

Race and Ethnicity

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- racial and ethnic minorities
- prejudice and discrimination
- minority groups in the United States

Two middle-aged women are ahead of you in line at the post office. One says, “We were stuck in traffic next to a bus full of ethnics.” What does she mean about the people on the bus?

One way people understand their world is by creating categories. We couldn’t make sense of all the information flooding our senses if we didn’t. We categorize almost everything we encounter. One kind of category is based on the racial or ethnic group into which people are born. Racial and ethnic groupings include much cultural information. The differences among groups of people have enriched human lives in countless ways, but have also spawned some of the biggest conflicts in history. The woman in line is not just acknowledging the different culture groups of the people she saw, she is also making a judgment about them. It is an unfavorable judgment. Prejudice and discrimination in the United States can be illustrated by examining the experiences of minority groups.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities

The oldest human records speak of minorities and raise the question of how they should be treated. There were minorities in ancient Egypt and Babylon, and the Hebrew scriptures furnish complete descriptions of numerous minority groups. How do sociologists view this aspect of human society?

Dominant Groups

In a society, the group of people that has the power—whose members include the rulers, lawgivers, and religious, military, and educational leaders—is the dominant group. A nation's history identifies its **dominant group**.

EXAMPLE: In Spain, the dominant group is the group whose power dates from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella and their European ancestors. These 15th-century rulers expelled and persecuted Jews and Muslims and established a white, Roman Catholic nation with Castilian Spanish as its official language.

Groups in a society that have been overpowered by the dominant group—such as American Indians in the United States—or have come in after the dominant group's power is established—immigrants in the United States other than the English—make up minority groups.

The dominant group establishes the values and norms of the society. It creates a social structure that operates in its favor. Minority groups have to live by the rules set by the dominant group, which usually means they don't have the same privileges

and must accept inferior housing and jobs and are often treated differently by the justice system.

Minority Groups

A common misconception about minority groups is that they are always numerically smaller than the majority group in a society. That may be true, but a **minority group** is better defined as any recognizable group in a society that suffers some disadvantage due to prejudice or discrimination by the dominant group. In some nations of the world, religion distinguishes a minority group. Major minority groups in the United States are identified by race and ethnicity.

Racial Groups

The concept of **race** is based on observable physical differences among people resulting from inherited biological traits. It divides people into groups based on skin color and ancestral origin. Traditionally, English-speaking people have talked in terms of three races with their origins from **three** of the world's continents:

1. Africa.
2. Asia.
3. Europe.

Centuries of racial mixing—through migration, exploration, and invasion—have resulted in a great intermingling of races. We cannot accurately categorize individuals as "black" or "white." Sociologists are not interested in the biology of race. They are interested in race as it relates to the social structure.

In order to make the gathering of data uniform, sociologists rely on the categories of race that the Census Bureau uses or on the definition of race that individuals give themselves or others.

If you read a U.S. Census Bureau report, you might find data divided among the following **five** groups:

1. White, not Hispanic.
2. Black.
3. Hispanic.
4. Asian and Pacific Islander.
5. American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.

In actual practice, the Census Bureau invites people to check one of dozens of categories to identify their race. In the

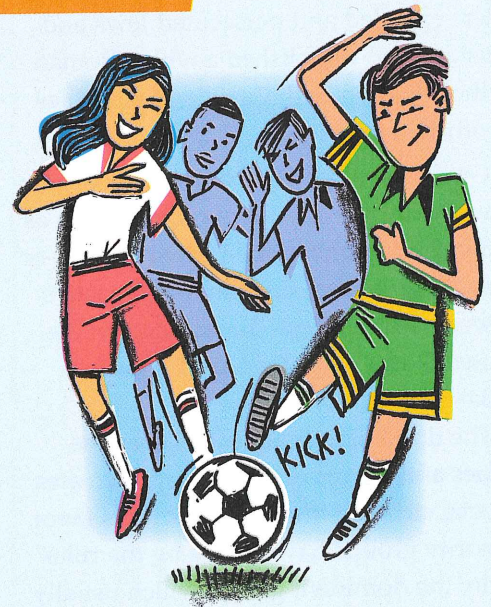
2000 census, there were about 60 different racial combinations recognized for non-Hispanics and another 60 for Hispanics. Census forms were available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog, the language of the Philippines. Guides for the census takers were written in 49 languages. As you can see, race in the United States is a matter of culture, and is not easy to define.

In the United States, about 30 percent of the population is non-white. African Americans make up the largest racial minority group. However, by around 2005 the Hispanic population is expected to outnumber the black population. If current trends continue, by 2050 almost half of the U.S. population will be non-white.

Across  Cultures

Skin Color and Race

Variations in skin color are used to categorize minority groups in many societies. But variations in skin color take on different meanings across cultures. When observing skin color, historically Americans have lumped people broadly into black, white, and Asian categories. In contrast, many nations of Central and South America distinguish many shades of color. In Brazil, for example, people recognize approximately 40 color groups. Terms in other countries, such as Mestizo Hondurans and Mulatto Colombians, recognize the cultural heritage of the hemisphere.



