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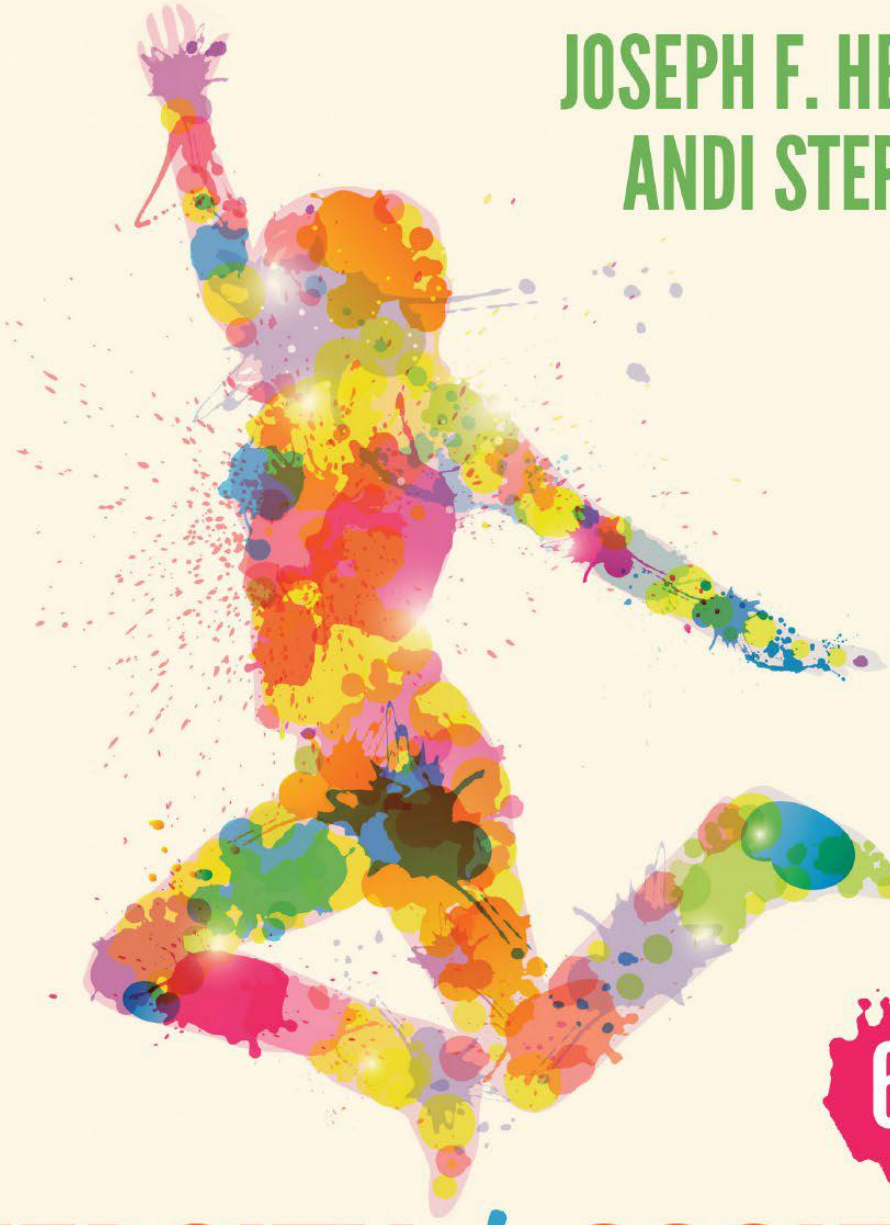
ANDI STEPNICK



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DIVERSITY & SOCIETY

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Diversity and Society

Sixth Edition

This book is dedicated to my mother, Alice T. Healey. May she rest in peace.

—Joe

To Shari, Catherine, Jennifer, and JT with deep gratitude 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

Diversity and Society

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Sixth Edition

Joseph F. Healey

Christopher Newport University

Andi Stepnick

Belmont University

SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

FOR INFORMATION:

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2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

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PREFACE

Of the challenges confronting the United States today, those relating to diversity continue to be among the most urgent and the most daunting. Discrimination and the rejection of "others" are part of our national heritage. Along with equality, freedom, and justice, prejudice, racism, and sexism are 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, and class. We've written for undergraduate students—sociology majors and nonmajors alike. We make few assumptions about students' knowledge of history or sociological concepts, and we try to present the material in a way that you will find accessible and relevant.

For example, we use a unified set of themes and concepts throughout the text. Our analysis is consistent and continuous, 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, we apply these concepts and analytical themes to a series of case studies of racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., African Americans, Native Americans). Finally, we review and summarize our main points and bring our analysis to a conclusion in the last chapter, where we also 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 systems—and we systematically compare and contrast the experiences and situations 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 don't attempt to give equal attention to all current sociological paradigms, explain everything, or include all possible analytical points of view. It couldn't be done! Rather, our goals are (a) to present the sociology of minority group relations in a way that you'll find understandable and intellectually challenging and (b) to address the issues (and tell the stories behind the issues) in a way that is highly readable and that demonstrates the power and importance of sociological thinking.

Although the text maintains a unified analytical perspective, we offer a wide variety of perspectives in our online resources. For example, we offer *Current Debates* for Chapters 1 through 9 (available at http://edge.sagepub.com/diversity6e). The debates focus on an issue taken from the chapter but present the views of scholars and analysts from a variety of disciplines and viewpoints. Without detracting from the continuity of the main analysis, these debates reinforce the idea that no one has all the answers

(or, for that matter, all the questions), and they can be used to stimulate discussion, bring additional perspectives to the classroom, and suggest topics for further research.

Additionally, every chapter (except the last) presents personal experiences that compellingly and dramatically foreshadow the material that follows. These introductions include the experiences and thoughts of a wide variety of people: immigrants, writers, politicians, racists, slaves, and "regular" people, among others. Also, each chapter (except the last) includes a section called *Focus on Contemporary Issues* that addresses a specific issue in American society that readers will find current and relevant.

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). We use an intersectional perspective that explores the ways race, ethnicity, social class, and gender influence one another, creating ever-shifting constellations of dominance and subordination. We focus on American minority groups. However, we've included a considerable amount of comparative, cross-national material. For example, the *Comparative Focus* features explore group relations in other societies.

Finally, we stress the ways American minority groups are inseparable from the American experience—from the early days of colonial settlements to tomorrow's headlines. 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 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.

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 these elements because we cannot understand (or change) the things we do not face.

FEATURES

- Chapters 1–4 provide a broad conceptual and historical overview of minority groups, dominant–minority group relations, and immigration to the United States.
- Chapters 5–8 focus on major U.S. racial and ethnic groups: African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans.
- Chapter 9 focuses on issues of diversity and inequality for "new Americans" from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
- **Opening Vignettes** foreshadow the chapter content in a personal way to generate student interest.

