Inequalities of Race and Ethnicity

Sections

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to

- describe what sociologists mean by the terms *minority*, *race*, and *ethnicity*.
- discuss patterns of racial and ethnic relations.
- discuss the difference between prejudice and discrimination.
- explain how functionalists, conflict theorists, and symbolic interactionists view racial inequalities.
- compare the condition of American minorities with that of the white majority.

Applying Sociology

"The Four Americas" is a report published by a major think tank, a national newspaper, and a prestigious university (Brodie, 1995). These organizations used an extensive national survey to investigate race in the United States. The survey asked people to respond to such questions as "Do you think the average African American is better off, worse off, or as well off as the average white person in terms of jobs, education, housing, and health care?"

Most Asians and Latinos answered that African Americans are doing less well than whites. But most whites thought blacks were doing about equally well.

The evidence shows that the average income of African American households is considerably less than that of white households. Moreover, at each level of education, African American males earn less than white males. The report concluded that "whites stand alone in their misperceptions of the problems facing minorities in America today."

Whites, of course, are not the only group who would benefit from a better understanding of these issues. This chapter will take a close look at how race and ethnicity have affected the ability of people to achieve the American dream.

Sociology Online

Chapter Overview
Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at **glencoe.com** and click on **Chapter 9—Chapter Overviews** to preview chapter information.

Minority, Race, and Ethnicity

Key Terms

- minority *(p. 276)*
- race *(p. 277)*
- ethnic
  minority *(p. 278)*

Section Preview

Sociologists have specific definitions particular to their field of study for *minority*, *race*, and *ethnicity*. Ethnic minorities have historically been subjected to prejudice and discrimination.

Minorities

Imagine that one evening, you and eight friends are unable to decide whether to go bowling or to the movies. Being a democratic group, you decide to put the question to a vote. If only three of you vote for the show, the movie fans—being fewer in number—will make up a minority.

But numbers alone are not the basis of the sociological definition of minority. Women in the United States outnumber males, and yet they are still referred to as a minority. Blacks in South Africa and in many large cities in the United States are minority populations even though they outnumber the white population. For sociologists, then, a minority population is defined by something more than size or number.

What are the characteristics of a minority? In 1945, sociologist Louis Wirth offered the following definition of **minority**:

> *We may define a minority as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. The existence of a minority in a society implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher social status and greater privileges. Minority carries with it the exclusion from full participation in the life of the society.*

A minority, then, has several key features.

1. *A minority has distinctive physical or cultural characteristics that can be used to separate it from the majority.* Physical characteristics may include such things as skin color, facial features, and disabilities. Cultural characteristics may include accent, religion, language, and parentage. In the past, some people have been forced to carry papers or wear badges that marked them as members of a minority. For example, during the Nazi regime, Jews in German-occupied countries were forced to wear yellow stars to separate them from non-Jewish citizens.

2. *The minority is dominated by the majority.* Because the majority is the dominating group, it holds an unequal share of the desired goods, services, and privileges. Further, minority members have fewer opportunities to get these goods and services. The best jobs are hard for minorities to get because of a lack of education or unfair hiring practices.

- **minority**
  a group of people with physical or cultural traits different from those of the dominant group in the society

Which of these teens are members of a minority group? Explain why.

3. *Minority traits are often believed by the dominant majority to be inferior.* This presumed inferiority can be used to justify unequal treatment. For example, a majority may justify job discrimination by depicting a minority as shiftless or lazy.

4. *Members of the minority have a common sense of identity, with strong group loyalty.* Efforts to keep the minority isolated create empathy among those suffering discrimination. Within the minority, there is a "consciousness of kind." Because of this sense of common identity, members of the minority accept a "we" and "they" vocabulary.

5. *The majority determines who belongs to the minority through ascribed status.* People become members of the minority at birth. Thus, membership is an ascribed status and is not easily changed. This is especially true when physical characteristics such as *race* are involved.

How many races are represented in this photo? On what basis did you make that determination?

Defining Race

Members of a <mark>race</mark> share certain biologically inherited physical characteristics that are considered equally important within a society. Biologists use characteristics such as skin color, hair color, hair texture, facial features, head form, eye color, and height to determine race. Traditionally scholars maintained there were three races—Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasoid—but today there is a much more complex understanding of race.