Ethnic Groups

While racial groups are based on physical characteristics, **ethnic groups** are based on such cultural factors as national origin, religion, language, norms, and values. As with the concept of racial groups, there is great variety within broad ethnic categories.

EXAMPLES: Asian Americans comprise a minority group that includes many different national groups. Japanese Americans not only speak a different language from Korean Americans, but they have different customs and political and social beliefs as well.

Jews, although they are racially diverse and live in many countries around the world, are bound together by their common religious beliefs, customs, and values.

Within the United States, nationality groups often settle in the same neighborhoods and retain separate identities. Poles, Ukrainians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and Germans who live in the United States may vary in the strength of their ethnic identities, but national heritage often sets such groups apart.

Ethnic groups retain their separate identities as long as they pass their cultural beliefs and practices from generation to generation. A common ancestry is usually—but not necessarily—shared by group members. In groups with strong ethnic identities, members are encouraged to form friendships with and to marry only others of the same ethnicity. In fact, the term *ethnic* comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning “people” or “nation.” The special feeling of “my people” sets the group apart from others and discourages members from forming close ties with “outsiders.”

Characteristics of Minority Groups

Sociologists identify minority groups by **four** characteristics, in addition to their receiving unequal treatment in society:

1. Shared Physical or Cultural

Characteristics. Members of a minority group are identified by a wide array of physical and/or cultural differences, including race, religion, ancestry, language, and customs. The foods served, the celebrations observed, the ways in which people choose their spouses—these are often similar among members of an ethnic group.

2. Ascribed Statuses. Membership in a minority (or dominant) group is not voluntary. People are born into the group; race and ethnicity are ascribed statuses.

3. Group Solidarity. When a group is the object of long-term prejudice or discrimination, the feeling of “us *versus* them” often becomes intense. Members of ethnic groups stick together when they feel under attack from the dominant group or from other minority groups.

4. Endogamy. Members of a minority generally marry others from the same group, a practice known as **endogamy**. Two factors account for this: (1) the unwillingness of members of the dominant group to marry into, and thus in some way join, a lower level of society; and (2) a minority group’s sense of solidarity, which encourages marriages within the group.

Patterns of Repression and Response

Societies vary in the degree to which racial and ethnic minority groups participate in mainstream society. Minorities respond to their situation with behaviors ranging from submission and acceptance to agitation and violence.

In history, repression of minorities by the dominant group has taken **four** forms:

- 1. Forced Removal**—in which a minority population is transferred to a separate geographic location.
EXAMPLE: The Trail of Tears removal of the Cherokee from Georgia to Oklahoma in 1838.
- 2. Segregation**—in which a minority group is kept separate from the dominant population in the same location. It can be *de jure*, based on laws, or *de facto*, based on informal norms.
EXAMPLES: Earlier laws in the South that kept blacks and whites from attending the same schools (*de jure*); the discriminatory practice of sellers, real estate agents, and mortgage lenders in the North that kept African Americans from living in neighborhoods with whites (*de facto*).
- 3. Subjugation**—maintaining control over the minority population by force.
EXAMPLE: The Israeli use of curfew laws and troops with guns and tanks to punish the Palestinian minority following acts of terrorism by militant individuals.

- 4. Annihilation**—the destruction of a targeted minority population. Also called *genocide*.

EXAMPLE: In Rwanda, the efforts of the Hutu rebels against the Tutsis.

Did You Know?



The Holocaust

The most extreme form of unequal treatment of a group is genocide, the systematic, wide-scale killing of people merely because they are members of a particular group. During World War II the German Nazis exterminated millions of minorities, including Jews, Slavs, gypsies, and homosexuals. The Nazi actions were based on the belief that the Germans were a “master race,” which was mentally and physically superior to all others. Nazis argued that an end to their problems would come only after they had exterminated people who might “pollute” their greatness. The horror that came from this ghastly idea was on a scale unknown in the world. This massive slaughter has been named the Holocaust, after a Greek word that means “burned whole” and was used to describe religious sacrifices.

Minority groups have often responded to these negative forms of treatment in **three** ways:

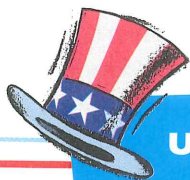
1. **Submission and Acceptance**—deferring to members of the dominant culture and learning ways of “getting along.”
2. **Withdrawal**—avoiding contact with the dominant culture through self-segregation.
3. **Agitation and Violence**—protesting minority status and unequal treatment

or organizing a revolt against the dominant group.