- **Questions for Reflection** help students analyze the material, identify key points, and recognize areas needing additional study.
- **Applying Concepts** activities provide students opportunities to use key chapter ideas.
- **Comparative Focus** boxes look at group relations outside the United States.
- **Focus on Contemporary Issues** boxes address current and relevant issues (e.g., modern slavery, hate crimes).
- This book uses an **intersectional approach** that offers a more complex view of diversity within the U. S. and within each minority group. In particular, we focus on how race, ethnicity, social class, and gender statuses combine with each other to produce unique experiences and oppressions.
- **Main Points** summarize key ideas from each chapter and **Review Questions** give students a chance to assess their understanding.
- **Group Discussion** questions provide teachers and students with a way to collectively explore ideas and questions.

CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

- Chapter content has been thoroughly updated from more than 500 new sources, allowing students to learn about the latest research. Expanded content emphasizes current events and applicability of concepts and theories to contemporary social problems (e.g., racial bias in the criminal justice system, immigration issues), including international ones. New examples emphasize an intersectional approach and highlight dominance, oppression, and the distribution of power. Additionally, we emphasize historical trajectory and past-in-present discrimination as much as possible. For example, students can't understand what happened in Ferguson, Missouri without understanding the historical context (1992 Los Angeles riots, 1965 Watts Rebellion).
- More than 80 new and updated tables, maps, and figures
- Updates or additions to the *Comparative Focus* features in Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
- Updates or additions to the *Focus on Contemporary Issues* features in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9
- New or revised *Opening Vignettes* in Chapters 3 and 5
- Revised or expanded *Questions for Reflection*, *Review Questions*, or *Group Discussion* questions in each chapter

- We've thoroughly revised the text to make it fresher, more relevant, more approachable, and even easier to understand. For example, we've simplified the writing and sentence structure. Additionally, we've taken steps to highlight social actors and processes by using active voice and by making other changes in language. For example, when possible, we use "enslaved people" instead of "slaves" because the former emphasizes that individuals, through the system of slavery, put humans in bondage. The latter is a social status that hides this important reality.

Some of the new and expanded topics in this edition include the following:

Chapter 1

- The changing social construction of race in the U.S. census

Chapter 2

- Theories of Assimilation (e.g., critiques of unidirectional models, intersectional and bidimensional models)
- The Holocaust (e.g., recent research about Americans' decreasing awareness, the role "everyday people" played, and documentation of more than 40,000 sites such as work "camps")
- Anti-Semitism (the relationship between the Old and New Worlds; European pogroms; and recent increases in anti-Semitic groups, attitudes, and hate crimes)

Chapter 3

- The origins of slavery (e.g., indentured servitude, first laws, widespread acceptance, and ideology)
- Modern theories of acculturation (e.g., multi-directional models)
- Regional variations in the system of slavery (e.g., Deep South states and widespread ownership, use, or benefits for whites)
- The experiences of enslaved women (e.g., division of labor, ideologies of "true womanhood")

Chapter 4

- Hate crimes (expanded explanation and examples such as the Tree of Life synagogue shooting as well as data about LGBTQIA and Muslim Americans)
- Social control of African Americans (e.g., sharecropping and Black Codes during de jure segregation)
- Educational inequalities (e.g., racially segregated, underfunded K–12 public schools) and their influence on college preparedness and competitiveness in the workforce

Chapter 5

- The perception of African Americans as "other" (e.g., "Living While Black"—police being called about African Americans doing "everyday things" in "white spaces")
- Rosa Parks and other pioneers of the civil rights movement
- The War on Drugs and inequalities in the criminal justice system (e.g., disparate sentencing)
- Police-related shootings of African Americans
- Increasing white supremacy, including the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, VA
- Debates about Confederate monuments and confederate-era symbols (including the "battle flag" and its history)

Chapter 6

- Native Americans' views on nature and land ownership
- Native Americans' views on gender (including two-spirit people and gender fluidity) and how gender organized social life
- The 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protest
- Similarities with Aboriginal people from Australia

Chapter 7

- Changes in immigration patterns (e.g., increases in unaccompanied minors and people from Central America)
- Changes to immigration policy (e.g., ICE, Homeland Security budgets, family separation)
- Hispanic American immigrant women workers
- DREAMers
- Historical information about Cuba and Puerto Rico
- Measuring the effects of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico
- Chicanas in El Movimento (Dolores Huerta, Lopez De La Cruz, Maria Luisa Rangel Juanita Valdez)

Chapter 8

- The role of labor unions in the 19th-century Anti-Chinese movement (e.g., Dennis Kearney of the Workingman's Party, Anti-Coolie Act)
- WWII detention centers for Japanese (and other) Americans as well as the demand for meaningful redress and National Day of Remembrance

- Japan's "invisible" minority: The Barakumin
- The model minority myth and its effects

ANCILLARIES

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- **Internet Activities** encourage students to apply chapter concepts to the "real world" via oral history archives, online art exhibits, YouTube videos, TED Talks, and more.
- Carefully selected chapter-by-chapter **video links** and **multimedia content** enhance classroom-based explorations of key topics.
- The **Current Debates** resource presents two or more opposing statements from scholars and analysts on controversial questions raised in the chapters (Are Indian sports team mascots offensive?).
- **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.
- **For further reading** lists useful books and articles for additional study on minority groups and intergroup relations.
- Exclusive access to full-text **SAGE journal articles** provides students with carefully selected articles designed to support and expand on the concepts presented in each chapter.

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- The **Current Debates** resource presents two or more opposing statements from scholars and analysts on controversial questions raised in the chapters (Are Indian sports team mascots offensive? Should children be raised genderless?).
- **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.
- **For further reading** lists useful books and articles for additional study on minority groups and intergroup relations.
- A **common course cartridge** includes all of the instructor resources and assessment material from the student study site, making it easy for instructors to upload and use these materials in learning management systems such as Blackboard, ™Angel, ®Moodle™, Canvas, and Desire2Learn™.

Exclusive access to full-text SAGE journal articles provides instructors with carefully selected articles designed to support and expand on the concepts presented in each chapter.

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—Joseph F. Healey

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—Andi Stepnick

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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

PART ONE

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

The United States is a nation of groups as well as individuals. These groups vary in many ways, including their size, wealth, education, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and language. Some groups have been part of American[1] society since colonial days, while others have formed recently.

Questions of unity and diversity are among the most pressing issues facing the United States today. How should these groups relate to one another? Who should be considered American? Should we stress our diversity and preserve the many cultural heritages and languages that currently exist? Should we encourage everyone to adopt Anglo American culture and strive to become more similar? Or should we celebrate our differences? Is it possible to do both?

We begin to address these questions and other related issues in Chapters 1 and 2. Our goal 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 American society. We'll sustain this focus throughout this book.

1

DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Questions and Concepts

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[2]

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 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[3]

> *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[4]

What do Butch, Rebecca, and Jennifer have in common? How do they differ? They think about their place in American 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 and at ease being "just an American."

Today, the United States is growing more diverse in culture, race, religion, and language. The number of Americans who identify as multiracial or who can connect themselves to different cultural traditions is increasing. Where will this increasing diversity lead us? Will our nation fragment? Could we dissolve into warring enclaves—the fate of more than one modern nation? Or can we find connection and commonality? Could we develop tolerance, respect, or even admiration for one another? Can we overcome the legacies of inequality established in colonial days? Can Americans embrace our nation's increasing diversity and live out our motto, *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one)?