Is there a scientific basis for race? Although certain physical features have been associated with particular races, scientists have known for a long time that there is no such thing as a "pure" race. Features typical of one race often show up in other races. For example, some people born into African American families are assumed to be white because of their facial features and light skin color. Most scientists consider racial classifications arbitrary and misleading. For sociologists, social attitudes and characteristics that relate to race are more important than physical differences.

But aren't some physical characteristics superior? It has sometimes been argued that certain physical characteristics often associated with race are superior and others are inferior. In fact, physical characteristics are superior only in the sense that they provide advantages for living in particular environments. For example, a narrow opening between eyelids protects against bright light and driving cold such as found in Siberia or Alaska. A darker skin is better able to withstand a hot sun. But these physical differences are controlled by a very few genes. In fact, geneticists claim that there may be more genetic difference between a tall person and a short person than between two people of different races who are the same height. Only about six genes in the human cell control skin color, while a person's height is affected by dozens of genes. Thus a six-foot white male may be closer genetically to a black male of the same height than to a five-foot white male. What is important to remember is that there is no scientific evidence that connects any racial characteristic with innate superiority or inferiority (Hurley, 1998). There is, for example, no evidence of *innate* differences in athleticism or intelligence among the various races.

● **race**
people sharing certain inherited physical characteristics that are considered important within a society
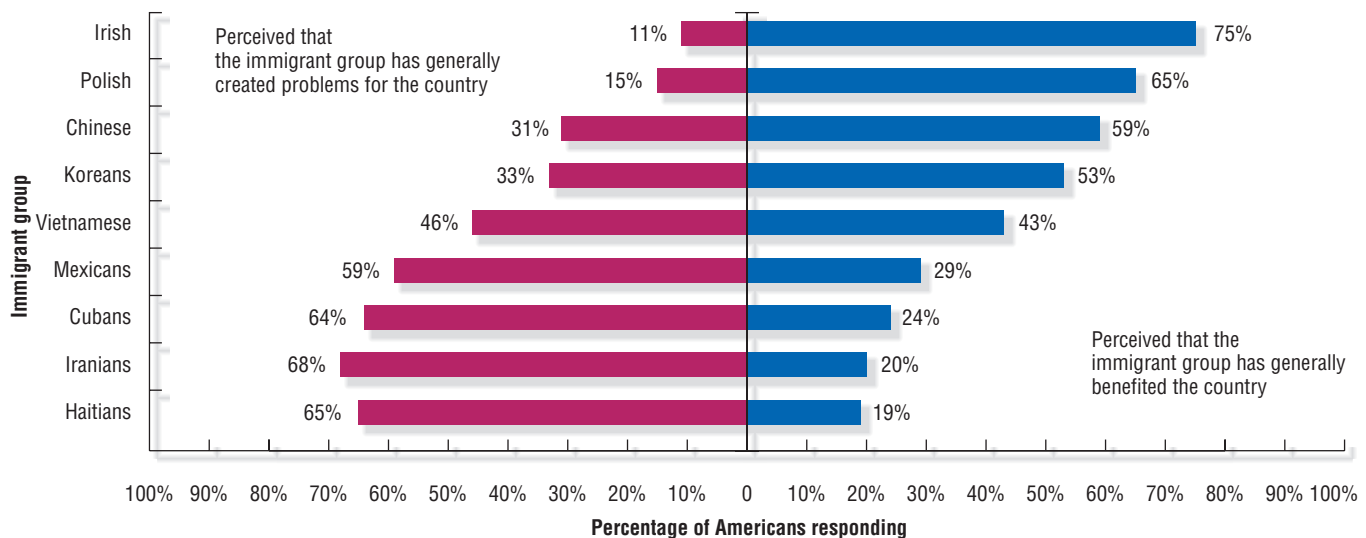
Ethnicity

The term *ethnicity* comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, originally meaning "people" or "nation." Thus, the Greek word referred to cultural and national identity. Today, an **ethnic minority** is socially identified by unique characteristics related to culture or nationality. Just as physical characteristics define racial minorities, cultural differences define ethnic minorities.