Melting Pot or Cultural Salad

Society in the United States has tried to encourage most of its immigrant minority groups, particularly those that are white, to join mainstream society. Historically, it has done this in **two** ways, described by figures of speech:

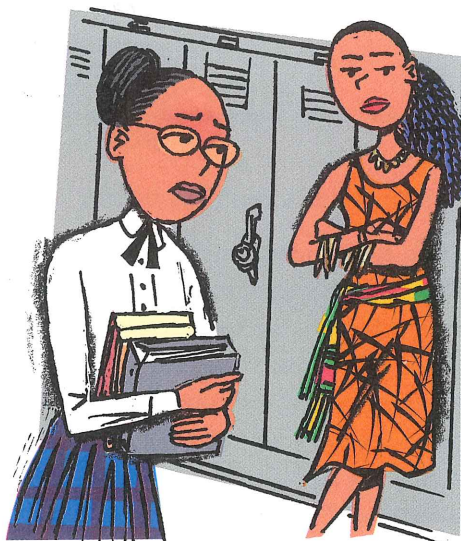
1. **The Melting Pot** (from the container in which metals are melted to make such



U.S. Culture Connection

“Uncle Toms” and “Oreos”

Minorities sometimes disdain members of the group who accept their status. This feeling may be expressed through insulting nicknames. For example, African Americans have used the name “Uncle Tom” (from the hero of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*) to refer to someone who seems overly anxious to win white people’s approval. A late-20th-century insult was “Oreo,” because the cookie is “black on the outside but white in the middle.” This term indicates one who doesn’t accept one’s own people.



alloys as steel) is a term for American society that suggests the people of different nations have given up their distinctive ways to become members of the dominant culture through **assimilation**, the process by which people become like others around them, taking their norms on as their own.

2. **The Salad Bowl** refers to the idea of **cultural pluralism** in which mainstream society acknowledges there is value in preserving the uniqueness of the subcultures that comprise it. Minority groups are encouraged to maintain unique identities within the larger culture, and society accepts diversity as part of its own definition.

Prejudice and Discrimination

We often think that prejudice and discrimination are pretty much the same thing, or that one always accompanies the other. Actually, they are two related but separate phenomena, and one can occur without the other.

Prejudice is a negative attitude toward an entire category of people, often an ethnic or racial minority. **Discrimination** is the denial of opportunities and equal rights to people based on their group membership. Prejudice is an *attitude*, whereas discrimination is an *action* that



The Authoritarian Personality

In the late 1940s, sociologist T. W. Adorno researched the question of whether some personality types were more likely to be prejudiced than others. He concluded that hostile attitudes toward minority groups are characteristic of an “authoritarian personality.” Authoritarians, as described by Adorno, hold a rigid, hierarchical view of human relations, and have a tendency to view reality in simple, black-or-white

terms, ignoring shades of gray. They are preoccupied by rules and regulations, with who gives orders and who takes them, and with different levels of power and status. Since they see life as a competition between winners and losers, authoritarians are uncomfortable with “democratic” situations and strive to dominate others. Authoritarians are suspicious and fearful of anything that is different, so they tend to reject anyone who is a member of a minority group.

deprives someone of equality. Both are aimed at a person's group membership, without regard for the individual.

The Roots of Prejudice

The Latin roots of the word *prejudice* mean prejudging, or judging before knowing. A prejudice may be either positive, such as the belief that one's school is the best in the country, or negative, such as the belief that all people on welfare are lazy.

A certain amount of prejudice comes from our tendency to generalize. Prejudging may even be functional. If, for example, you are in trouble and need someone to run as fast as she can for help, you may turn to your softball teammate rather than to your book-loving friend.

Prejudice becomes a problem when the preformed judgment remains unchanged even after facts show it to be inaccurate. So, if your reading friend has won many track races and you still don't recognize her running talent, you probably are prejudiced against the athletic abilities of studious people.

What causes people to develop hostile attitudes toward other groups? Prejudice has psychological, cultural, and social roots.

Psychological Roots

Prejudice may serve a psychological function for dominant-group members who feel frustrated, insecure, or inferior. These people may take satisfaction in **scapegoating**—placing the blame for troubles on an innocent individual or group.



"Is it OK to discriminate against bigots?"

People who scapegoat seem to get psychological satisfaction from knowing that no matter how low they sink, there are still some people—a whole race or group—who are lower. Once they identify a scapegoat, people justify their irrational feelings and behavior by "discovering" evidence that the group is indeed "wicked" and "inferior."

Cultural and Social Roots

Sociologists seek to identify cultural and social factors that shape prejudice. In some societies, prejudice is explicitly encouraged. In others, economic or political conflict

may cause groups to be hostile toward one another. Socialization can reinforce prejudices. **Two** roots of prejudice include:

1. Ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture group. This attitude may lead to **racism**, the belief that one race is superior to others. When racism is common in a society, most members of the dominant group are prejudiced against minorities. Racism may reflect a group's desire to have power over others, or it

may come from a wish to keep one's culture as it is. Minority groups may be perceived as bringing unwanted change.

2. Economic and Political Conflict. When culturally separate groups live in the same geographical area, they have often had a history of competing for scarce resources. Warfare that erupts between them from time to time leaves deep scars. Sometimes it seems these will never heal, as each generation passes on the stories of old grievances and the hatred born of



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Hate Crimes

Hate crimes, fueled by prejudice, are directed toward individuals solely because they are members of a minority group. In 1990, the U.S. Congress passed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. This law requires the Department of Justice to gather data on victims of hate crime by their race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. By 1998, 537 active hate groups were identified in the United States. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported in 1999 that hate crimes were directed at minority individuals every day.