This book raises many questions about the past, present, and future of group relationships in America. For example, what historical, social, political, and economic forces shaped those relationships historically and how are they shaping contemporary group relations? How do racial and ethnic groups relate to each other today? What kind of society are we becoming because of immigration? What does it mean to be an American? What kind of society do we want to become and how can we move in that direction?

America is a nation of immigrants and groups. Today, about 13.5% of the U.S. population was born in some other nation. The population of some states is more than one fifth foreign-born (e.g., California is 28% foreign-born), and some cities are more than one third foreign-born (e.g., New York is 37% foreign-born; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017c). 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 Native Americans 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, on busses, and even on foot. Some arrived last week, while others have had family here for centuries. Each wave of newcomers has altered our social landscape. As many have observed, our society is continually under construction and seems permanently unfinished.

Today, America is remaking itself yet again. Large numbers of immigrants are arriving from around the world, and their presence has raised questions about 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 America? Are they bringing new energy and revitalizing the economy? Are they draining resources such as school budgets, health care, and jobs? Both? 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, Donald Trump became our country's 45th president. 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 the 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. Native Americans and African Americans have been a part of this society since its start, but they've existed largely as outsiders—as slaves, servants, laborers, or even enemies—to the mainstream, dominant group. In many ways, they haven't 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 future chapters, they and other American minority groups continue to suffer from inequality, discrimination, and marginalization.

Even a casual glance at our schools, courts, neighborhoods, churches, or corporate boardrooms—indeed, at any nook or cranny of our society—reveals pervasive patterns of inequality, injustice, and unfairness and different opportunities. So, which is the "real"[5] 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. Group membership, including our race or ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation, shape our experiences and, therefore, how we think about American society, the world, and ourselves. Additionally, group membership shapes the opportunities available to us and to others.

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 U. S. may be at a crossroads concerning these issues. Throughout this book, you'll 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.

MINORITY GROUPS: TRENDS AND QUESTIONS

Because our group memberships shape our experiences and worldviews, they also affect the choices we make, including those in the voting booth. People in different groups may view decisions in different ways due to their divergent group histories, experiences, and current situations. Without some knowledge of the many ways someone can be an American, the debates over which direction our society should take are likely to be unmeaningful or even misunderstood.

Increasing Diversity

The choices about our society's future may feel especially urgent because the diversity of American society is increasing dramatically, largely due to high rates of immigration. Since the 1960s, the number of immigrants arriving in America each year has more than tripled and includes groups from around the world.

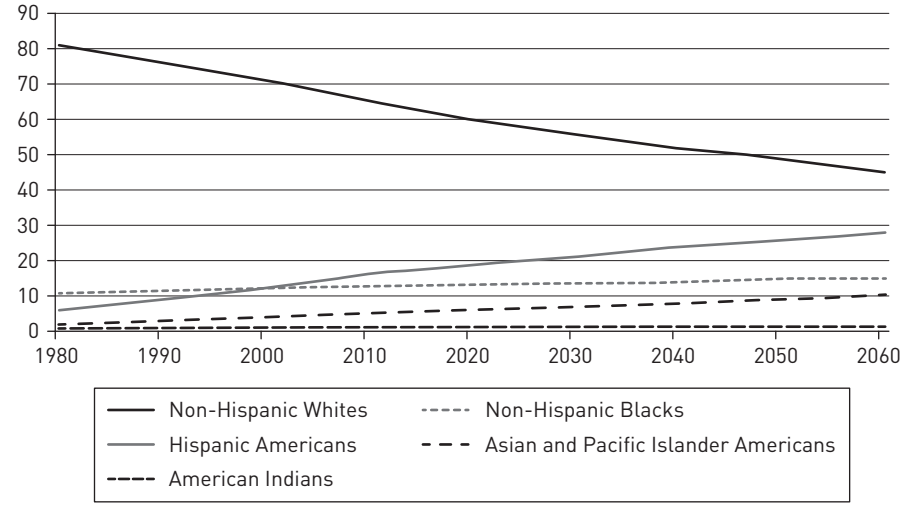
People's concerns about increasing diversity are compounded by other unresolved issues and grievances. For example, in Part 3, we document continuing gaps in income, poverty rates, and other measures of affluence and equality between minority and dominant groups. In many ways, the problems currently facing African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and other minority groups are as formidable as they were a generation (or more) ago. Given these realities, how can America better live out its promise of equality for all?

Let's consider the changing makeup of America. Figure 1.1 presents the percentage of the total U.S. population in each of the five largest racial and ethnic groups. First, we'll consider this information at face value and analyze some of its implications. Then, we'll consider (and question) the framing of this information, such as group names and why they matter.

Figure 1.1 shows the groups' relative sizes from 1980 through 2010 (when the government last conducted the census) and it offers the projected relative sizes of each group through 2060. The declining numbers of non-Hispanic whites reflect the 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 U. S. (50.4%) are members of minority groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b).

Researchers predict that African American and Native American populations will increase in absolute numbers but will remain similar in relative size. However, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander populations 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,

FIGURE 1.1 ■ U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980–2060



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017a). National Population Projections. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html

Note: Hispanics may be of any race.

however, will be among Hispanic Americans. In 2002, this group surpassed African Americans as the largest minority group. Researchers expect it will be almost 30% of the U. S. population by 2060.

Projections about the future are educated guesses based on documented trends, but they suggest significant 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 these demographic changes as part of the ebb and flow of social life. That is, society has changed ever since it began; this is merely another phase in the great American experiment. Which viewpoints are most in line with your own and why?

What's in a Name?

The group names we used in Figure 1.1 are arbitrary, and no group has 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. Although such group names are convenient, this doesn't mean that they are "real" in any absolute sense or equally useful in all circumstances. These group names have some serious shortcomings. For example, they reflect social conventions whose meanings change over time and location. 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). Nevertheless, issues remain.

First, the race/ethnic labels suggest groups are homogeneous. While it's true that people within one group may share some general, superficial physical or cultural traits (e.g., language), 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 the categories of Native American or Alaska Native include 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 group (e.g., Hispanics) might be quite different from each other in some respects and similar to people from "different" racial/ethnic groups (e.g., whites).

Second, people don't necessarily use these labels when they think about their own identity. In this sense, the labels aren't "real" or important for all the people in these racial/ethnic groups. For example, many whites in the U. S. (like Jennifer, quoted in the chapter opening) think of themselves as "just American." Many Hispanic Americans think of themselves in relation to ethnic origin, such as Mexican or Cuban (see Chapter 7). Or they may identify with a particular region or village in their homeland. For LGBTQIA[6] group members, sexual orientation may be more important to their identity than their race or ethnicity. Thus, the labels don't 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 don't grow out of or always reflect people's everyday realities.