An ethnic minority is a subculture defined by its own language, religion, values, beliefs, norms, and customs. (See page 98 in Chapter 3 for an introduction to subcultures.) Like any subculture, it is part of the larger culture—its members work in the majority, or host, economy, send their children through the host educational system, and are subject to the laws of the land. Ethnic minorities are also separate from the larger culture. The separation may continue because the ethnic minority wishes to maintain its cultural and national origins or because the majority erects barriers that prevent the ethnic group from blending in with the larger culture. For example, Michael Novak (1996) makes a case that members of white ethnic minorities from southern and eastern Europe—Poles, Slavs, Italians, Greeks—have not been able to blend completely into American society. Compared with other white European immigrant groups, such as German immigrants, groups from southern and eastern Europe were more culturally different from the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) majority and thus mixed less easily with the majority culture.

Why are ethnic minorities seen as inferior?
Negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities exist in part because of *ethnocentrism*. As you read in Chapter 3, ethnocentrism involves judging others in terms of one's own cultural standards. Ethnocentrism creates the feeling of "us," the group one belongs to, versus "them," the other groups that are out there.

People in the majority, out of loyalty to and preference for their own values, beliefs, and norms, may consider other views to be inferior. Because members of ethnic minorities do not measure up to the majority's conception of appropriate ways of behaving, it may be assumed that something is wrong with them. Ethnocentric judgments are often expressed as prejudice and discrimination. Figure 9.1 shows American attitudes toward specific immigrant groups. In general, European immigrants are viewed more positively than non-European immigrants.

- **ethnic minority**
  group identified by cultural, religious, or national characteristics

Figure 9.1
Attitudes of Americans Toward Immigrant Minorities
The results of a Gallup poll are displayed in this graph of attitudes toward various immigrant groups in the United States. What pattern is reflected in this graph among the groups that are most favored as helping the country?

Perceived that the immigrant group has generally created problems for the country

Immigrant group	Problems	Benefited
Irish	11%	75%
Polish	15%	65%
Chinese	31%	59%
Koreans	33%	53%
Vietnamese	46%	43%
Mexicans	59%	29%
Cubans	64%	24%
Iranians	68%	20%
Haitians	65%	19%

Perceived that the immigrant group has generally benefited the country

100% 90% 80% 70% 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Percentage of Americans responding

The Travelling People

The following excerpt describes the Irish "Travelling People," who are viewed by mainstream Irish as inferior.

They are Ireland's unrecognized minority—homeless and ostracized. Despite public disapproval, their family groups wander the Irish countryside. Other than a limited number of official halting sites they have no place to stop. Most live by the side of the road. They bathe, eat, and sleep in public. They live without electricity or permanent running water, bathing facilities, or toilets. Their child-mortality rate is similar to those in Third World countries, and there is a 98 percent illiteracy rate among adults. According to the Economic and Social Research Institute's 1985 report, "The circumstances of the Irish Travelling People are intolerable. No humane and decent society once made aware of such circumstances could permit them to persist."

But although local political groups and organizations have expressed the need to create permanent housing for the Travellers (most commonly described as "gypsies" or "tinkers"), the settled community prefers what Traveller Nell McDonaugh calls an "unspoken segregation." Travellers are evicted from areas not designated as official halting sites, and grassy lanes that Traveller groups have frequented for years are blocked and barred. Most official halting sites are located in undesirable, often industrial, areas.

Most settled people want nothing to do with Travellers. Popular belief has it that Travellers draw the dole [welfare] in more than one county at a time, are troublemakers, and leave piles of garbage in their wake. Many local people are opposed to having halting sites in their vicinity. Why should "respectable" people support itinerants?

But these "homeless" outcasts have filled a social niche in Ireland for centuries. Theirs may be a distinct lifestyle, and their traditions are unlike those of other Irish, but they are, nonetheless, Irish. In a traditionally rural society, Travellers served acceptable social purposes as itinerant farm workers, metal craftsmen, lace makers, and storytellers. But in today's settled urban society, this integrated group of nomads are a people displaced by and at odds with contemporary expectations. They are a community without a place in its own homeland and a cultural group in danger of losing its identity.

Source: Excerpted and reprinted with permission from *The World & I*, Amy Seidman, June 1993, *The Washington Times Corporation*, © 1993, pp. 250, 252.