Daily Hate Crime Victims

8 African Americans	3 Caucasian Americans
3 homosexuals	3 Jewish persons
1 Latino	

violence. This situation exists in many places, including the Balkan Peninsula and the Middle East.

Discrimination

It makes sense to assume that discrimination is always the result of prejudice. However, prejudiced people do not always act on their biases. Sometimes people go to great lengths to keep from acting on their prejudices.

EXAMPLE: A white supervisor realizes that he is prejudiced toward blacks and works hard to treat his employees equally, despite his bias.

Discrimination can also occur without a direct connection to prejudice.

EXAMPLE: A supervisor without bias refuses to hire African Americans because her biased clients would take their business elsewhere.

Bias-motivated Incidents
Race 4,321
Religion 1,390
Sexual orientation 1,260
Ethnicity/national origin 754
Disability 25
Multiple biases 5

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (1999)

In the first case, the supervisor is prejudiced without discrimination, and in the second, discrimination occurs even though the prejudice is not “first-hand.”

We can identify **three** types of discrimination:

1. Legal Discrimination. Discrimination that is supported by law is less common than it was even a few decades ago. Both constitutional interpretation and federal laws have thrown out state and local segregation laws in the United States. Apartheid (separation of the races) in South Africa is now illegal. However, historical examples of legal discrimination are plentiful. In Germany during the 1930s, Jews were barred from government and professional jobs and their property was confiscated. During World War II, the United States placed Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans into internment camps.

2. Nonlegal Discrimination. Discrimination that is not supported by law but results from actions by individuals is far more common than legal discrimination. In the United States, minorities have been barred from good neighborhoods by discriminatory real estate practices. They have been kept from promotion to the best jobs. No laws support either behavior.

3. Institutional Discrimination.

Institutional discrimination refers to the denial of opportunities and equal rights that results from the normal operations of a society. Some examples are:

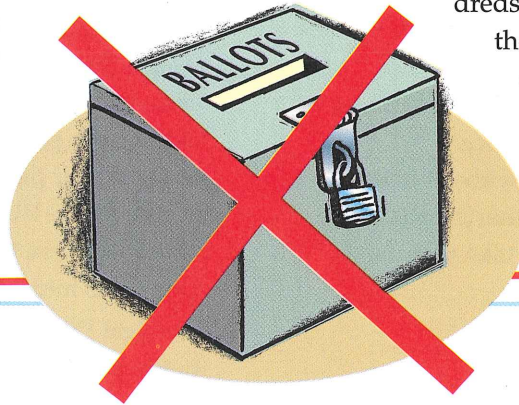
- * Rules that only English be spoken at a place of work.



U.S. Culture Connection

Election 2000

The Fifteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees black Americans the right to vote, but for years after the amendment was passed, Jim Crow laws—demanding that voters pay poll taxes and pass literacy tests—made black voting almost impossible in many Southern states. In a controversy surrounding the 2000 general election, some African Americans

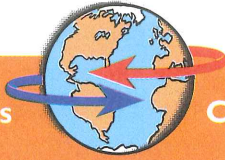


in Florida claimed they experienced systematic problems in trying to cast their votes. Civil rights leaders from such groups as the NAACP and the Rainbow Coalition charged that African Americans were intimidated by police sweeps and roadblocks and victimized by widespread confusion. The groups sent hundreds of sworn statements to the Justice Department, and representatives were sent to investigate the charges.

- * Preferences shown by schools in the admission of children of wealthy and influential alumni.
- * Restrictive employment leave-taking policies that make it difficult for a parent to take time off.
- * Lack of computer access at home and in school.

In each of these examples, minority group members are disadvantaged. Those

who cannot speak English, who lack influential parents, who do not have a spouse to share childcare when children at home need someone to stay with them, or who lack sufficient resources to get the tools they need to perform work are discriminated against in the job market. Institutional discrimination becomes part of a vicious circle that makes it very difficult for minorities to get ahead.



Koreans in Japan

Legal discrimination toward Koreans is increasingly controversial in contemporary Japan. About 96 percent of the population is Japanese; only about 700,000 Koreans live in Japan. It is not easy for Koreans to obtain citizenship, and without citizenship, they cannot vote and they cannot work as teachers or government officials. In 1995 Japan's Supreme Court ruled that local governments could permit resident Koreans the right to vote, but there was little movement to make this a national policy.



Minority Groups in the United States

American society is enriched by the various racial and ethnic groups that make up its minorities. Members of minority groups can be found in all the classes of society. While membership in a minority group affects an individual's status, it does not prevent social mobility.

African Americans

The 34 million African Americans in the United States make up one of the nation's largest minorities, about 12.1 percent of the total population. According to projections by the U.S. Census Bureau, the African-American population is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the white population between 1995 and 2050.

This population is not distributed evenly throughout the country. Although African Americans have been migrating out of Southern states for more than a century, in 1996, 53 percent of African Americans still lived in the South. There, they made up about 19 percent of the region's population. Nationwide, 55 percent of African Americans resided in the central cities of metropolitan areas.

