group** experiences systematic disadvantage and has a visible identifying trait. The group is self-conscious, and membership is usually determined at birth. Members tend to form intimate relations within the group.

are sometimes considered a minority group, even though they are a numerical majority of the U.S. population. As in many nations created by European colonization whites are a numerical minority in South Africa, accounting for less than 10% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). However, whites have been the most powerful and affluent group by far. Despite changes resulting from the end of Apartheid, whites retain their advantage in many ways (e.g., economically, politically). Therefore, we would consider them the majority group.

Minority status has more to do with the distribution of resources and power than with the size of the group. We use the definition of minority group developed by Wagley and Harris (1958) that emphasizes these characteristics:

1. The members of the group experience a pattern of *disadvantage or inequality*.
2. The members of the group share a *visible trait or characteristic* that differentiates them from other groups.
3. Minority-group members are aware that they share their status with other members of the group.
4. Membership in the group is usually *determined at birth*.
5. Members tend to *form intimate relationships* (close friendships, dating partnerships, and marriages) *within the group*.

We will briefly examine these five defining characteristics next. A bit later, we will return to examine the first two—inequality and visibility—in greater detail, because they are the most important characteristics of minority groups.

1. Inequality. The first and most important defining characteristic of a minority group is *inequality*—that is, some pattern of disadvantage. The degree of disadvantage varies over time and location and include such slight irritants as a lack of desks for left-handed students or a policy of racial or religious exclusion at an expensive country club. (Note, however, that you might not agree that the irritant is slight if you are a left-handed student awkwardly taking notes at a right-handed desk or if you are a golf aficionado who happens to be African American or Jewish American.) The most significant types of inequalities include exploitation, slavery, and **genocide** (the intentional killing of a group such as the mass execution of Jews, Slavs, Roma, gays and lesbians, and others under Nazi rule in Germany).

Whatever its scope or severity, whether it affects people's ability to gain jobs, housing, wealth, political power, police protection, health care, or other valued resources, the pattern of disadvantage is the key characteristic of a minority group. Because the group has less of what society values, some people refer to minority groups as *subordinate groups*.

The pattern of disadvantage members of the minority group experience results from the actions of another group that benefits from and tries to sustain the unequal arrangement. This core group is the **dominant group**. We use the latter term most frequently because it reflects the patterns of inequality and the power realities of minority-group status. Keep in mind that the inequalities we observe today were always established in the past, sometimes centuries ago or even longer. Privilege exists even when the beneficiaries are unaware of it.

2. Visibility. The second defining characteristic of a minority group is some *visible trait* or characteristic that sets members of the group apart and that the dominant group holds in low esteem. The trait can be cultural (language, religion, speech patterns, or dress styles), physical (skin color, stature, or facial features), or both. Groups defined primarily by their cultural characteristics such as Irish Americans and Jewish Americans are called **ethnic minority groups**. Groups defined primarily by their physical characteristics, such as African Americans and Americans Indians, are **racial minority groups**. These categories overlap. So-called ethnic groups may also have (or may be thought to have) distinguishing physical characteristics (e.g., the stereotypical Irish red hair or "Jewish nose"). Racial groups may also have (or are thought to have) cultural traits that differ from the dominant group (e.g., differences in dialect, religious values, or cuisine).

These distinguishing traits help identify minority-group members and separate people into distinct groups. Thus, they help to maintain the patterns of disadvantage. That is, the dominant group has (or at one time had) sufficient power to create the distinction between groups and thus solidify a higher position for itself. These markers of group membership are crucial. Without visible signs, it would be difficult or impossible to identify who was in which group, and the system of minority-group oppression would soon collapse.

It is important to realize that the characteristics marking the boundaries between groups usually are not significant in and of themselves. They are selected for their

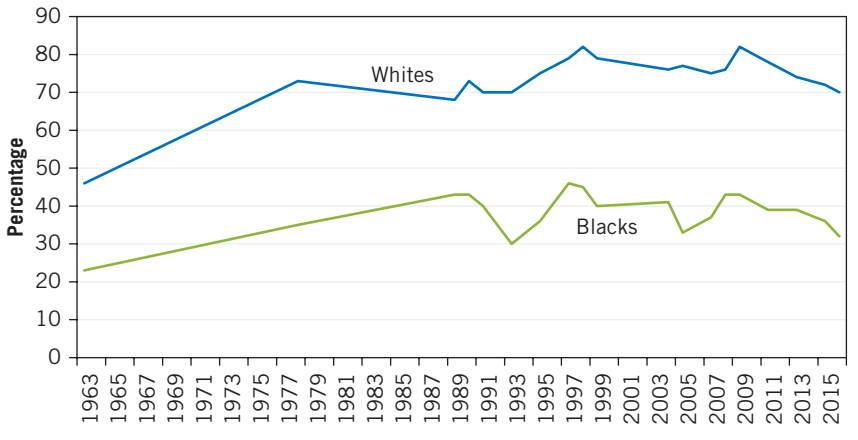
Genocide is the deliberate attempt to exterminate an entire group.

A **dominant group** is the group that benefits from minority-group subordination.

Ethnic minority groups are distinguished by cultural traits.

Racial minority groups are distinguished by physical traits.

FIGURE 1.3 Do Black Americans Have the Same Chances as White Americans to Obtain the Same Level of Employment? 1963–2016



SOURCE: Gallup, 2017.

ACTUAL QUESTION: In general, do you think that black people have as good a chance as white people in your community to get any kind of job for which they are qualified, or do you think they do not have as good a chance?

visibility and convenience and, objectively, may be trivial and unimportant. For example, scientists now conclude that skin color and other so-called racial traits have little scientific, evolutionary, medical, or biological importance (Gannon, 2016; Yudell, Roberts, DeSalle, & Tishkoff, 2016). For example, darker skin color reflects the body's response to sunlight. In areas with greater sunlight (closer to the equator), people's bodies produce melanin to protect the skin. As we shall see in future chapters, skin color is an important marker of group membership in our society that emerged through a complex and lengthy historical process, not because it has any inherent significance. These markers of minority-group membership are social constructions that become important because people in a society attribute significance to them such as superiority or inferiority.

3. Awareness. A third characteristic of minority groups is that the members are aware of their differentiation from the dominant group and their shared disadvantage. This shared social status can provide the basis for strong intragroup bonds and a sense of solidarity, and can lead to views of the world that are markedly different from those of the dominant group and other minority groups. Minority and dominant groups can live in different cultural worlds. For example, public opinion polls frequently show sizeable differences between dominant and minority groups in their views of the seriousness and extent of discrimination in American society. Figure 1.3 shows persistent and sizeable gaps in the percentage of nationally representative samples of whites and blacks who agree that blacks and whites have equal job opportunities. As would be expected, given their different histories, experiences, and locations in the social structure, black Americans have much more negative views of racial equality. Even after the election of President Obama in 2008, the percentage of black Americans who perceived that racial opportunity was equal was about half the corresponding percentage of white Americans. Both groups have become more pessimistic about equal opportunity in recent years. A national Gallup poll conducted in 2016 showed just 71% of Americans believed black children have the same opportunity as white children to get a good education. This is the lowest percentage on record since Gallup began asking that question in 1962, less than a decade after the Supreme Court voted to desegregate public schools in *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954). Just 70% believe black Americans have equal opportunities to get housing, which is the lowest rating on this question since 1989 (Jones, 2016).

4. Ascription. A fourth characteristic of minority groups is that, in general, membership is an **ascribed status** given to them, often at birth. The traits that identify minority-group membership are typically not easy to change. Thus, minority-group status is usually involuntary and for life.

In some cases—with "racial" minority groups, for example—this defining characteristic may seem obvious and hardly worth mentioning. Remember, however, that group labels are social constructions, based on particular historical circumstances and shared cultural perceptions. Thus, group membership can be negotiable and changeable, and a person's status at birth is not necessarily constant throughout his or her lifetime. A member of a racial minority may be able to "pass" as a member of a different group, and a member of a religious minority may be able to change status by changing his or her faith.

It's important to keep in mind the qualification that minority status is *generally* a matter of birth. There are important exceptions to the general rule and a great deal more ambiguity regarding group membership than may appear at first glance. Also, for some groups—gays and lesbians in particular—the notion of membership by ascription is debated. Some say homosexuality is inborn while others say it is learned. We will address this issue in Chapter 12.

An **ascribed status** is involuntary and usually acquired at birth.