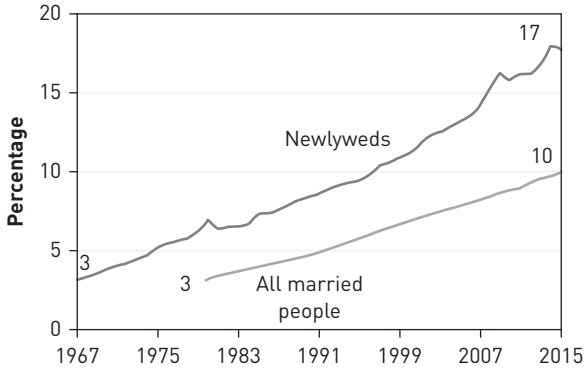
Third, although the categories in Figure 1.1 are broad, several groups don't neatly fit into them. For example, where should we place Arab Americans and recent immigrants from Africa? These groups are relatively small (about 1 million people each), but there is no clear place for them in the current categories. Should we consider Arab Americans as "Asian," as some argue? Should recent immigrants from Africa be in the same category as African Americans? Should we create a new group for people of Middle Eastern or North African descent? The point is that such classification schemes have somewhat ambiguous boundaries.

Further, we can't neatly categorize people who identify with more than one racial or ethnic group (like Butch, quoted in the chapter opening). The number of "mixed-group" Americans is relatively small today—about 3% of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2015a). However, between 2000 and 2016, the number of people who chose more than one racial or ethnic category on the U.S. census increased by 33% (from 2.4% to 3.2% of the total population) (Jones & Bullock, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). This trend is likely to continue increasing rapidly because of the growth in interracial marriage.

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 who will be born of such partnerships. 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 group names are **social constructions**,[7] or ideas and perceptions that people create in specific historical circumstances and that reflect particular power relationships. For example, the group "Native Americans" didn't exist before

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



Source: Livingston and Brown (2017).

the European exploration and colonization of North America. Before then, hundreds of separate indigenous societies, each with its own language and culture, lived across North America. Native Americans thought of themselves primarily in terms of their tribe and had little awareness of the many other groups spread across the vast expanse of the North American continent. However, European conquerors constructed them as one group: the enemy. Today, many Americans see Native Americans as one group. This reflects their historical defeat and domination by white European colonists, which led to Native Americans' current status as a minority group in a largely white society.

Likewise (although through different processes), African, Hispanic, and Asian Americans came to be seen as separate groups as the result of their unequal interactions with white Americans. These group labels have become real because people *believe* they are real. We use these familiar group labels to facilitate our discussion of complex topics, but they don't reflect some unchangeable truth or reality regarding racial or ethnic groups.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. If asked about your group membership, which of the groups in Figure 1.1 would you choose, if any? Do you feel that you belong to one group or several? How much does your group membership shape your circle of friends, your experiences, and your worldview? How important is your group membership to your self-identity?

(Continued)

(Continued)

2. 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?
3. Over the past 5 to 10 years, what signs of increasing diversity have you seen in your community? What benefits and challenges have come with that increasing diversity?
4. What does it mean to be American? If you asked Americans, a popular answer might be *freedom*. What does that mean to you—freedom to do what? Or freedom from what? How do you think people of other countries or generations might respond?

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

At our country's inception, the law recognized only white Anglo-Saxon Protestant men of elite classes as full citizens deserving of specific rights (e.g., voting) and opportunities (e.g., education). Most of us would agree that this definition of *American* is far too narrow. Given the changing U.S. population (Figure 1.1), you may wonder who should count as American. What does it mean to be an American? Does diversity threaten societal cohesion? Likewise, what problems might come from narrow definitions of what it means to be an American?

We've raised several complex questions in these first few pages. The answers aren't obvious or easy to come by. There is no guarantee that we, as a society, will be willing or able to resolve all the issues related to intergroup relations. However, the issues won't disappear or resolve themselves if we ignore them. We'll never make progress unless we address the issues honestly and with an accurate base of knowledge and understanding. We hope this book helps you develop thoughtful, informed positions on these issues.

Throughout our inquiry, we'll rely on sociology and other social sciences for concepts, theories, and information to gain a greater understanding of the issues. The first two chapters introduce many of the ideas that will guide our investigation. Part 2 explores how relations between the dominant group and minority groups have evolved over time. Part 3 analyzes the current situation of U.S. racial and ethnic minority groups. Finally, Part 4 explores many of the challenges facing our society (and the world) and offers conclusions from our inquiry.

WHAT IS A MINORITY GROUP?

A common vocabulary will help us understand and discuss the issues with greater clarity. The mathematical connotation of the term **minority group** implies that minority groups are small. However, they can be quite large—even a numerical majority. For example,

most sociologists consider women a minority group, although they are a numerical majority of the U.S. population. Whites are a numerical minority in South Africa, accounting for less than 10% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). However, they've been the most powerful and affluent group in that nation's history. Despite the end of **apartheid** (a state-sanctioned racial inequality) in South Africa, whites keep their advantage in many ways (e.g., economically, politically). Therefore, sociologists would consider them the dominant group.

Sociologists define minority status in terms of the distribution of resources and power. We use the definition of minority group developed by Wagley and Harris (1958) that emphasizes these characteristics:

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

Next, we briefly explain these five characteristics. Because inequality and visibility are the most important characteristics of minority groups, we'll examine them in even more detail later in the chapter.

1. **Inequality**. The first and most important defining characteristic of a minority group is its *inequality* (some pattern of disadvantage). The degree of disadvantage varies over time and location and includes 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're a left-handed student awkwardly taking notes at a right-handed desk or if you're a golf aficionado who happens to be African American or Jewish American.) The most significant inequalities include exploitation, such as 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 inequality. This advantaged group is the **dominant group**. We use the latter term most frequently because it reflects the patterns of inequality and the lack of power experienced by minority groups. Keep in mind that the inequalities we see today were established in the past, sometimes centuries ago or more. 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 apart and that the dominant group holds in low esteem. The trait can be cultural (e.g., language, religion, speech patterns, or dress styles), physical (e.g., skin color, stature, or facial features), or both. Groups defined primarily by their cultural characteristics such as Irish Americans and Jewish Americans are **ethnic minority groups**. Groups defined primarily by their physical characteristics, such as African Americans and Native Americans, are **racial minority groups**. These categories overlap. So-called ethnic groups may also have what some people see as distinguishing physical characteristics (e.g., the stereotypical Irish red hair or "Jewish nose"). Racial groups may also have (or be thought to have) cultural traits that differ from the dominant group (e.g., differences in dialect, religious values, or cuisine).

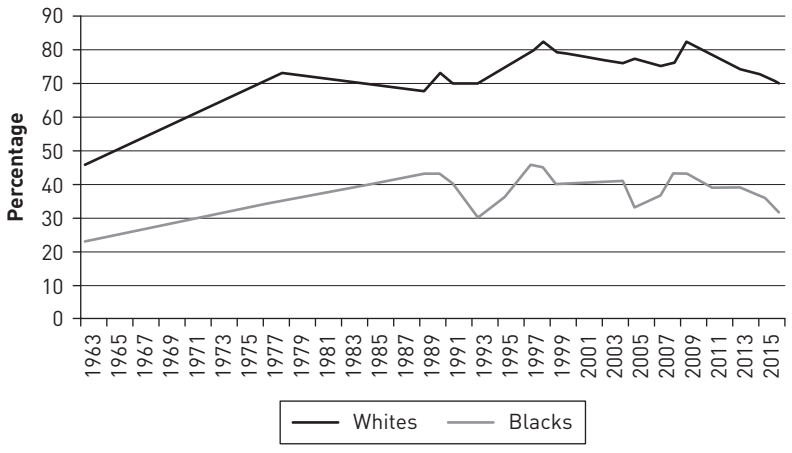
These distinguishing traits help identify minority group members and separate people into distinct groups. Thus, they help to maintain the patterns of disadvantage. That is, the dominant group has (or at one time had) enough power to create the distinction between groups and thus solidify a higher position 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 collapse.