Thinking It Over

Use either functionalism or conflict theory to explain this attitude toward the Travellers.

Section 1 Assessment

1. Summarize the five main characteristics of a minority.
2. What is the difference between race and ethnicity? Between race and nationality?

Critical Thinking

3. **Summarizing Information**
   Identify the main racial or ethnic minorities in your area. Are you a member of any minority groups? What are they?

Racial and Ethnic Relations

Key Terms

- **assimilation** *(p. 280)*
- **cultural pluralism** *(p. 281)*
- **genocide** *(p. 281)*
- **subjugation** *(p. 282)*
- **de jure segregation** *(p. 282)*
- **de facto segregation** *(p. 282)*

- **assimilation**
  the blending or fusing of minority groups into the dominant society

Section Preview

Patterns of racial and ethnic relations take two forms: assimilation and conflict. Patterns of assimilation include Anglo-conformity, melting pot, cultural pluralism, and accommodation. Conflict patterns include genocide, population transfer, and subjugation.

Patterns of Assimilation

Generally, minority groups are either accepted—which leads to *assimilation*—or rejected—which leads to *conflict*. Within these two broad approaches, however, is a wide range of outcomes.

Assimilation refers to the blending or fusing of minority groups into the dominant society. When a racial or ethnic minority is integrated into a society, its members are given full participation in all aspects of the society. Assimilation has taken several forms in the United States: *Anglo-conformity, melting pot, cultural pluralism, and accommodation.*

Anglo-conformity has been the most common form of assimilation in U.S. society.

What is the most common pattern of assimilation? Anglo-conformity has been the most prevalent pattern of assimilation in America. *Anglo* is a prefix used to indicate an American of English descent. In Anglo-conformity, traditional American institutions are maintained. Immigrants are accepted as long as they conform to the "accepted standards" of the society. Anglo-conformity is the least egalitarian pattern of assimilation because the immigrant minority is required to conform. By implication, it must either give up or suppress its own values.

Is America more like a melting pot or a tossed salad? A second pattern of assimilation is the *melting pot,* in which all ethnic and racial minorities voluntarily blend together. Older history textbooks, in describing the immigrant experience in the United States, often referred to a melting pot of cultures. However, there is some question about how much fusing of cultures has really taken place. Instead of a melting pot, many sociologists are now using the idea of a "tossed salad," in which traditions and cultures exist side by

side. The cultures of the Tejanos in Texas and the Creoles of New Orleans are examples. This pattern of assimilation is called **cultural pluralism.** It recognizes immigrants' desire to maintain at least a remnant of their "old" ways. In so doing, however, the immigrants have an impact on institutions in the United States. Because of the large numbers of Latino immigrants, for example, many states have instituted bilingual education programs in public schools. The government now routinely makes official forms available in both English and Spanish, many churches throughout the country conduct services in both languages, and cable television stations offer English and Spanish audio tracks.

Accommodation is an extreme form of cultural pluralism. It occurs when a minority maintains its own culturally unique way of life. The minority learns to deal with, or accommodate, the dominant culture when necessary but remains independent in language and culture. The Cubans in Miami and the Amish in Pennsylvania are examples of distinct groups within larger communities that have kept separate identities.

● **cultural pluralism**
desire of a group to maintain some sense of identity separate from the dominant group

Patterns of Conflict

In looking for broad patterns of conflict, sociologists examine historical records and analyze current events. Three basic patterns have emerged that describe approaches that dominant cultures take in their rejection of minority groups. These are *genocide, population transfer,* and *subjugation* (Mason, 1970).

What is the most extreme pattern of conflict? At the extreme, conflict takes the form of **genocide,** the systematic effort to destroy an entire population. One of the best-known examples is the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler's attempt to destroy all European Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. (See Figure 9.2 below.) Less well known is the "Rape of Nanking," begun in 1937, during which the Japanese massacred an estimated 260,000 to 350,000 Chinese men, women, and children (Chang, 1998).