African Americans in the United States date back to 1619, when the first African immigrants settled in Virginia as indentured servants. By the end of the 1600s, nearly all U.S. blacks and their descendants were either indentured servants or slaves. It took a civil war and the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 for African Americans

to gain freedom and citizenship. Another 100 years went by before members of this group won the rights of full participation in the benefits of U.S. society. The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s resulted in significant gains for African Americans.

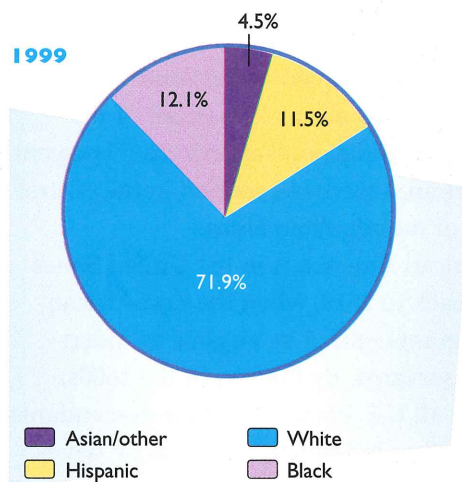
Today, the percentages of African Americans and white Americans completing high school are nearly identical. African Americans hold managerial and professional jobs, and their percentages in these jobs has been growing significantly for more than 40 years. As a result of better job opportunities, there is a major group of middle-class African Americans. In business, there are African American multimillionaires. In the leadership ranks of government, there are African American

mayors, Supreme Court justices, and members of the President's Cabinet.

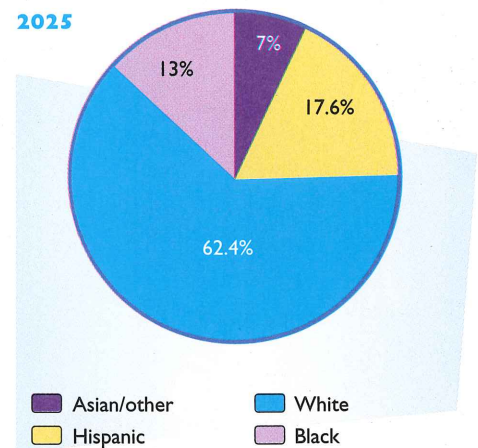
Thus, we can see that class and race are two different concepts. African Americans occupy all classes in our society. Yet statistics reflect continuing inequalities:

- * The percentage of African Americans completing four or more years of college is about half that of whites, and the percentages are decreasing.
- * In 1999, the mean income for African American families was \$27,900, as compared to \$44,400 for white families.
- * The unemployment rate for African Americans in 2000 was 7.7 percent, compared to 3.9 percent for whites.
- * The percentage of African Americans below the poverty line in 1999 was 23.6, compared to 7.7 for whites.

U.S. Race and Ethnic Composition, 1999 and 2025



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



African Americans and the Justice System

Recent studies, including one conducted by Eric Lotke in the District of Columbia, reveal that growing numbers of young black men are in trouble with the law.

According to Lotke, the number of African Americans in prison nationwide grew from 146,900 in 1980 to 541,900 in 1995, and the number on probation and parole grew from 410,000 to 1,395,000. In 1997, one in three young black men nationwide was under the control of the justice system on any given day.

Lotke believes that these increases were sparked by the decision to use law enforcement to manage social problems, such as mental health, drug abuse, or disorderly teens, problems previously handled by

other means. He asserts that those caught in the justice net are often the poor or minority group members. Often they lack the community and personal resources to handle their problems differently.



Latinos

The many groups included under the general terms *Latinos* and *Hispanics* represent the second largest minority in the United States. They are soon to become the largest. In 2000, 12 percent of the population, or 32.8 million, were Hispanic. More than 21.6 million, or 66 percent, were of Mexican origin. Nearly 2 million were Puerto Rican, and smaller numbers were Cuban Americans and people of Central or South-American origin. The numbers of

Latinos are increasing rapidly. According to Census Bureau data, Latinos make up the majority of residents in such cities as Miami, Florida; Santa Ana, California; and El Paso, Texas.

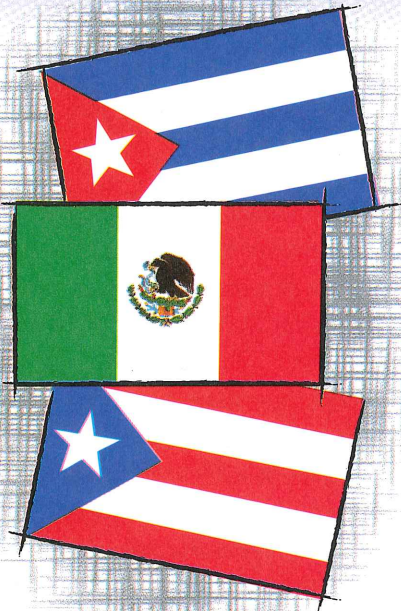
Latino groups share a common language and some cultural characteristics, although cultural customs vary widely among the different nationalities. The increasing number of Spanish-speaking populations in the United States has created a demand for bilingual education programs in some public schools.