The characteristics marking the boundaries between groups usually aren't significant in and of themselves. They are selected for their 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 simply reflects the body's response to sunlight. In areas with greater sunlight (closer to the equator), people's bodies produce melanin, which screens out the sun's ultraviolet rays and protects the skin. Skin color emerged as an important marker of group membership in our society through a complex and lengthy historical process, not because it has any inherent significance. Again, these markers of minority group membership become important because people give them significance (e.g., superiority, 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 a sense of solidarity and serve as the basis for strong intragroup bonds. As noted earlier, minority and dominant groups can experience life differently. Thus, minority group members may have worldviews that are markedly different from those of the dominant group and from other minority groups. For example, public opinion polls often show sizeable group differences about the seriousness and extent of discrimination in America. 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. Given their different group histories, experiences, and locations in the social hierarchy, it may not surprise you that black Americans see more racial inequality than whites. Even after President Obama's election in 2008, the percentage of black Americans who believed equal opportunity exists was about half the rate of white Americans.

Both groups have become more pessimistic about equal opportunity in recent years. A 2016 national poll showed that only 71% of Americans believed black children

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



Source: Gallup (2017a).

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). Only 70% believe black Americans have equal opportunities to get housing, which is the lowest rating on this question since 1989 (J. M. Jones, 2016).

4. **Ascription**. A fourth characteristic of minority groups is that, generally, membership is an **ascribed status** given to them, often at birth. The traits that identify minority group membership are typically hard to change. Thus, minority group status is usually involuntary and for life.

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

Pervasive racial and ethnic segregation of neighborhoods, schools, and other areas of American society 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 the 1967 case, *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 Native Americans but we can apply it to other groups. For instance, women as a group fit the first four criteria, and we can analyze their experience with many of the same concepts and ideas that guide our analysis of racial and ethnic minority groups. Similarly, we can apply this concept to Americans who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender; to Americans with disabilities;

to Americans who are left-handed; and to Americans who are very old, very short, very tall, or very obese. We hope that you gain insights about a wide variety of groups and people by applying ideas from this book.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

5. Which parts of the definition of a minority group apply to gay and lesbian Americans? Which parts, if any, apply to other groups of interest that are not defined as American minority groups, such as Christians or men? What do your answers suggest about differences between minority and majority groups?

PATTERNS OF INEQUALITY

The most important defining characteristic of minority group status is inequality. As you'll see, minority group membership affects 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 opportunities for upward mobility.

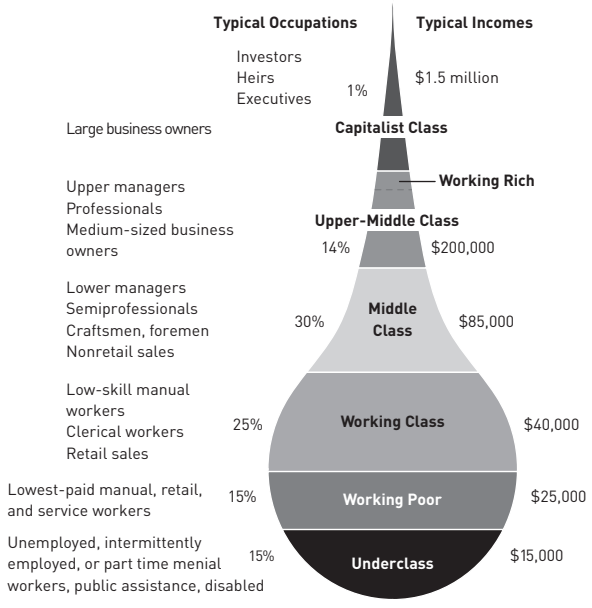
Stratification is the hierarchical ranking of societal groups that results in the unequal distribution of goods and services. Every human society, except the simplest hunter–gatherer societies, is stratified to some degree. You can visualize these divisions as horizontal layers (or strata) that differ from one another by the amount of resources they command. Economic stratification results in different **social classes**. Many criteria (e.g., education, age, gender, power, parent's social class) may affect a person's social class position and their 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 U. S. and in other societies.

The next section considers different theories about the nature and dimensions of stratification. Then, we discuss how minority group status relates to stratification.

Theoretical Perspectives

Sociologist (and other social scientists) have been concerned with stratification and inequality since the formation of sociology in the 19th century. We highlight four of the most significant thinkers in this section. An early and important contributor to our understanding of the 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 are 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, which views inequalities based on class, race or ethnicity, gender (and so on) as a single, interlocking system of inequality.

FIGURE 1.4 ■ Class in the United States



Source: Gilbert, 2011.

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 significant role in world affairs for more than 170 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 a society produces and distributes goods and services. In an agricultural society, the means of production include land, draft animals, and plows. 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 social classes that struggle over the means of production. In industrial societies, the rise of capitalism created a new, simplified class system with two classes. 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 called them "two great hostile camps" (Marx & Engels, 1967, p. 1). He believed that class conflict was inevitable and that, ultimately, the working class would revolt against the bourgeoisie and create a society without exploitation, coercion, or inequality. That is, it would create a classless society.

Marx is consistently named one of the most influential thinkers of all time; yet, scholars and others have extensively critiqued or modified his ideas. Nevertheless, modern social science owes a great deal to his insights about inequality, class struggle, social conflict, and group relations, as you'll see in upcoming chapters.

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 saw Marx's view of inequality as too narrow. Weber argued that inequality included dimensions other than one's relationship to the means of production. Weber expanded on Marx's view of inequality by identifying three separate components of stratification.

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 like Marx's concept of class, and Weber used the term **class** for this specific form of inequality.

A second dimension of stratification involves differences in **prestige**, or the amount of honor, esteem, or respect that people give us. Different factors influence prestige, including one's class position, family lineage, athletic ability, and physical appearance. Group membership also affects prestige. People typically give less prestige to minority group members than dominant group members.

The third component of stratification 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 that lobby state and federal legislatures, such as labor unions or interest groups. Some politically active groups have access to great wealth and can it to promote their causes. Other groups may rely more on their size and ability to mobilize large demonstrations to achieve their goals. Political organizations and the people they represent vary in the power that they can mobilize to control political decision making.

Typically, these three dimensions of stratification go together: wealthy, prestigious classes are generally 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.

Weber's concept of stratification offers more complexity than Marx's. For example, instead of simply being bourgeoise or proletariat, Weber suggests that people can be 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.

Gerhard Lenski

Gerhard Lenski is a modern 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). Lenski argues that the degree of inequality or the criteria affecting a group's position is closely related to **subsistence technology**, or how the society

meets people's basic needs for food, water, shelter, and so on. 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.

In modern industrial societies, land ownership isn't 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, the level of development and the nature of inequality, differs.