5. Intimate Relationships. Finally, group members tend to *form emotionally close bonds with people like themselves*. That is, members tend to choose each other as close friends, dating partners, and partners (legal spouses or cohabitational partner). (Members of the dominant group do this, too.)

Pervasive racial and ethnic segregation of U.S. neighborhoods, schools, and other areas of social life influence who one meets or spends time with on a regular basis. In some cases, the dominant group dictates this pattern. For example, many states outlawed interracial marriages until the U.S. Supreme Court declared laws against **miscegenation** unconstitutional in 1967 in the case of *Loving v. Virginia* (Bell, 1992).

The Wagley and Harris (1958) multipart definition of a minority group encompasses "traditional" minority groups such as African Americans and American Indians, but can be applied to other groups. For instance, women as a group fit the first four criteria and can be analyzed with many of the same concepts and ideas that guide our analysis of other minority groups. Similarly, we can apply this concept to Americans who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender; to Americans who are differently abled; to Americans who are left-handed; to Americans who are very old, very short, very tall, or very obese. We will consider some of these groups in Part 4. For now, just note that the analyses developed in this book can be applied more broadly than you might realize at first. We hope this leads you to some fresh insights about a wide variety of groups and people.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

6. Consider one of the groups mentioned in the prior paragraph. Do they fit all five parts of this definition of minority groups? Why or why not?

PATTERNS OF INEQUALITY

As mentioned earlier, the most important defining characteristic of minority-group status is inequality. As we show in upcoming chapters, minority-group membership can affect access to jobs, education, wealth, health care, and housing. It is associated with a lower (often much lower) proportional share of goods and services and more limited (often much more limited) opportunities for upward mobility.

Miscegenation is marriage or sexual relations between members of racial groups that a society defines as different and unequal.

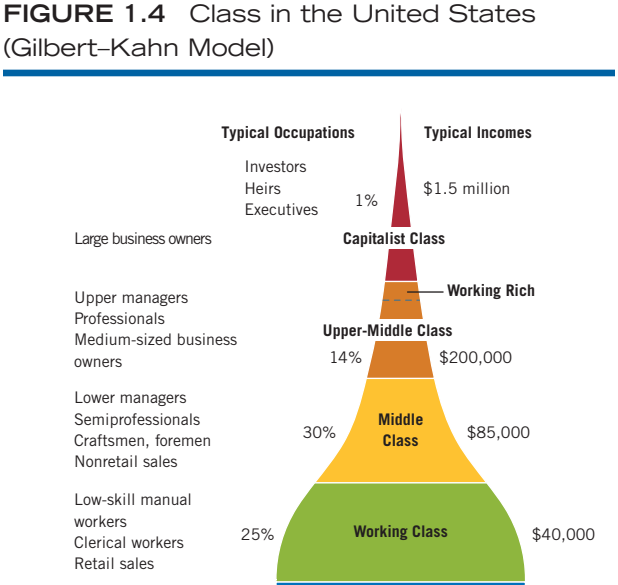
Stratification, or the unequal distribution of valued goods and services, is a feature of U.S. society. Every human society, except perhaps the simplest hunter-gatherer societies, is stratified to some degree. That is, society distributes its valued resources so that some people get more while others get less. We can visualize these divisions as horizontal layers (or strata) that differ from one another by the amount of resources they command. Economic stratification results in different **social classes**; Figure 1.4 shows one view of the American social class system. Many criteria (such as education, age, gender, and talent) may affect a person's social class position and his or her access to goods and services. Minority-group membership is one of these criteria, and it has a powerful impact on the distribution of resources in the United States and other societies.

The next section considers different theories about the nature and dimensions of stratification. Then, it focuses on how minority-group status relates to stratification.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Sociology (and other social sciences such as economics, history, and political science) has been concerned with stratification and human inequality since the formation of the

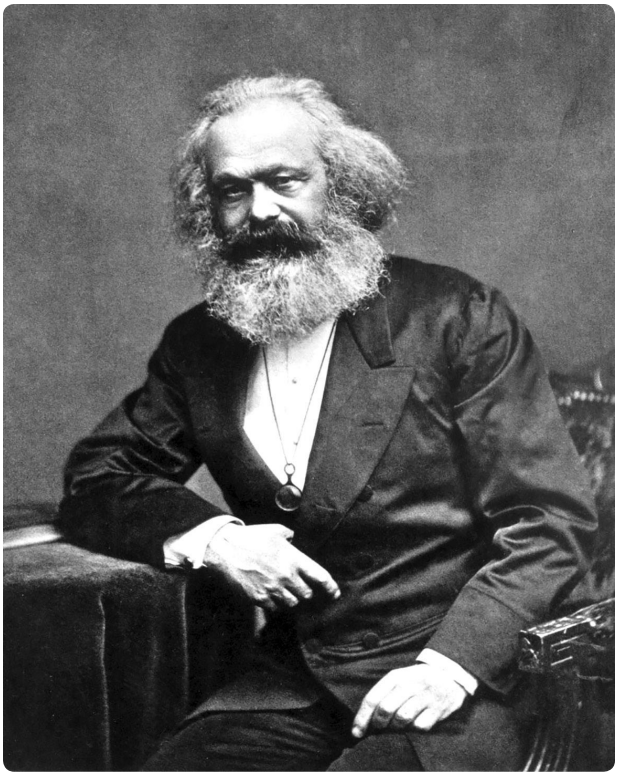
FIGURE 1.4 Class in the United States (Gilbert–Kahn Model)



SOURCE: Gilbert, 2011.

Stratification is the system of unequal distribution of valued resources in society.

Social classes consist of people who have similar levels of access to valued goods and services.



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Karl Marx (1818–1883) contributed to the founding of sociology and was one of the authors of the *Communist Manifesto*.

discipline in the 19th century. We highlight the work of four significant thinkers in this section. An early and important contributor to our understanding of the nature and significance of social inequality was Karl Marx, the noted social philosopher and revolutionary. Half a century later, sociologist Max Weber (pronounced Mahks Vay-ber), a central figure in the development of sociology, critiqued and elaborated on Marx's view of inequality. Gerhard Lenski was a modern sociologist whose ideas about the influence of economic and technological development on social stratification is relevant for comparing societies and understanding the evolution of intergroup relations. Finally, we consider another modern sociologist, Patricia Hill Collins, who argues for an intersectional approach to inequality. That is, we need to view inequalities based on class, race or ethnicity, gender (and so on) as a single, interlocking system of inequality.

Karl Marx. Although best known as the father of modern communism, Karl Marx was also the primary architect of a political, economic, and social philosophy that has played a major role in world affairs for more than 150 years. Marxism is a complex theory of history and social change in which inequality is a central concern.

Marx argued that the most important source of inequality in society was the system of economic production. He focused on the **means of production**, or the materials, tools, resources, and social relationships by which the society produces and distributes goods and services. In an industrial society, the means of production include factories, commercial enterprises, banks, and transportation systems, such as railroads.

In Marx's view, all societies include two main social classes that struggle over the means of production. In an industrial society, one class, the **bourgeoisie**, or capitalist class, owns or controls the means of production. It benefits from that arrangement and exploits and oppresses the **proletariat** or working class. Marx believed that conflict between these classes was inevitable and that, ultimately, the working class would successfully revolt against the bourgeoisie and create a society without exploitation, coercion, or inequality. In other words, it would create a classless society.

Scholars and others have extensively critiqued or modified Marx's ideas over the past century and a half. Still, modern social science owes a great deal to Marx's views on inequality and his insights on class struggle and social conflict. As you will see in later chapters, Marxism remains an important body of work and a rich source of insight concerning group relations in industrial society (Marx & Engels, 1848/1967).

Max Weber. One of Marx's major critics was Max Weber, a German sociologist who did most of his work around the turn of the 20th century. Weber thought that Marx's view of inequality was too narrow. Marx saw social class as a matter of economic position or relationship to the means of production, but Weber argued that inequality was more complex and included dimensions other than just the economic. Individuals could be members of the elite in some ways but not in others. For example, an aristocratic family that has fallen on hard financial times might belong to the elite in terms of family lineage and prestige but not in terms of wealth. Or, a major figure in the illegal drug trade could enjoy substantial wealth but be held in low esteem.

Weber expanded on Marx's view of inequality by identifying three separate stratification systems. First, economic inequality is based on ownership or control of wealth (such as property) and income (money from employment, interest on bank holdings, or other payments). This is similar to Marx's concept of class, and Weber used the term *class* to identify this form of inequality.