● **genocide**
the systematic effort to destroy an entire population

Jewish Population in 1992 as a Percentage of Jewish Population in 1930

- 100% or more
- 75% to 99%
- 50% to 74%
- 25% to 49%
- 15% to 24%
- 10% to 14%
- 1% to 9%
- Less than 1%
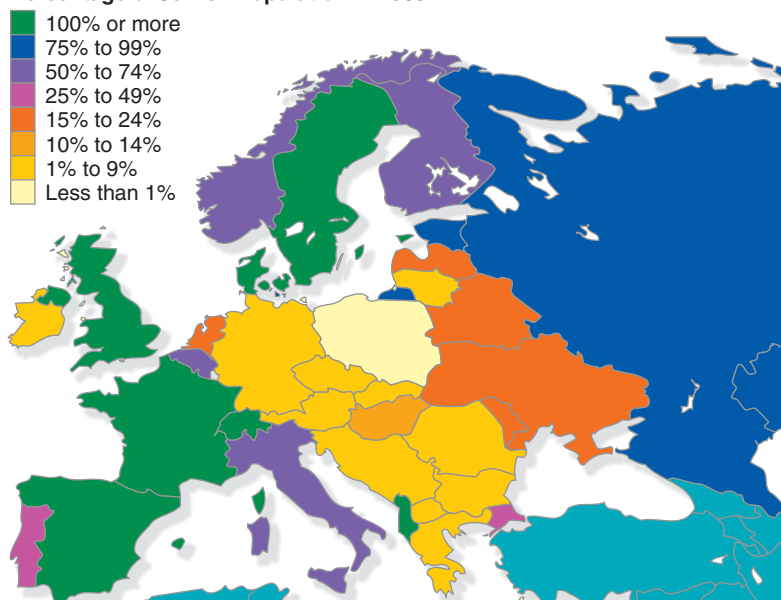
Figure 9.2 Impact of the Holocaust
One of the worst examples of genocide was the Nazis' attempt, in the 1930s and 1940s, to exterminate the European Jewish population. This map shows the decline in Jewish population in European countries as a result of the Holocaust.

The Cherokee were not the only Native American population transferred from their homes. The Creek and the Seminole were also forcibly removed by U.S. troops.

● **subjugation**
process by which a minority group is denied equal access to the benefits of a society

● **de jure segregation**
denial of equal access based on the law

● **de facto segregation**
denial of equal access based on everyday practice

Tragically, genocide campaigns are more common in world history than might be supposed. Recently, the Serbians have been accused of conducting campaigns of "ethnic cleansing" against the Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo. In 1994, the Tutsi tribe of Rwanda slaughtered 500,000 to 800,000 of the minority Hutu tribe.

What is population transfer? In *population transfer,* a minority is forced either to move to a remote location or to leave entirely the territory controlled by the majority. This was the policy most often used against Native Americans. For example, in 1838, sixteen thousand Cherokee from the southeastern United States were set on a forced march along the "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma reservations, where they became dependent on the U.S. government. An estimated four thousand Cherokee (nearly a fourth of the tribes) died because of harsh conditions along the Trail of Tears.

What conflict pattern appears most often? Subjugation is the most common pattern of conflict. A subjugated minority is denied equal access to the culture and lifestyle of the larger society. Subjugation may be based on the law, or *de jure*. An example was the de jure segregation of public schools in the United States during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. In *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) the Supreme Court overturned previous case law that had made racial segregation legal in the U.S.

Subjugation may also arise from the everyday practices of people, even when specific laws do not exist to deny opportunities to minority groups. *De facto* is a term used in case law that describes the actual, or real, situation regardless of what the law is. De facto segregation is operating when, for example, neighboring homeowners agree among themselves not to sell to members of certain ethnic groups or races. De facto discrimination exists when people of certain backgrounds are not promoted to important positions in local government or in businesses because of widely held stereotypes. Although illegal, the difficulty of proving bias can make this type of subjugation a very effective tool for controlling a minority.

Section 2 Assessment

1. Identify and define four patterns of assimilation.
2. What is the difference between de jure and de facto segregation?

Critical Thinking

3. **Evaluating Information** Work with one or more of your classmates to research and evaluate the impact that the assimilation of Latinos is having on American institutions such as public schools, churches, and government agencies.

Sociology Today

Bridging the Digital Divide

In 2000, Delta Airlines and Ford Motor Company both publicly announced their multimillion-dollar (hundreds of millions, in fact) bet they are placing on their employees (Miller and Silverstein, 2000). Each intends to provide home computers and Internet access to all of their 422,000 workers. It is a new company benefit costing each employee as little as $5 per month.