The U. S. and other more-industrialized societies have entered another stage of development, so they are often referred to as **postindustrial societies**. In postindustrial societies, developments in new technology, computer-related fields, information processing, and scientific research create economic growth. Additionally, one's economic success is closely related to formal education, specialized knowledge, and familiarity with new technologies (Chirot, 1994, p. 88; see also Bell, 1973).

These changes in subsistence technology, from agriculture to industrialization to an information-based 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 in society. Some stratification systems are based on social class, while others categorize and rank people by their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability, and other criteria. Most people have complex social statuses, some more privileged and some less privileged. For example, consider a heterosexual, college-educated man with a professional job. These social statuses rank high in the United States. But what if he is Latino or 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 has multiple group memberships and that these crisscross or intersect to create different experiences for people with varying combinations of statuses. For example, the realities faced by gay, white-collar, Mexican American men are different from those faced by heterosexual, blue-collar Puerto Rican women, although 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, such as those based on class (blue collar vs. white collar), race (black vs. white), or gender (men vs. women). An intersectional approach involves seeing how these statuses link together to form a "matrix of domination." For example, white Americans aren't a homogenous dominant group. Some group

members, such as women or poor whites, are privileged in terms of their race (white) but subordinate in terms of their gender (women) or class (poor). Collins's ideas help us see that who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor changes across social contexts, and people can occupy privileged and subordinated statuses simultaneously.

The separate systems of domination and subordination overlap and reinforce one another. This matrix of domination shapes people's opportunities, experiences, and perceptions. As you'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 5.5, which shows that black women consistently earn less income than either black men of the same race and white women of the same gender).

Likewise, stereotypes and other elements of prejudice are gendered. For example, some stereotypical traits might be applied to all African Americans (such as laziness), but others are applied only to women (e.g., "uppity") or men (e.g., "thug").

An intersectional approach stresses the multiplicity of systems of inequality and analyzes the connections between them. It sees groups as complex, not uniform. In this book, we'll 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've 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 America, minority group status has been and continues to be one of the most important and powerful determinants of one's **life chances**, or opportunities and access to resources such as nutritious food, health care, education, and a job that provides a good income. We explore these complex patterns of inequality in Part 3, but observation of American society reveals that minority groups control proportionately fewer resources and that minority group status and stratification are complexly intertwined. Consider, for example, the life chances of two 18-year-olds. One is white, comes from a wealthy family, was educated in excellent private schools, had the opportunity to travel the world on holiday, and has had the opportunity to network with members of the American elite. The other is a recent immigrant who fled the war in Syria. This one is smart, hardworking, and proficient in English but has a low overall level of education, which makes it hard to find work that pays a living wage. Which person has had and will have greater life chances?

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 by group and across time. Some groups, such as Irish or Italian Americans, have experienced considerable upward **social mobility** (or movement) within the class stratification system although they faced considerable discrimination in the past. Furthermore, as stressed by the intersectional approach, minority groups are 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 while the majority of group members experience poverty and powerlessness.

Likewise, members of the same social class vary by ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and other social statuses.

Third, dominant–minority group relationships are created by the struggle to control 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 at the top of the stratification system, or eliminate perceived threats to its well-being. Struggles over property, wealth, prestige, and power lie at the heart of every dominant–minority relationship. Marx believed that the ruling class shaped all aspects of society to 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 you'll see in upcoming chapters.

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. Let's consider two of the more visible and permanent markers of group membership—race and gender.

Race

Historically, race has been widely misunderstood, but the false ideas and exaggerated importance people have attached to race haven't merely been errors of logic that are 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, such as slavery and genocide. Myths about race continue today, though in different forms. To decrease the likelihood of further tragedies, it's important to cultivate accurate understandings about race.

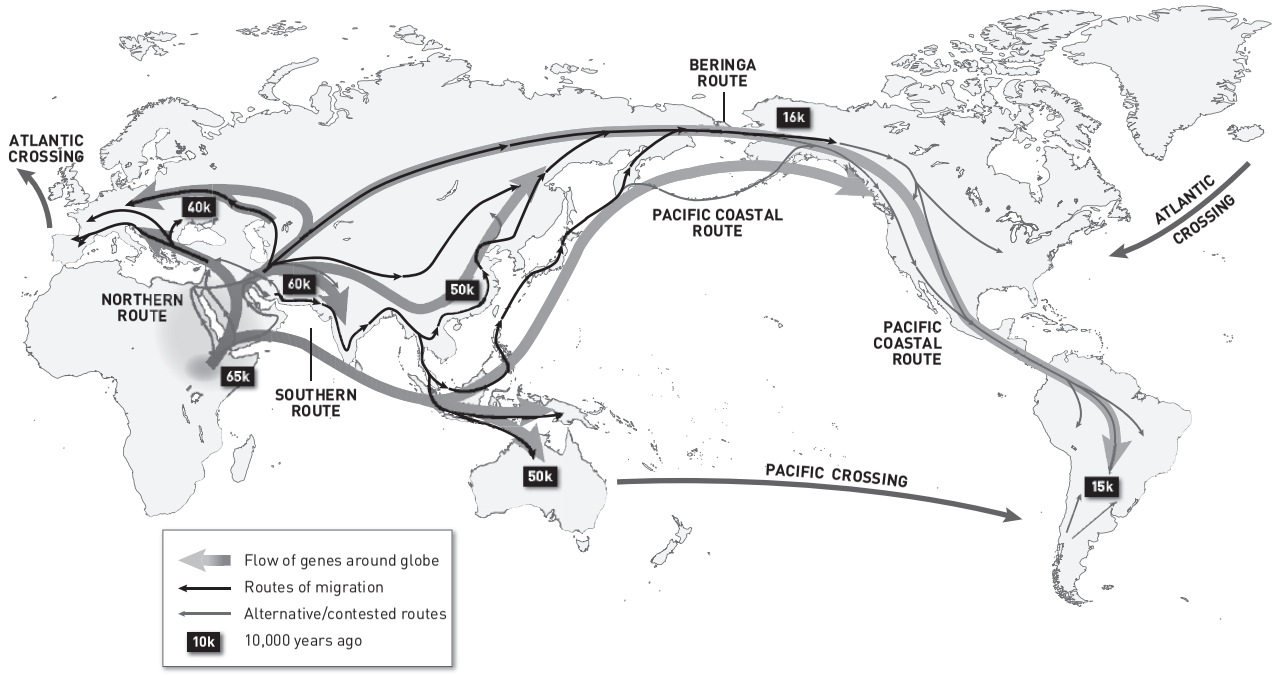
Thanks to advances in genetics, biology, and physical anthropology, we know more about what race is and, more importantly, what race isn't. We can't address everything in these first few pages, but we can establish a basic framework and use the latest scientific research to dispel some of the myths.

Race and Human Evolution

Humans 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 1.5) (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

FIGURE 1.5 ■ The Migration of Anatomically Modern Humans



Source: Gugliotta (2008).

called *melanin*. In areas with 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 than 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 1.6).

The lower concentration of melanin in people 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. That is, 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 1.5, 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 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 world, eliminating any "pure" races (if such ever existed).