The **means of production** are the materials, resources, and social relationships by which society produces and distributes goods and services.

The **bourgeoisie** are the elite or ruling class that owns the means of production in an industrial society. The **proletariat** are the workers.

A second system of stratification revolves around differences in **prestige**, or the amount of honor, esteem, or respect given to us by others. Class position is one factor that affects the amount of prestige a person enjoys. Other factors that influence prestige include family lineage, athletic ability, and physical appearance. In the United States and other societies, the groups to which people belong affect prestige. Members of minority groups typically have less prestige than members of the dominant group. Thus, a wealthy minority-group member might be ranked high on class, but low on prestige.

Weber's third stratification system is **power**, or the ability to influence others, impact the decision-making process of society, and pursue and protect one's self-interest and achieve one's goals. One source of power is a person's standing in politically active organizations, such as labor unions or pressure groups, that lobby state and federal legislatures. Some politically active groups have access to great wealth and can use their riches to promote their causes. Other groups may rely more on their size and ability to mobilize large demonstrations to achieve their goals. Political groups and the people they represent vary in their abilities to affect the political process and control decision making. That is, they vary in the power they can mobilize.

Typically, these three dimensions of stratification go together: wealthy, prestigious groups will be more powerful (more likely to achieve their goals or protect their self-interest) than low-income groups or groups with little prestige. However, power is a separate dimension: even very impoverished groups have sometimes found ways to express their concerns and pursue their goals.

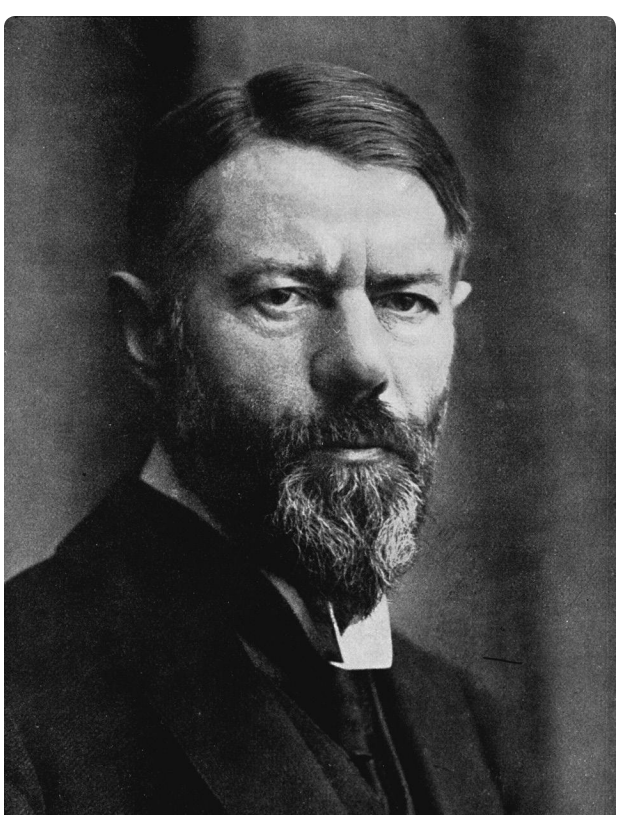
Gerhard Lenski. Gerhard Lenski is a contemporary sociologist who expands on Weber's ideas by analyzing stratification in the context of societal evolution, or the **level of development** of a society (Nolan & Lenski, 2004). He argues that the degree of inequality or the criteria affecting a group's position is closely related to **subsistence technology**, the means by which the society satisfies basic needs such as hunger and thirst. For example, preindustrial agricultural societies rely on human and animal labor to generate the food necessary to sustain life. Inequality in these types of societies centers on control of land and labor because they are the most important means of production for that level of development.

Prestige is honor, esteem, or respect.

Power is the ability to affect the decision-making process of a social system.

The **level of development** is the stage of evolution of a society, including agrarian, industrial, and postindustrial.

A **subsistence technology** is the system by which a society satisfies basic needs.



akg-images/Newscom

Max Weber (1864–1920) was a major figure in the establishment of sociology. He took issue with many of Marx's ideas in publications such as *The Protestant Ethic* and *The Spirit of Capitalism*.

In modern industrial societies, land ownership is not as crucial as control of financial, manufacturing, and commercial enterprises. Because the control of capital is more important than control of land for those societies, level of development, and the nature of inequality, would be different.

The United States and other societies have entered still another stage of development, often referred to as **postindustrial society**. In this type of society, developments in new technology, computer-related fields, information processing, and scientific research create economic growth. In postindustrial societies, economic success is closely related to specialized knowledge, familiarity with new technologies, and formal education (Chirot, 1994, p. 88; see also Bell, 1973).

A **postindustrial society** is dominated by service work, information processing, and high technology.

These changes in subsistence technology, from agriculture to industrialization to the "information society," alter the stratification system. As the sources of wealth, success, and power change, so do the relationships between minority and dominant groups. For example, the shift to an information-based, "high-tech," postindustrial society means that the advantages conferred by higher levels of education are magnified. Groups that have less access to schooling will likely rank low on all dimensions of stratification.

Patricia Hill Collins. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2000) calls for an approach to the study of inequality and group relations that recognizes the multiplicity of systems of inequality and privilege that operate in society. Some stratification systems are based on social class, while others rank people by their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability, and other criteria. Most people have mixed statuses, some more privileged and some less privileged. For example, Hector, the Mexican American parole officer mentioned in the "American Stories" at the start of this chapter, is a college-educated man with a professional job. His gender and class (education and occupation) rank high in the United States. On the other hand, he is Mexican American and bisexual. These latter statuses put him at a disadvantage in a society where whiteness and heterosexuality are more valued.

Collins stresses **intersectionality**, a view that acknowledges that everyone—like Hector—has multiple group memberships and that these crisscross and create different experiences for people with varying combinations of statuses. The realities faced by gay, white-collar, Mexican American men are very different from those faced by heterosexual, blue-collar Puerto Rican women, even though both would be counted as "Hispanic" in Figure 1.1. From this perspective, you can see that no singular, uniform Hispanic American (or African American or Asian American) experience exists. Thus, we need to recognize how gender, class, sexual orientation, and other factors intersect with and reinforce one another.

Collins and other intersectional theorists critique the tendency to see inequality in terms of separate simple dichotomous systems, based on class (blue collar vs. white collar), race (black vs. white), gender (men vs. women), or some other criterion. An intersectional approach analyzes how these statuses link together and form a "matrix of domination." For example, white Americans are not a homogenous "dominant group." Some segments that this group, such as women or poor whites, occupy are privileged in terms of their race (white) but subordinate in terms of their gender (women) or class (poor). Who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor changes across social contexts, and people can occupy privileged and subordinated statuses simultaneously.

Intersectionality stresses the linked inequalities in a society and the multiplicity of statuses all people occupy.

Photo courtesy of Patricia Hill Collins

Patricia Hill Collins is a major contributor to the ongoing attempts by American social scientists to analyze inequality and group relations.

The separate systems of domination and subordination overlap and reinforce one another. This matrix of domination shapes people's opportunities, experiences, and their perceptions. As we'll see in later chapters, race and gender interact with each other and create especially disadvantaged positions for people who rank lower on both dimensions simultaneously (e.g., see Figure 6.5, which shows that black women consistently earn less income than either black men who share the same race and white women who share the same gender).

Likewise, stereotypes and other elements of prejudice are gendered. That is, they are attached to men or women, not to the entire group. For example, some stereotypical traits might be applied to all African Americans (such as laziness; see Figure 3.3), but others are applied only to women (e.g., the "welfare queen" or "mammy") or men (e.g., the "thug" or "buffoon").

An intersectional approach stresses the multiplicity of the systems of inequality and analyzes the links among them. Groups are seen as differentiated and complex, not uniform. In this text, one of our main concerns will be to use an intersectional lens to explore how class and gender influence racial and ethnic minority-group experiences. However, you can apply an intersectional approach to other dimensions of power and inequality, including disability, sexual orientation, and religion.