Sociologist's Perspective

Cultural Identity of Latinos



Many Latinos clearly identify themselves as an ethnic group apart from other whites in the United States. Geographer Daniel L. Roy provides evidence for the importance of being Latino in a recent survey of ethnic attitudes from more than 1,000 Latino respondents. Ethnicity was deemed "very important" in defining identity by 755 respondents (72 percent), "somewhat important" by 222 respondents (21 percent), and "not important" by 58 respondents (six percent).

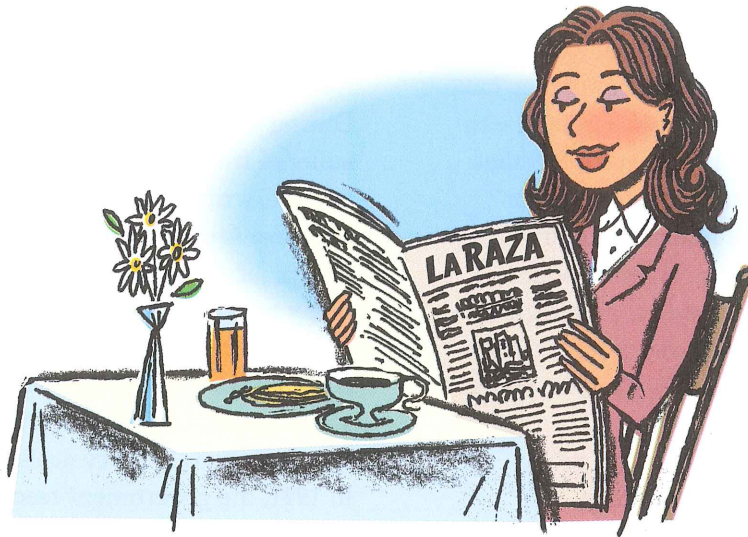


Some inequities between Latinos and the white majority are reflected in the following statistics from 2000:

- * 10.6 percent of Latino adults had completed college, compared with 28.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- * The median household income of Latinos was 76 percent that of whites.
- * 22.8 percent of all Latinos living in the United States lived below the poverty line.

The **three** largest Latino groups are:

- 1. Mexican Americans.** Members of the largest Latino population trace their roots to Mexico. Some are descendants of the residents of territories annexed by the United States in the mid-1800s. Many others have migrated over the years into the Southwestern states. Today the highest concentrations of Mexican Americans are in California and Texas, although many have migrated to other areas of the country. Many Mexican Americans have strong family ties in both Mexico and the United States; most are devout Roman Catholics. Politically, Mexican Americans tend to be more liberal than most other Latinos.
- 2. Puerto Ricans.** This second-largest group of Latinos in the United States is concentrated in large eastern cities. Since 1917, residents of Puerto Rico have held the status of U.S. citizens. The easy access between the island and the mainland has kept family ties and loyalties strong. Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States have barely half the



family income of whites, so a reverse migration has occurred for the past three decades: More Puerto Ricans have been going back to the island than coming to the mainland.

3. Cuban Americans. Cuban immigration dates back as far as 1831, but the numbers increased dramatically after Fidel Castro assumed control of Cuba in 1959. Throughout the various waves of immigration since then, most Cuban Americans have settled in southern Florida, particularly around Miami, where today they make up a majority of the population. Many Cuban Americans, especially those who came in the first round of immigration after the 1959 revolution, are successful professionals. Politically, Cuban Americans tend to be more conservative than other Latino groups. As a group, Cuban Americans have the highest rate of income, rate of employment, and proportion of professionals of all Hispanic Americans.

Asian Americans

Asian Americans come from many ancestral and national backgrounds. The **six** largest groups are from:

1. China.
2. Japan.
3. The Philippines.
4. India.
5. Korea.
6. Vietnam.

Until the 1960s, the United States severely limited the numbers of Asians who could immigrate to this country, so Asian Americans make up a smaller percentage of the total population than African Americans and Latinos, just 4 percent. However, their numbers are increasing rapidly, from 3.5 million in 1980 to 10 million in 2000. Some experts predict that by 2040, Asian Americans will make up about 10 percent of the U.S. population.

Asian Americans have been called a “model” minority group because they have succeeded economically, socially, and educationally. This label ignores the fact that Asian Americans are very diverse. For example, Southeast Asians living in the United States have the highest welfare dependency of any racial or ethnic group. For every Asian American family with an annual income of \$75,000, there is another earning less than \$10,000.

Asian Americans trace their roots to at least 25 different countries. However, most Asian Americans belong to one of the **two** largest groups:

1. Chinese Americans. The largest numbers of Asians in the United States are Chinese Americans. In the mid-1800s, about 200,000 Chinese people immigrated to this country, attracted by job opportunities created by the discovery of gold in the West. So many came that Congress enacted the Chinese

Exclusion Act in 1882, effectively halting further immigration until the 1960s. During that time Chinese Americans suffered from economic, political, and social discrimination.