The bet is that employees become more efficient and effective when they are proficient with computers. Expected payoffs for the companies is improved communication with their workforces, heightened employee morale, and increased employee loyalty. Employees at Ford and Delta enthusiastically welcomed the new benefit.

There is a possible downside for employees. When workers can be reached instantaneously at home day or night, the traditional boundaries between the home and the workplace could erode. And Ford and Delta do have plans to communicate with workers at home. According to sociologist Arlie Hochschild, this apparent gift could be a Trojan horse by extending the "long arm of the workplace." Even worse, some workers fear that companies might intrude on their private lives by monitoring their Internet activities. (See the *Tech Trends* feature entitled "The Dark Side of Workplace Technology" in Chapter 5.)

There could also be a social upside to wide-scale on-line access. Sociologists have recognized computer literacy as a key to social mobility in the twenty-first century. Since those nearer the bottom of the social class structure lack the resources necessary to be computer literate, sociologists fear they will be hopelessly left behind.

Given this situation, widespread exposure of less-skilled workers to computer technology could have benefits Ford and Delta employees may not have considered. Since both companies are encouraging workers' families to use the technology, the spouses and children of a significant number of individuals will have access to an indispensable tool for occupational advancement. While Ford and Delta may be concerned only about keeping their employees out of the digital divide, their action may unintentionally enable many more Americans to cross this divide. Company-provided computer technology at home may become a staple in most future corporate benefit packages.

Doing Sociology

1. Do you believe that computer literacy is a key element in today's job market? Tomorrow's?
2. Evaluate your own capabilities regarding computer technology.
3. Go to your library and examine the employment page of the Sunday edition of a major newspaper. Write a brief report on the extent to which computer literacy appears to be an important qualification in today's urban marketplace.

Theories of Prejudice and Discrimination

Key Terms

- prejudice *(p. 284)*
- racism *(p. 284)*
- discrimination *(p. 285)*
- hate crime *(p. 285)*
- stereotype *(p. 285)*
- self-fulfilling prophecy *(p. 288)*

- **prejudice**
  widely held negative attitudes toward a group (minority or majority) and its individual members

- **racism**
  an extreme form of prejudice that assumes superiority of one group over others

Section Preview

Prejudice involves attitudes, while discrimination is about behavior. Prejudice often leads to discrimination. Conversely, in some instances, discrimination creates prejudiced attitudes through stereotyping. Each of the three major perspectives looks at different aspects of prejudice.

Prejudice, Racism, and Discrimination

Individuals hold prejudices of many types. To a sociologist, though, **prejudice** has a very particular meaning. It refers to widely held preconceptions of a group (minority or majority) and its individual members. Prejudice involves a generalization based on biased or insufficient information. Prejudiced attitudes are based on strong emotions, so they are often difficult to change, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. It is easier to explain individuals who don't fit the stereotype as exceptions than it is to reexamine a whole set of established beliefs. For example, many people believe that Asian students have a particular "gift" for mathematics. Suppose that Susie is one of these people. In algebra class, she sits next to an Asian student who is not doing well. Will Susie change her idea about the mathematical abilities of Asian people as a result of this? Probably not. It will be less trouble for her to think that this one Asian student is the exception to the rule.

Racism is an extreme form of prejudice, because it not only involves judging people unfairly, but it assumes that a person's own race or ethnic group is superior. Racists believe that discrimination or exclusion is morally justified because of their own natural superiority.

Prejudice can lead to discrimination as simple as hostile looks or as serious as crimes against people and property.

How is discrimination different from prejudice? While prejudice involves holding biased opinions, discrimination involves acting upon those opinions by treating people unfairly. Prejudice does not always result in discrimination, but it often does.

Discrimination takes many forms, including avoiding social contact with members of minority groups, denying them positions that carry authority, and blocking their access to the more exclusive neighborhoods. It can also involve such extremes as attacking or killing minority members.

Hate Crimes

In 1998, James Byrd, Jr., an African American from Texas, was chained to a pickup truck, then dragged to death. That same year saw Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, tied to a fence and beaten to death. Both incidents fell under a special kind of crime called *hate crimes*.