MINORITY-GROUP STATUS AND STRATIFICATION

The theoretical perspectives we have just reviewed raise three important points about the connections between minority-group status and stratification. First, minority-group status affects access to wealth and income, prestige, and power. In the United States, minority-group status has been and continues to be one of the most important and powerful determinants of one's life chances, health, wealth, and success (e.g., education). We explore these complex patterns of inequality in Part 3, but observation of U.S. society will reveal that minority groups control proportionately fewer resources and that minority-group status and stratification are intimately and complexly intertwined. Second, although social class and minority-group status are correlated, they are different dimensions of inequality and they vary independently. The degree to which one status affects the other varies from group to group. Some groups, such as Irish or Italian Americans, have experienced considerable upward **social mobility** (or movement) within the class stratification system even though they faced considerable discrimination in the past. Furthermore, as stressed by the intersectional approach, each minority group is internally divided by systems of inequality based on class, status, or power. Some members of a minority group can be successful economically, wield great political power, or enjoy high prestige even though the vast majority of their group experiences poverty and powerlessness. Likewise, members of the same social class vary by ethnicity or race, gender, sexual orientation, and other social statuses.

Third, dominant–minority group relationships are created by struggle over the control of valued goods and services. Minority-group structures (such as slavery) emerge so that the dominant group can control commodities such as land or labor, maintain its position in the stratification system, or eliminate a perceived threat to its well-being. Struggles over property, wealth, prestige, and power lie at the heart of every dominant–minority relationship. Marx believed that all aspects of society and culture were shaped to benefit the elite or ruling class and sustain the economic system that underlies its privileged position. The treatment of minority groups throughout American history provides a good deal of evidence to support Marx's point, as we'll see in upcoming chapters.

Social mobility is movement up and down the stratification system.

VISIBLE DISTINGUISHING TRAITS: RACE AND GENDER

In this section, we focus on the second defining characteristic of minority groups: the visible traits that represent membership. The boundaries between dominant and minority groups have been established along a wide variety of lines, including religion, language, skin color, and sexuality. Next, let's consider race and gender, two of the more physical and permanent—and thus more socially visible—markers of group membership.

RACE

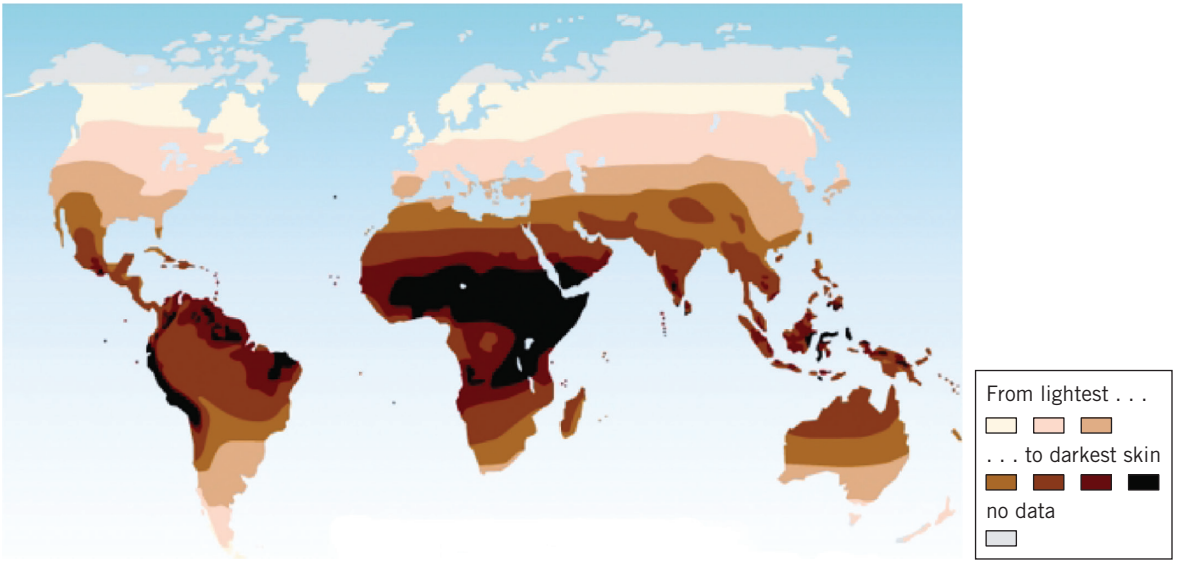
In the past, race has been widely misunderstood, but the false ideas and exaggerated importance people have attached to race have not just been errors of logic that were subject to debate. At various times and places, ideas about race have resulted in some of the greatest tragedies in human history: immense exploitation and mistreatment, slavery, and genocide. Myths about race survive in the present though in diluted form. It is important to cultivate accurate understandings about race to decrease the likelihood of further tragedies.

Thanks to advances in the sciences of genetics, biology, and physical anthropology, we know more about what race is and, more important, what race is not. We cannot address all the confusion in these few pages, but we can establish a basic framework and use the latest scientific research to dispel some of the myths.

Race and Human Evolution. Our species first appeared in East Africa more than 160,000 years ago. Our ancient ancestors were hunters and gatherers who slowly wandered away from their ancestral region in search of food and other resources. Over the millennia, our ancestors traveled across the entire globe, first to what is now the Middle East and then to Asia, Europe, Australia, and North and South America (see Figure 1.6) (Gugliotta, 2008; Hirst, 2017).

"Racial" differences evolved during this period of dispersion, as our ancestors adapted to different environments and ecological conditions. For example, consider skin color, the most visible "racial" characteristic. As noted earlier, skin color derives from a pigment called melanin. In areas with

FIGURE 1.5 Skin Color Variation by Latitude



SOURCE: Chapman, 2004.

intense sunlight, at or near the equator, melanin screens out the sun's ultraviolet rays helping to prevent sunburn and, more significantly, skin cancer. Thus, people from equatorial locations produce higher levels of melanin and have darker skin compared to people who live farther away from the equator (Jablonski & Chaplin, 2010). This almost certainly means that the first humans were dark skinned and that lighter skin colors are the more recent adaptation reflecting migration away from the equator (see Figure 1.5).

The lower concentration of melanin in peoples adapted to areas with less intense sunlight may also be a biological adaptation to a particular ecology. Lighter skin maximizes vitamin D synthesis, which is important for the absorption of calcium and protection against health problems such as rickets. In other words, the skin color of any group reflects the melanin in their skin that helps them balance the need for vitamin D against the need to protect their skin from ultraviolet rays (Jablonski & Chaplin, 2010).

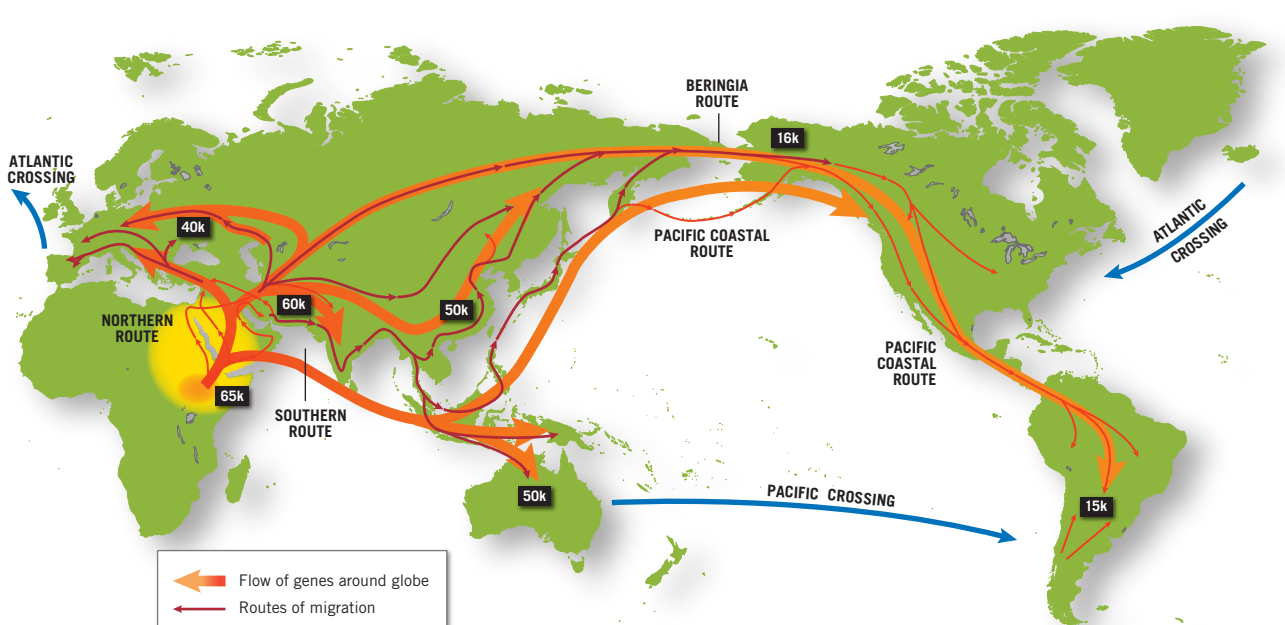
The period of dispersion and differentiation, depicted in Figure 1.6, began to end about 10,000 years ago, when some of our hunting and gathering ancestors developed a new subsistence technology and established permanent agricultural villages. Over the centuries, some of these settlements grew into larger societies, kingdoms, and empires that conquered and absorbed neighboring societies, some of which differed culturally, linguistically, and racially from each other. The great agricultural empires of the past—Roman, Egyptian, Chinese, Aztec—united different peoples, reversed the process of dispersion and differentiation, and began a phase of consolidation and merging of human cultures and genes. Over the next 10,000 years following the first settlements, human genes were intermixed and spread around the globe, eliminating any "pure" races (if such ever existed).