2. Japanese Americans. As an immigrant group, Japanese Americans are relatively recent arrivals to the United States. Many came during the early 20th century to escape political and social upheavals in Japan. When Japan attacked the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor in 1941, the government reacted by sending Japanese Americans to “evacuation” camps, uprooting them from their homes and communities on the West Coast. This mass detention branded them as “disloyal” to the country and cost Japanese Americans billions of dollars. Not until 1988 did the U.S. government formally apologize and set up a \$1.25 billion trust fund to compensate victims of this discrimination.

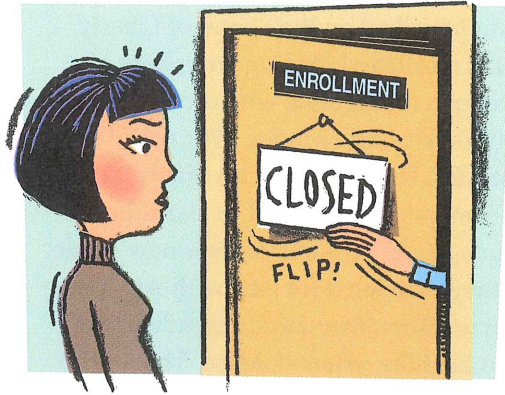




Asian Americans: Discrimination in College Admissions?

Since the mid-1960s affirmative action programs have encouraged colleges and universities to ensure that minorities have equal access to higher education. However, in recent years many colleges and universities have been accused of “reverse discrimination” toward Asian Americans. According to critics, Asians do so well on admissions exams and make such good high school grades that selective schools worry that the percentages of Asian students will be too high. These schools have been criticized for creating higher

admission standards for Asians than for other students—an accusation they have strongly denied.



Native Americans

Native Americans probably numbered in the millions before Europeans arrived on this continent. By the end of the 1800s, the Native American population had been reduced to only about 250,000 as a result of diseases introduced by the Europeans and the warfare and relocation visited on them by the dominant culture group.

By 2000 nearly 2.5 million citizens identified themselves as Native American. Native Americans are the nation’s most poverty-stricken minority.

- * About 14 percent are unemployed.
- * About 32 percent live below the poverty line. On reservations, the numbers are probably higher.

- * Less than 10 percent have graduated from college.
- * The suicide rate among Native Americans is almost twice as high as in the general population.
- * About one-third of Native American deaths are alcohol related.

In recent years Native Americans have formed political groups that actively lobby for equal rights and improved living conditions. These groups have also encouraged renewal of tribal identities and development of Native American businesses.

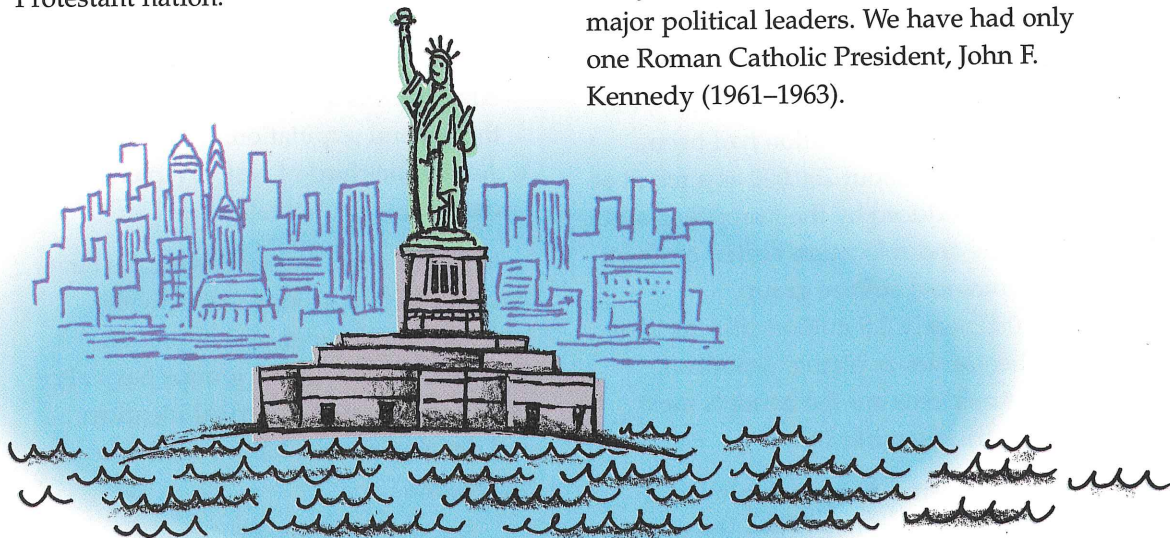
White Ethnics

"Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore./Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me./I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

This verse is from Emma Lazarus's poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, which welcomed the huge numbers of European immigrants who came through New York's harbor in the 19th and 20th centuries. Each group faced difficulties as its members struggled to learn the language and customs of their new home. As they competed for jobs with American-born workers, they faced prejudice and open hostility, often violence. Those who were from Ireland, Italy, and the countries of Eastern Europe were Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox—religions that were feared and despised in the largely Protestant nation.