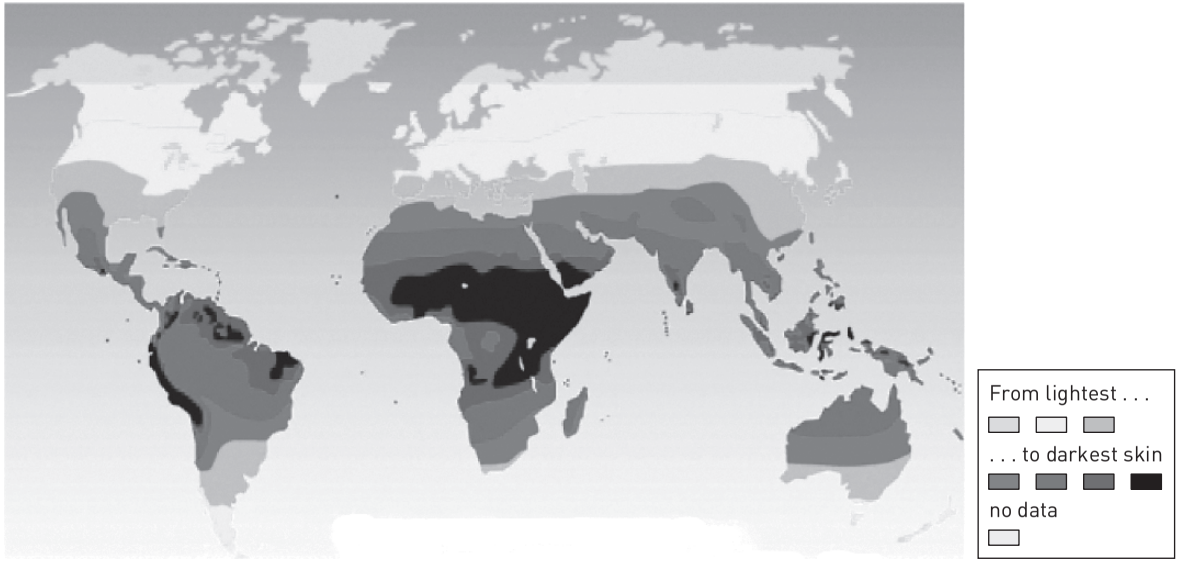
The differentiation created during the period of global dispersion was swamped by consolidation, a process that was greatly accelerated starting about 500 years ago when European nations began to explore and conquer much of the rest of the world (e.g., India, Africa). This consolidation of groups continues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

Race and Western Traditions

Europeans had been long aware of racial variation but, aided by breakthroughs in ship design and navigation, 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 the sake of exploration, but to lay claim to valued resources (such as 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* (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 racially and culturally superior to the nations and peoples they conquered.

FIGURE 1.6 ■ Skin Color Variation by Latitude



Source: Chapman (2004).

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 tried 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 typologies were quite elaborate, with numerous races and subraces. For example, the "Caucasian" race was often subdivided into Nordics (blond, fair-skinned Northern Europeans), Mediterraneans (dark-haired Southern Europeans), and Alpines (people between those categories, with qualities from both).

One major limitation of these classification systems is that the dividing lines between the so-called racial groups are arbitrary. There is no clear, 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 vary in their physical appearance, these differences don't sort themselves out in ways that enable us to divide people into precise groups like species of animals. The differences between the so-called human races aren't 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 can't address the fact that many individuals fit into more than one category while others don't fit into any of them. So, who gets to decide how many groups exist and what racial group people belong to? We'll address that question in future chapters.

Over the past several decades, advances in genetic research have provided new insights into race that negate the validity of such racial typologies and the racial myths associated with them. One significant finding is that genetic variation *within* the traditional racial groups is greater than the variation *between* those groups (American Sociological Association, 2003; Gannon, 2016). That is, 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, nonscientific 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.

The Social Construction of Race

Sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois wrote that the "problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" ([1903] 1997, page 45 c.f. Lee & Bean, 2007). You can see the "color line," and how race is socially constructed, by examining changes in U.S. census categories.

The first census, in 1790, used only three racial categories—whites, other free persons, and slaves. The first census after the Civil War ended used white, black, mulatto, and Indian. By 1890, the categories were:

- 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 Chinese and Japanese categories reflect Asian immigration to the United States. The subcategories of *quadroon* and *octoroon* were an attempt to measure race in more detail, but still along a black–white dichotomy (Blank, Dabady, & Citro, 2004). Identifying the amount of "blackness" was more complicated than it sounded, and the census didn't 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 Census Bureau continues to add ethnic categories as new immigrants come to the United States For now, ethnic categories fall under one of these "racial" categories: white, black/African American, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Native Hawaiian), and other. The Census Bureau notes that people of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Therefore, 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 their race, 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. 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 *white* has remained remarkably consistent over time.

Despite its scientific limits, the idea of race continues to shape intergroup relations in America and globally. 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 remains 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 see lighter-skinned African Americans as superior to darker-skinned African Americans; thus, they may treat lighter-skinned people better. Walker (1983) named this *colorism*. Such discrimination reflects the dominant racial hierarchy that prefers 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 social and biological dimensions. 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 3, we'll analyze the role of race in the creation of American slavery and you'll 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 visible differences in skin color, elevated it to a matter of supreme importance, and used it to justify the enslavement of blacks. That is, the importance of race was 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.