The differentiation created during the period of global dispersion was swamped by consolidation, a process that was greatly accelerated starting about 500 years ago when European nations began to explore and conquer much of the rest of the world (e.g., India, Africa). This consolidation of groups continues today. For example, in the United States, we can see it with the increasing numbers of people who claim "mixed-race" descent. We see similar patterns across the globe and throughout recent history.

Race and Western Traditions. Europeans had been long aware of racial variation, but aided by breakthroughs in navigation and ship design, the nations of Western Europe began regularly traveling to Africa, Asia, and eventually North and South America in the 1400s. The contact with the peoples of other continents resulted in greater awareness and curiosity about observable physical differences such as skin color.

European travel required tremendous time and resources. The goal wasn't exploration for exploration sake, but to lay claim to valued resources (like gold) that existed elsewhere. In the process, European nations such as England, France, Spain, and Russia conquered, colonized, and sometimes destroyed the peoples and cultures they encountered. This political and military domination (e.g., English colonization of India, French colonization of West and North Africa) required an ideology, or belief system to support it. From the beginning, Europeans linked physical variation with judgments about the relative merits of other races: people from conquering nations thought they were

FIGURE 1.6 The Migration of Anatomically Modern Humans



SOURCE: Gugliotta, 2008.

racially and culturally superior to the nations and peoples they conquered.

Since then, other countries have justified military conquest, genocide, exploitation, and slavery with similar racist and xenophobic thinking. But, the toxic form of racism that bloomed during the expansion of European power continues to haunt the world today. It was the basis for the concept of race that took root in the United States.

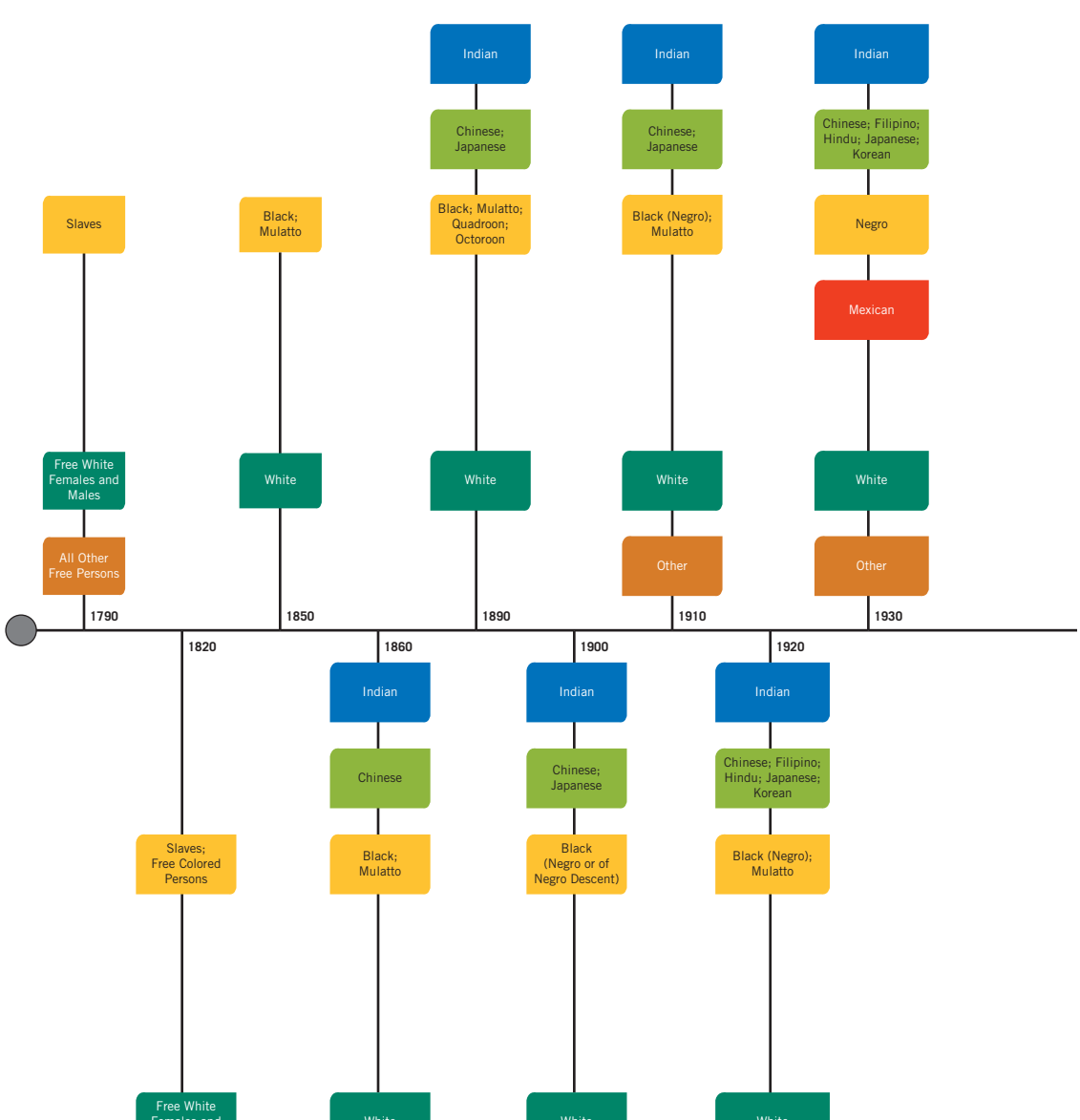
Race and Biology. Europeans primarily used race to denigrate, reject, and exclude nonwhites. However, as the tools of modern science developed, some people attempted to apply the principles of scientific research to the concept of race. These investigations focused on constructing typologies or taxonomies to classify every person of every race into a category. Some of these typologies were quite elaborate with numerous races and sub-races. For example, the "Caucasian" race was often subdivided into Nordics (blond, fair-skinned northern Europeans), Mediterraneans (dark-haired southern Europeans), and Alpines (people falling between the first two categories).

One major limitation of these systems of classification is that the dividing lines between the so-called racial groups are arbitrary. There is no clear or definite point where, for example, "black" skin color stops and "white" skin color begins. The characteristics used to define race blend imperceptibly into one another. Additionally, one racial trait (skin color) can appear with others (e.g., hair texture) in an infinite variety of ways. A given individual might have a skin color that people associate with one race, the hair texture of a second, the nasal shape of a third, and so forth.

Although people undeniably vary in their physical appearance, these differences do not sort themselves out in a way that permits us to divide people intro neat and tidy groups like species of animals. The differences between the so-called human races are not at all like the differences between elephants and butterflies. The ambiguous and continuous nature of racial characteristics makes it impossible to establish categories that have clear, nonarbitrary boundaries. Even the most elaborate racial typologies could not address the fact that many individuals fit into more than one category while others do not fit into any of them. So, who gets to decide how many groups exist and what racial group people belong to?

Over the past several decades, advances in genetic research have provided new insights into race that negate the validity of racial typologies and racial myths associated with them. Perhaps the most important finding is that genetic variation *within* the "traditional" racial groups is *greater* than the variation *between* those groups (American Sociological Association, 2003). In other words, any two randomly selected members of the "black" race will probably vary genetically from each other *at least* as much as they do from a randomly selected member of the "white" race. This finding refutes traditional, non-scientific ideas that racial categories accurately reflect groups of homogeneous people. In other words, the traditional American perception of race as based primarily on skin color has no scientific validity.