These "white ethnics," like members of other immigrant groups, tended to live near each other in the large cities. They helped each other find work, often dominating certain occupations. They formed close-knit societies. However, their children found it easier than other immigrants to move out of the lower class. For some, English was their first language. They learned in school the ways of the dominant culture. As they grew up, they moved away from the "old neighborhood."

Today, some white ethnics live in close-knit ethnic neighborhoods, but many have been assimilated into American culture, leaving the "old ways" behind. Although white ethnics in general don't face the same kinds of discrimination today as other minority groups, some research indicates that they are still underrepresented among the rich and the powerful. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants are still more likely to be CEOs of large corporations and major political leaders. We have had only one Roman Catholic President, John F. Kennedy (1961–1963).



Chapter 7 Wrap-up

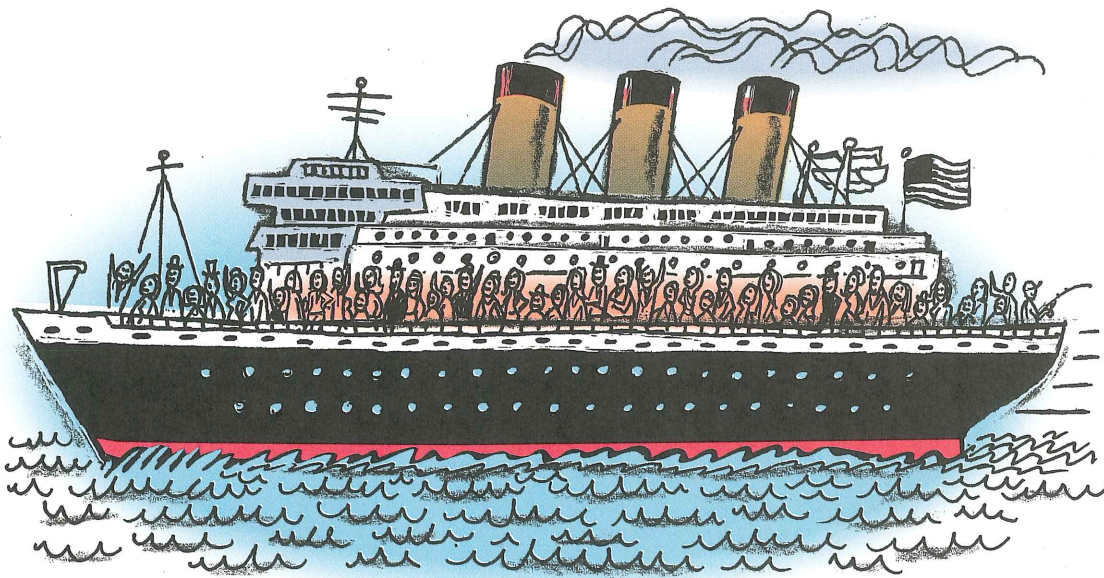
RACE AND ETHNICITY

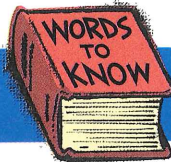
Throughout history, societies have been composed of a dominant group and minority groups. The dominant group establishes the norms of the society and establishes a social structure that favors its members. Minority groups, therefore, generally have fewer privileges and suffer disadvantages.

Treatment of minority groups by the dominant group may involve assimilation, cultural pluralism, forced removal, segregation, subjugation, and, in extreme cases, annihilation. Reactions to such treatment by members of minority groups may include acceptance, submission, withdrawal, protest, or revolt.

Prejudice and discrimination are characteristic behaviors of the dominant group. Prejudice is an attitude and discrimination is a behavior. They have psychological, cultural, and social roots. Discrimination can be legal, nonlegal, and institutional.

Major minority groups in U.S. society include African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Members of these groups occupy all levels of the social hierarchy. Minority group membership does not predetermine class. White ethnics, the last of the minority groups discussed, include European immigrants who have not assimilated into mainstream society.





assimilation—process of becoming absorbed into the dominant group, taking on its norms and values. *p. 126*

cultural pluralism—condition of society in which different ethnic and racial groups coexist while maintaining separate identities; the enriching influence of their differences is valued. *p. 126*

discrimination—denial of opportunities and equal rights to people based on their group membership. *p. 126*

dominant group—group in a society that sets the values and norms and creates a social structure that operates in its favor. *p. 121*

endogamy—custom of marriage within a particular group. *p. 123*

ethnic group—group of people identified by their common cultural background; national origin, religion, and language distinguish ethnic groups. *p. 123*

institutional discrimination—denial of opportunities and equal rights to

individuals and groups that results from the normal operations of a society. *p. 129*

minority group—recognizable group of people who suffer disadvantages due to prejudice or discrimination by the dominant group. *p. 121*

prejudice—negative attitude toward an entire category of people, often an ethnic or racial minority. *p. 126*

race—major division of the world's population based on biologically inherited physical characteristics. *p. 121*

racism—belief that one race is supreme and all others are inferior; discrimination or prejudice based on race. *p. 128*

scapegoating—placing the blame for troubles on an innocent individual or group. *p. 127*

segregation—physical separation of racial and/or ethnic groups within a culture. *p. 124*