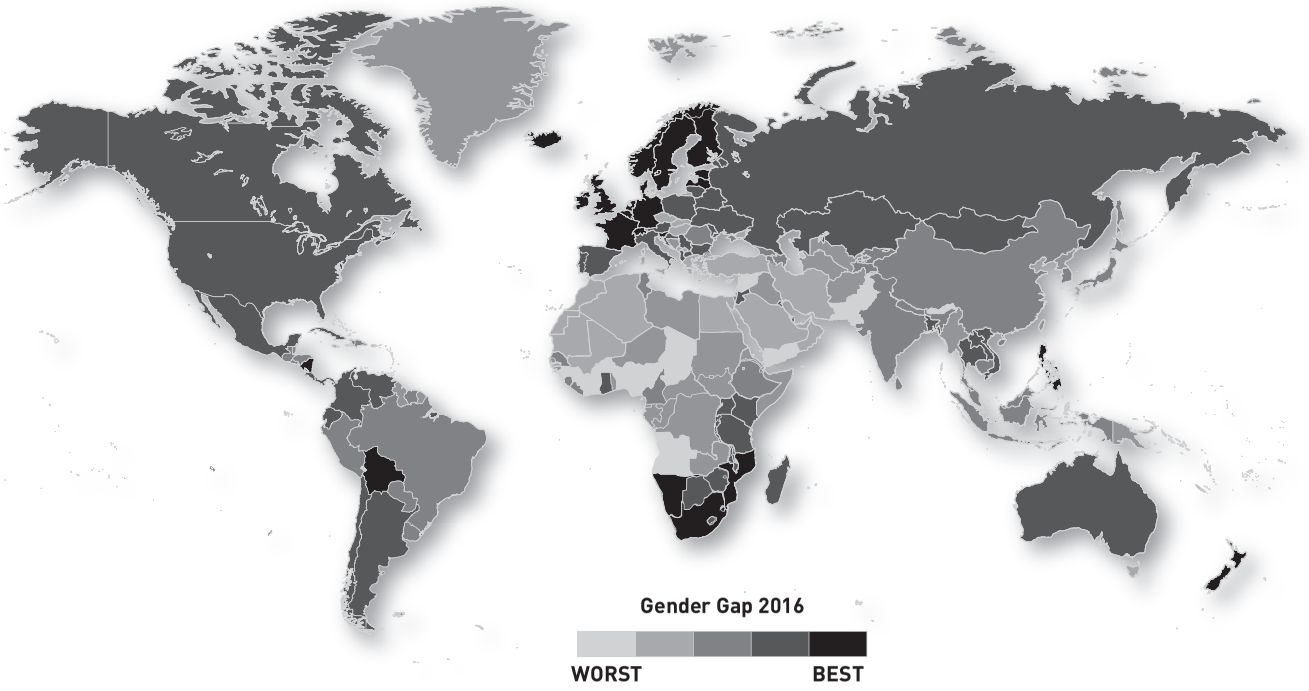
Gender

You've seen that minority groups can be internally differentiated by social class and other factors. Gender is another source of differentiation. Like race, **gender** has visible and socially meaningful components that make it convenient for categorizing people and organizing society. Historically, people have used visible biological characteristics such as genitalia to assign people into two sexes, female or male. (Almost 2% the U.S. population are intersex, having biological characteristics from more than one sex category [see Fausto-Sterling, 1993].)

Americans primarily recognize two gender statuses: boy/man and girl/woman. Babies are given a gender based on their sex. For example, when a fetal ultrasound for sex shows a penis, people declare, "It's a boy!" As you'll learn, gender is also a social construct. These ideas about what is masculine or feminine influence **gender norms**, or societal expectations about proper behavior, attitudes, and personality traits. Gender norms vary across time and from one society to another.

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 1.7 provides some perspective on the global variation in gender inequality. The map shows the Gender Gap Index, a statistic that measures the amount of inequality between women and men based on variables such as education, labor market participation, reproductive health (e.g., maternal mortality rate), and political representation. As you can see, gender equality is generally highest in the more-industrialized nations of North America and Western Europe and lowest in Africa (e.g., Niger, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Mauritania, Benin) and the Middle East (e.g., Yemen, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Iran).

FIGURE 1.7 ■ Gender Inequality Worldwide



Source: Florida (2012). From "The Geography of Women's Economic Opportunities" by Richard Florida. The Atlantic Cities. January 11, 2012. Map by Zara Matheson of the Martin Prosperity Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Although Western European and North American societies rank relatively high on gender equality, gender discrimination continues to be a major issue in many of them. For example, a consistent—and large—gender income gap exists in many of them, and women are decidedly underrepresented in the most lucrative and powerful occupations (see Figure 4.4). While many societies have made progress, gender inequality appears likely to continue for generations.

Part of the problem is that all societies, including Western European and North American ones, have strong histories of **patriarchy**, or systems of dominance by men. As with racial and class stratification, dominant groups have greater resources. In patriarchal societies, men (as a group) have more control over the economy and more access to leadership roles in business, politics, education, and other institutions. Parallel to forms of racism that sought to justify and maintain racial inequality, **sexism** is an ideology that justifies and maintains gender inequality. For example, people in some societies view women as "delicate," "too emotional," and physically weak for the demands of "manly" occupations. (In the U. S. and other societies, these ideas about gender were also racialized, applying only to white women. The same men who placed white women "on a pedestal" didn't hesitate to send enslaved women into the fields to perform the most difficult, physically demanding tasks.)

Even in the most progressive societies, women possess many characteristics of a minority group, especially a pattern of disadvantage based on group membership marked by visible characteristics. We consider women to be a distinct minority group. However, in keeping with our intersectional approach, we'll address women's and men's experiences *within* each racial or ethnic minority group, as well. As stressed in the intersectional approach, the experience of racial or ethnic minority group membership varies by gender (and class, etc.). Likewise, the way gender is experienced isn't the same for every racial or ethnic (or other) group. Therefore, some African American women may share common interests and experiences with white women and different interests and experiences compared to African American men. In other cases, those constellations of interests and experiences would probably change.

Those in power generally write about history from their own standpoint—ignoring, forgetting, or trivializing minority group experiences. For instance, slave owners for much of the history of slavery. Laws against education kept slaves illiterate, leaving few mechanisms for recording their thoughts or experiences. A more accurate picture of slavery has emerged only since the mid-20th century, when scholars started to reconstruct the experiences of enslaved Africans 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 Fennell, 2013; Levine, 1977).

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

The Social Construction of Gender

Social scientists see race as a social construction created under certain historical circumstances (e.g., slavery) when it was needed to justify the unequal treatment of nonwhite groups. What about gender? Have socially created ideas enabled and rationalized men's

higher status and their easier access to power, prestige, and property? Figure 1.7 shows that every nation has some degree of gender inequality—though it varies a lot. Does that inequality result from popular ideas about gender? For example, are boys and men naturally more aggressive, competitive and independent, and girls and women naturally more cooperative, helpful, and fragile? Where do these ideas come from? If gender isn't a social construction, why do ideas about what girls/women and boy/men are like vary across time (e.g., 1400, 1776, 2019) and place (e.g., China, Afghanistan, Sweden)? Why do ideas about what they should and shouldn't do vary? And why does gender inequality vary? Many people look to the role of biology when explaining such variation. Yet, if people's biology (e.g., chromosomes, hormones) is fairly constant across time and location, wouldn't gender be as well? Let's dig a bit deeper.

First, the traits people commonly see as typical for women or men aren't 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 a masculine characteristic, but some women are more aggressive than some men. As with race, research shows that there is more variation *within* categories (e.g., all women, all men) than between them—a finding that seriously undermines the view that gender differences are biological (Basow, as cited in Rosenblum & Travis, 2002).

Second, gender as a social construction is illustrated by the fact that what people think is "appropriate" behavior for women and men varies over time 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, these variations wouldn't exist.

Third, the relationship between subsistence technology and gender inequality illustrates the social nature of gender norms. As noted previously, humans evolved in East Africa and relied on hunting and gathering to meet their basic needs. Our distant ancestors lived in small, nomadic bands that relied on cooperation and sharing for survival. Societies at this level of development typically divided adult labor by gender (often men hunting, women gathering). Because everyone's work was crucial to survival, gender inequality was minimal (Dyble et al., 2015). Women's subordination seems to have emerged with settled agricultural communities, the first of which appeared about 10,000 years ago in what is now the Middle East. People in preindustrial farming communities didn't roam, and people could accumulate (and store) wealth (see Dyble et al., 2015). Survival in these societies required the combined labor of many people; thus, large families were valued. Women became consigned to domestic duties, especially having and raising children. Because the infant mortality rate in these societies was high (approximately 50% or more), women spent much of their lives confined to their homes, pregnant or nursing, far removed from the possibility of participating in other extra-domestic life, such as contending for community leadership roles.

Industrialization and urbanization, linked processes that began in the mid-1700s in Great Britain, changed the cost–benefit ratios of childbearing. As people moved to cities, the expense of having children rose, and work increasingly required education and literacy—both possible for women and men. Thus, gender inequality probably reached its