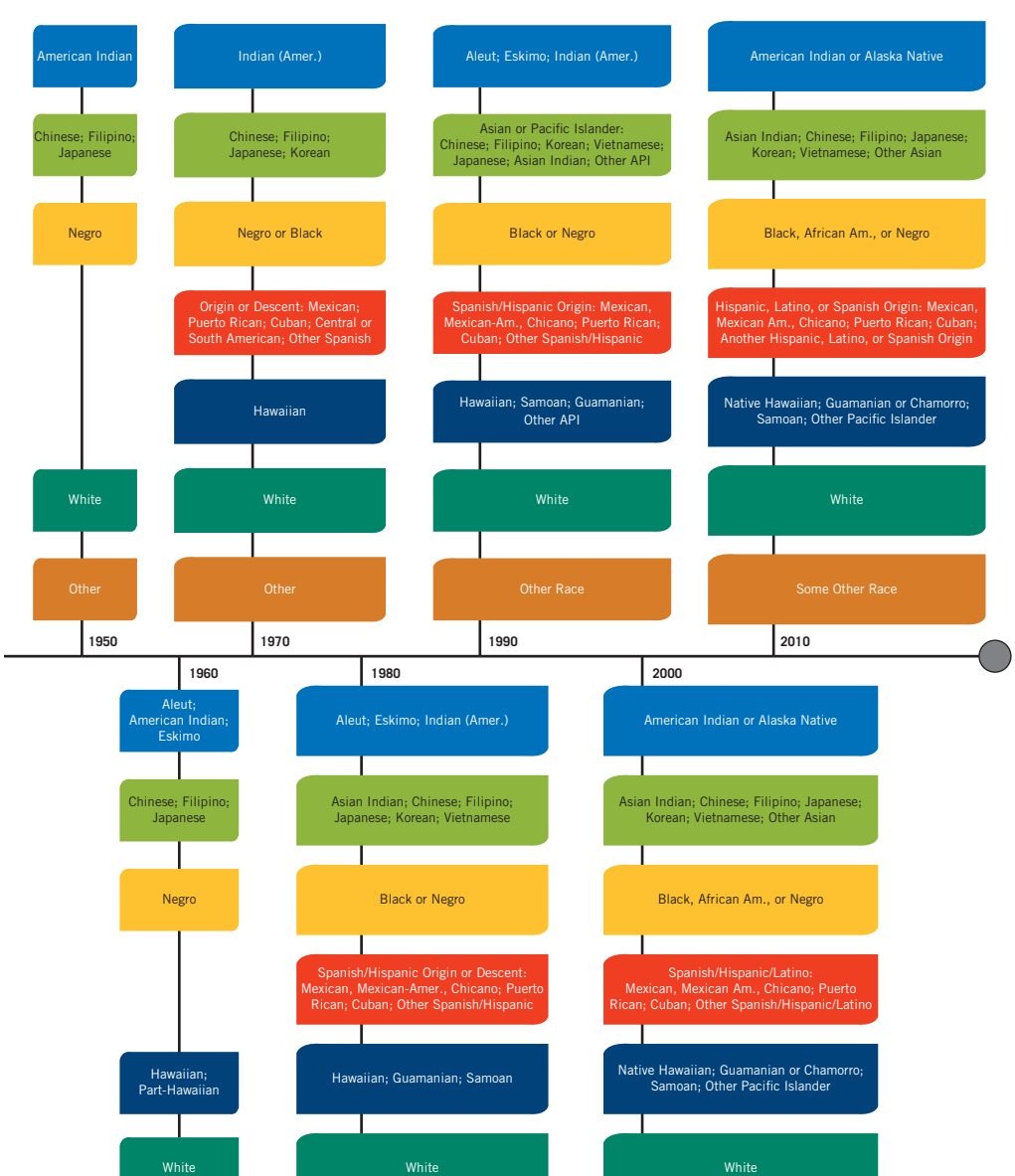
FIGURE 1.7 Changes in Racial and Ethnic Categories Over the Past 220 Years



The Social Construction of Race. Sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois (who you will read about in Chapter 5) wrote that the "problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" ([1903] 1997, page 45 c.f. Lee & Bean, 2007). He argues that our nation's history of slavery and the resulting discrimination and inequalities were critical to how U.S. race relations have evolved and, by extension, to how they affect society today.

You can begin to understand the social construction of this "color line" when you examine the U.S. Census race/ethnicity categories over time. The U.S. Constitution (Section 2, Article 1) requires a census (or population count) every decade (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004, p. 206). A state's population influences its political representation in the U.S. House of Representatives, its taxation, and the federal resources it receives (Anderson & Fienberg, 1999).

The census also gatherers important demographic data about household members such as their race, age, gender, occupation, level or education, marital status, and if they own their residence. The first census in 1790 used just three racial categories. (If you consider gender, four subcategories exist; if you include age, there are five categories.) These categories reflect the de facto color line (and gender/age lines) operating in U.S. society at that time:



- Free whites (males under 16 years old, males over 16 years old, females)
- All other free persons (e.g., Native Americans who paid taxes and free blacks)
- Slaves

Although southern states fought to define slaves as property in all other matters (e.g., see *Missouri v. Celia* in Chapter 4), they argued the opposite about census counts because states with more people would get more political power and resources. Such an arrangement would advantage slave holding states and, presumably, give them a reason to enslave more people (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004). Northern and southern states made a compromise to count slaves as three fifths of a person to distribute power more equitably, writing that "direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States . . . by adding to the whole Number of free Person sexcluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons" (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004, p. 206).

In addition to telling us about the population, census categories also tell us how people think about race at any given time. For example, the first census taken after slavery ended (1870) used these categories: White, Black, Mulatto,

and Indian. (The category of "Mulatto" applied to people with unspecified "mixed" racial heritage.) By 1890, the categories changed, again, to:

- White
- Black (a person who is more than three-fourths black)
- Mulatto (a person who is three-eighths to five-eighths black)
- Quadroon (*quad* meaning four, or one-fourth black)
- Octoroons (*octo* meaning eight, one eighth or any other amount of "black blood")
- Indian
- Chinese
- Japanese

The addition of Chinese and Japanese categories reflects Asian immigration to the United States. The subcategories of "quadroon" and "octoroon" illustrate an attempt to precisely measure race along a black-white dichotomy (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004), and reflect concerns about the impact of free slaves on U.S. society (Hochschild & Powell, 2008). Specifically, lawmakers sought "to ascertain and exhibit the physical effects upon offspring resulting from the amalgamation of human species" and see if "the mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons are disappearing and the race becoming more purely Negro" (Hochschild & Powell, 2008). While census takers were advised to "be particularly careful to distinguish between blacks, mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons," they were not told how to determine those specific fractions of "black blood" (Hochschild & Powell, 2008).

Identifying the amount of "blackness" was more complicated than it sounded; thus, the census did not use those categories again. However, southern states continued efforts to do so by introducing the "one-drop rule." Under this law, a person with any trace of black ancestry, even "one drop" of African blood, was defined as black and subject to the limitations of extreme racial inequality. Thus, it rigidly solidified the black-white color line in law and in custom.

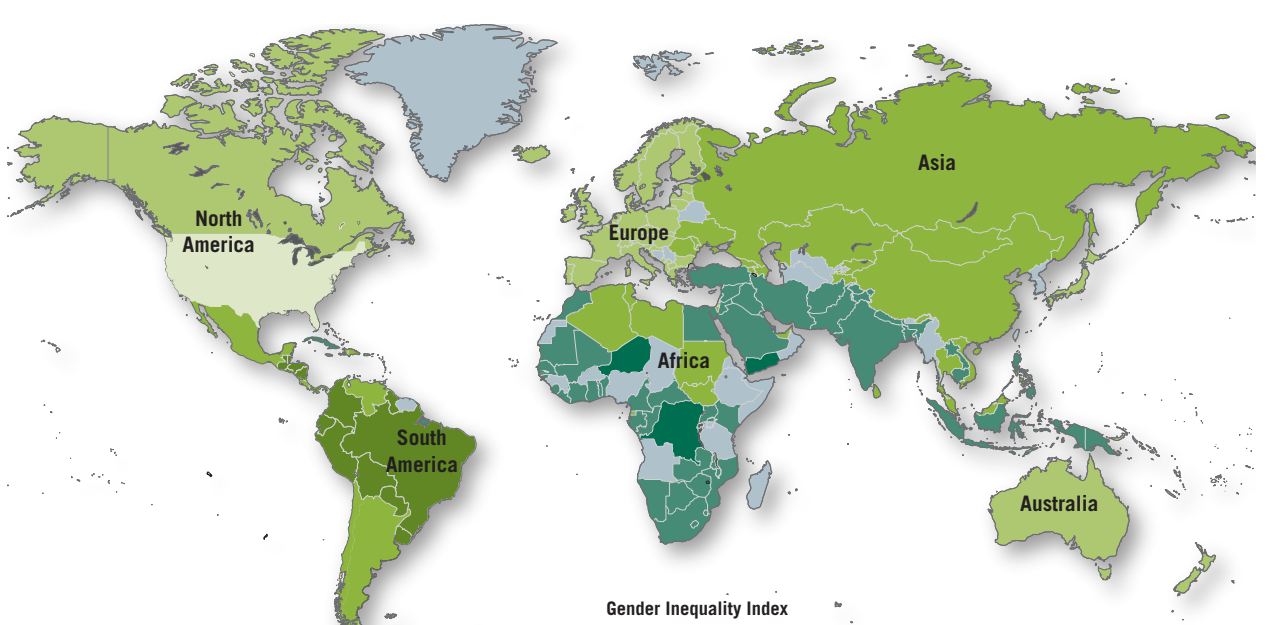
The racial categories for African Americans and other groups have changed over the years—most notably for African Americans (see Figure 1.7). The Census Bureau continues to add ethnic categories as new immigrants have come to our country that, for now, fall under one of these primaries categories: Whites, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Native Hawaiian), and other. The Census Bureau notes that "Hispanic origins are not races" and thus, it asks people of Hispanic origin to identify their place of origin such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, or Mexico. The census has changed in other ways, too. In 1960, the Census Bureau mailed its form to urban residences and for the first time respondents could choose their racial identity. (In prior decades, the census taker determined each person's race. This change was important for giving people agency to self-identify; but, it may also have produced more accurate information. That is, given the prejudice and discrimination against nonwhites, people may have been more likely to choose "white" when the census taker was nearby.) The first census to ask about Hispanic origin happened in 1980 and the 2000 census was the first to allow people to identify as multiracial by selecting more than one category (Lowenthall, 2014). For example, someone could identify as white and Cuban.

Yet even with these changes, the category of "white" has remained remarkably consistent over time (see Figure 1.7). Nor has it included gradations of "whiteness"; that is, there are no subcategories of "whiteness" as there were of "blackness" in 1890, for example (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004). Thus, we might consider the U.S. construction of race as involving a white-nonwhite color line (i.e., white is a dominant, nonchanging category) that reflects assumptions of black inferiority made at the heart of U.S. slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

Despite its scientific uselessness, the idea of race continues to shape intergroup relations in the United States and around the world. Race, along with gender, is one of the first things people notice about one another. Because race is still a significant way of differentiating people, it continues to be socially important. In addition to discrimination by out-group members, ideas about race can also shape relations *within* a perceived racial group. For example, people within groups and outside of them may treat "light-skinned" African Americans better than "dark" African Americans. Walker (1983) named this colorism. Such discrimination reflects the dominant racial hierarchy that preferences lighter skin tone and presumed European facial features and body types (Harris, 2008, p. 54). While an important area of study, we (like other researchers) focus on broadly defined racial groups that affect all group members (see Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004, p. 29).

So, how does the idea of race remain relevant? Because of the way they developed, Western concepts of race have a social as well as biological dimension. Sociologists consider race a social construction whose meaning has been created and sustained not by science but by historical, social, economic, and political processes (see Omi & Winant, 1986; Smedley, 2007). For example, in Chapter 4, we will analyze the role of race in the creation of American slavery and you will see that the physical differences between blacks and whites became important *as a result* of that system of inequality. The elites of colonial society needed to justify their unequal treatment of Africans and seized on the obvious differences in skin color, elevated it to a matter of supreme importance, and used it to justify the enslavement of blacks. In other words, the importance of race was

FIGURE 1.8 Gender Inequality Worldwide



SOURCE: Florida (2012).

socially constructed as the result of a particular historical conflict, and it remains important not because of objective realities, but because of the widespread, shared social perception that it is important.

GENDER

You have already seen that minority groups can be internally differentiated by social class and other factors. An additional source of differentiation is gender. Like race, gender has biological and social components that allow it to be a convenient way to sort people and organize social life. Historically, people have used visible biological characteristics such as genitalia to assign people into two sexes (i.e., female, male). Those ascribed statuses then become the basis for **gender norms**, or societal expectations about proper behavior, attitudes, and personality traits. In the contemporary United States, people have stressed the importance of nurturance, interpersonal skills, and "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1979) for girls, while people expect boys to be assertive and independent.

Gender norms vary across time and from one society to another, but sociologists and other social scientists have documented the close relationship between gender and inequality. Typically, men (as a group) possess more property, prestige, and power than women. Figure 1.8 provides some perspective on the variation in gender inequality across the globe. The map shows the Gender Inequality Index, a statistic that measures the amount of inequality between women and men based on variables such as education, health, labor market participation, and political representation. As you can see, gender equality is generally highest in the industrialized nations of North America and Western Europe and lowest in the less developed, more agricultural nations of sub-Saharan Africa.

Western European and North American societies rank relatively high on gender equality, but gender discrimination continues to be a major issue, as you'll see throughout this text (Chapter 11 in particular). For example, there is a consistent—and large—gender income gap in these societies, and women are decidedly underrepresented in the most lucrative and powerful occupations (e.g., see Figure 11.1). While many societies have made progress, gender equality will continue to be an issue for generations to come.

Part of the problem is that all societies, including Western Europe and North America, have strong traditions of **patriarchy**, or men's dominance. In a patriarchal society, men have more control over the economy and more access to leadership roles in business, politics, education, and

Gender norms are societal expectations for behavior based on one's gender status (e.g., girl, boy). The social characteristics associated with males or females.

Patriarchy is men's dominance.

other institutions. Parallel to forms of racism that sought to justify and continue racial inequality, women have been subjected to **sexism**, an ideology that "explains" inequality based on gender. For example, people in some cultures viewed women as "delicate flowers," too emotional, and physically weak for the harsh demands of "manly" occupations outside the home. (In the United States and other societies, this social construction was racialized, applying only to white women. The same men who placed white women "on a pedestal" did not hesitate to send women of color into the fields to perform the most difficult, physically demanding, "unfeminine" tasks during slavery.)

Even in the most progressive societies, women continue to possess many characteristics of a minority group (namely, a pattern of disadvantage based on group membership marked by a physical characteristic). Thus, women could be, and in many ways should be, treated as a separate minority group. We will do this in Chapter 11, but throughout the text, we will address the divergent experiences of men and women within each minority group. We will consider how the interests and experiences of women of different groups and classes coincide with and diverge from one another and from those of the men in their groups. For example, on some issues African American women might have interests identical to those of white women and opposed to those of African American men, and on other issues the constellations of interests might be reversed. As stressed in the intersectionality approach, the experience of minority-group membership varies by gender (along with other criteria), and the way gender is experienced is not the same for every group.

Those in power generally write about history from their own standpoint—ignoring, forgetting, or trivializing minority-group experiences. For instance, much of the history of slavery has been told from the viewpoint of the slave owners. Laws against education kept slaves illiterate, leaving few mechanisms for recording their thoughts or experiences. A more accurate picture of slavery began to emerge only since the mid-20th century, when scholars started to dig beneath the written records and memoirs of the slave owners and reconstruct the experiences of African Americans from nonwritten documentation—such as oral traditions including folklore and songs—and from physical artifacts—such as quilts, pottery, and religious objects (e.g., see Levine, 1977).

However, despite these advances, the experiences of women minorities are much less well known and documented than men's experiences. One of the important trends in contemporary scholarship is to correct this skewed focus and systematically incorporate gender as a vital factor for understanding minority-group experiences (Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill, 1994; Espiritu, 1996).

Sexism refers to belief systems that label women as inferior and rationalize their lower status.

The Social Construction of Gender. Social scientists see race as a social construction created under certain historical circumstances (such as the era of European colonialism) when it was needed to help justify the unequal treatment of nonwhite groups. What about gender? Is it also merely a social creation designed to rationalize the higher status of men and their easier access to power, prestige, and property? Figure 1.8 shows that all contemporary nations have some degree of gender inequality. Is this because—as many people believe—boys and men are "naturally" more aggressive and independent, and girls and women are "naturally" more gentle and dependent? What is the basis of these distinctions? What role, if any, do the distinctions have with people's biology (e.g., genes, hormones)?

First, the traits people commonly see as "typical" for women or men are not disconnected, separate categories. Every person has them to some degree. To the extent that gender differences exist at all, they are manifested not in absolutes but in averages, tendencies, and probabilities. Many people consider aggressiveness to be a masculine characteristic, but many women are more aggressive than many men. Likewise, people tend to associate "emotionality" with women but many men are more emotional than many women. As with race, research shows that there is more variation *within* categories than among them—a finding that seriously undermines the view that gender differences are genetic or biological (Basow, as cited in Rosenblum & Travis, 2002).

Second, gender as a social construction is illustrated by the fact that what is thought to be "appropriate" gender behavior varies over time period and from society to society. The behavior people expected from a woman in Victorian England isn't the same as those for women in 21st-century America. Likewise, the gender norms for men in 500 CE China are different from those in Puritan America. This variability makes it difficult to argue that the differences between the genders are "hardwired" in the genetic code; if they were, the variations over time and place would be nonexistent.

Third, the relationship between subsistence technology and gender inequality illustrates the social nature of gender norms. As we noted previously, our species evolved in East Africa and relied on hunting and gathering to satisfy their need for food. Our distant ancestors lived in small, nomadic bands that relied on cooperation and sharing for survival. Societies at this level of development typically divide adult labor roles by gender (with men hunting and women gathering), and, although they may tend toward patriarchy, women and women's work are highly valued and gender inequality is minimal. The subordination of women

is more closely associated with settled agricultural communities, the first of which appeared about 10,000 years ago in what is now the Middle East. Survival in preindustrial farming societies requires the combined efforts of many people; thus, large families are valued as a cheap labor force. Women are consigned to household and domestic duties, with a strong emphasis on producing and raising children. Because the infant mortality rate in these societies is high (approximately 50% or more), women spend much of their lives confined and secluded, pregnant or nursing young children, far removed from the possibility of contending for leadership roles in their communities.

Industrialization and urbanization, linked processes that began in the mid-1700s in Great Britain, changed the cost-benefit ratios for childbearing. The expenses associated with having children rose in the city, and the nature of industrial work increasingly required education and literacy—qualities and abilities available to both genders. Thus, gender inequality probably reached its peak in preindustrial agrarian societies and has tended to decline as societies industrialized. It is no accident of timing that the push for gender equality and the Women's Liberation Movement are associated with industrial societies and that gender equality is highest today in industrial and postindustrial societies (see Figure 1.8).

Biology may shape one's personality to some degree, and researchers continue to explore the links between genetics and gender norms (e.g., see Hopcroft, 2009; Huber, 2007; Udry, 2000) as well as the interaction between them. However, at its core, gender is social, not biological (Booth, Granger, Mazur, & Kivligham, 2006, pp. 167–191; see also Ridgeway, 2011, pp. 18–23). Gender, like race, is a social construction, especially when people treat the supposed differences between men and women as categorical, "natural," and fixed, and then use those ideas to deny opportunity and equality to women.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

7. Are gender and race *merely* social constructions? Aren't they *real* in some ways? In what ways do they exist apart from people's perception of them? Are they both social constructions in the same way? Are they *equally* matters of perception?

KEY CONCEPTS IN DOMINANT–MINORITY RELATIONS

Whenever people raise sensitive issues such as dominant–minority group relations, the discussion often turns to matters of prejudice and discrimination. We need to clarify these terms. This section introduces and defines four concepts that will help you understand dominant–minority relations in the United States.

This book addresses how individuals from different groups interact, as well as how groups interact with each other. Thus, we need to distinguish between what is true for individuals (the more psychological level of analysis) and what is true for groups or society as a whole (the sociological level of analysis). Beyond that, we must attempt to trace the connections between these two levels of analysis.

At the individual level, what people think and feel about other groups may differ from how they actually behave toward members of another group. A person might express negative feelings about other groups in private but deal fairly with members of the group in face-to-face interactions. Groups and entire societies may display this same kind of inconsistency. A society may express support for equality in its official documents or formal codes of law and simultaneously treat minority groups in unfair and destructive ways. An example of this kind of inconsistency is the contrast between the commitment to equality stated in the Declaration of Independence ("All men are created equal") and the actual treatment of black slaves, Anglo-American women, and American Indians at that time.

At the individual level, social scientists refer to the "thinking/feeling" part of this dichotomy as prejudice and the "doing" part as discrimination. At the group level, the term **ideological racism** describes the thinking/feeling dimension and **institutional discrimination** describes the doing dimension. Table 1.1 depicts the differences among these four concepts.

TABLE 1.1 Four Concepts in Dominant–Minority Relations

DIMENSION	LEVEL OF ANALYSIS	
	Individual	Group or Societal
Thinking/feeling	Prejudice	Ideological racism
Doing	Discrimination	Institutional discrimination

Ideological racism refers to societal belief systems that label certain groups as inferior.

Institutional discrimination is a pattern of unequal treatment of a group built into the daily operation of society.

PREJUDICE

Prejudice is the tendency of an individual to think about other groups in negative ways, to attach negative emotions to those groups, and to prejudge individuals based on their group memberships. Individual prejudice has two aspects: **cognitive prejudice**, or the thinking aspect, and **affective prejudice**, or the feeling part. A prejudiced person thinks about other groups in terms of **stereotypes** (cognitive prejudice), generalizations that he or she thinks apply to group members. Examples of familiar stereotypes include notions such as "women are emotional," "Jews are stingy," "blacks are lazy," "the Irish are drunks," and "Germans are authoritarian." A prejudiced person also experiences negative emotional responses to other groups (affective prejudice), including contempt, disgust, arrogance, and hatred.

People vary in their levels of prejudice, and levels of prejudice vary in the same person from one time to another and from one group to another. We can say that people are prejudiced to the extent that they use stereotypes in their thinking about other groups or have negative emotional reactions to other groups.

Generally, the two dimensions of prejudice are highly correlated with each other; however, they are distinct and separate aspects of prejudice and can vary independently. One person may think entirely in stereotypes but feel no particular negative emotional response to any group. Another person may feel a very strong aversion toward a group but be unable to articulate a clear or detailed stereotype of that group.

Individual prejudice, like all aspects of society, evolves and changes. In the past, American prejudice was strongly felt, overtly expressed, and laced with clear, detailed stereotypes. Overt forms declined after the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s but did not disappear, and vast numbers of Americans came to view them as problematic. In modern societies that emphasize mutual respect and tolerance, people tend to express prejudice in subtle, indirect ways. For example, prejudice might manifest in language that functions as a kind of code; for instance, when people associate "welfare cheats" or criminality with certain minority groups. We will explore these modern forms of prejudice in Chapter 3,

Prejudice is the tendency of individuals to think and feel negatively toward others.

The **cognitive dimension of prejudice** refers to how people *think* about members of other groups.

The **affective dimension of prejudice** refers to how people *feel* about members of other groups.

Stereotypes are generalizations thought to characterize groups as a whole.

Samuel Corum/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

In 2017, hundreds of white nationalists marched on the University of Virginia campus. Note the shirt's triangular "dragon's eye" symbol of the white nationalist group, Identity Evropa.

but we need to be clear that the relative absence of blatant stereotyping or expressions of strong public emotions against minority groups in modern society does not mean that we have eliminated individual prejudice in the United States. In more recent years, many of the traditional forms have reasserted themselves, as we'll discuss in future chapters.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is the unequal treatment of people based on their group membership; for example, an employer doesn't hire someone because he or she is African American (or Puerto Rican, Jewish, Chinese, etc.). If the unequal treatment is based on the individual's group membership (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion), the act is discriminatory.

Just as the cognitive and affective aspects of prejudice can be independent, discrimination and prejudice do not necessarily occur together. Even highly prejudiced individuals may not act on their negative thoughts or feelings. In social settings regulated by strong egalitarian codes or laws (e.g., restaurants and other public facilities), people who are highly bigoted in their private thoughts and feelings may follow these norms in public. On the other hand, when people approve of prejudice in social situations, such support can produce discrimination from otherwise unprejudiced individuals. In the southern United States during the height of segregation, and in South Africa during the period of state-sanctioned racial inequality called apartheid, it was usual and customary for whites to treat blacks in discriminatory ways. Regardless of individuals' actual level of prejudice, they faced strong social pressure to conform to the official forms of racial superiority and discrimination.

Discrimination is the unequal treatment of a person based on his or her group membership.