How are hate crimes different? A hate crime is a criminal act that is motivated by extreme prejudice. Hate crimes involve bias related to race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004). Victims include, but are not limited to, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Jews, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. Data on hate crimes were not formally collected until 1990, when Congress passed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. Since then, these statistics have been a standard part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. Hate crimes occur in relatively small numbers, but the frequency is increasing. In 2003, more than 8,700 hate crime offenses were reported to the FBI.

How does sociology interpret hate crimes? Each of the theoretical perspectives discussed below can help us understand hate crimes. The functionalist might notice that members of a group are bolstering their sense of unity against a common enemy. Some hate crimes, consistent with conflict theory, are based on the belief that the victim is somehow threatening the person's livelihood or self-interest. This is the case when immigrants are attacked out of fear that they will take the jobs of the white majority. Finally, hate crimes always involve labeling. People who commit hate crimes have vocabularies filled with demeaning stereotypes that attempt to justify violence directed against the victims.

Stereotypes

A stereotype is a set of ideas—based on distortion, exaggeration, and oversimplification—that is applied to all members of a group. Stereotypes appear throughout any society. In the United States, examples of stereotypes include that athletes are "all brawn and no brain" and that politicians are corrupt.

Stereotypes are sometimes created to justify unethical behavior against minority groups. For example, very early relationships between the colonists and Native Americans in early colonial times were relatively peaceful and cooperative. As the population of the colonies grew, however, conflicts

These federal agency employees are searching through the ashes of an African American church in Mississippi. What would make this case of arson a hate crime?

● **discrimination**
treating people differently based on ethnicity, race, religion, or culture

● **hate crime**
a criminal act motivated by prejudice

● **stereotype**
a distorted, exaggerated, or oversimplified image applied to a category of people

Even marching band members suffer from stereotyping.

over land and resources became more frequent and intense. To justify expansion onto Indian territory, the colonists began perceiving Native Americans as "lying, thieving, un-Christian savages" who did not deserve the rights accorded to white settlers. This image helped the colonists defend their otherwise unjustifiable treatment of the Native American population.

The Functionalist Perspective

In studying prejudice and discrimination, functionalists focus on the dysfunctions caused by these practices. (We will look at this topic in greater detail in Section 4.) When minorities are exploited or oppressed, the social, political, educational, and economic costs to society are extremely high. Furthermore, the safety and stability of the larger society are at risk, because violence periodically erupts between the groups.

Functionalists recognize, however, that by fostering prejudice, a dominant group can create a feeling of superiority over minority groups. This feeling can strengthen its members' own self-concepts. Strangely, then, for the majority culture, functionalists can see a positive aspect to discrimination.

The Conflict Perspective

According to conflict theory, a majority uses prejudice and discrimination as weapons of power to control a minority. The majority does this to increase its control over property, goods, and other resources. The example about stereotypes used by colonists to portray Native Americans is based on the conflict perspective.

In the conflict perspective, despite being common targets, different minorities tend to view one another as competitors rather than as allies in their struggle against the majority (Olzak and Nagel, 1986). Conflict among minorities, particularly African Americans and Latinos, is increasing in the United States as whites leave cities and African Americans assume political power. To many urban blacks, Latinos appear to be benefiting from the civil rights movement waged by African Americans. Many Latinos, on the other hand, believe that African Americans are using their political clout to push an agenda that favors their own community at the expense of others. It remains to be seen if urban African Americans and Latinos will become allies for their mutual welfare or if they will engage in fierce conflict over the scarce resources available to them.

The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, members of a society learn to be prejudiced in much the same way they learn to be patriotic. Sociologist Gordon Allport (1979) described two stages in the learning of prejudice. In the *pregeneralized learning period,* children may overhear parents make racist or prejudiced statements, but they have not yet learned to separate people by race or ethnic group. By the time children reach the *total rejection stage,* however, they are able to use physical clues to sort people into groups. If children

Snapshot of America

Hate Groups in the United States

Hate groups are groups that have beliefs or practices that target an entire group of people. Each year, the Southern Poverty Law Center tracks the number of active hate groups operating in the United States. These groups include the Ku Klux Klan, Black Separatists, White Supremacists, and Neo-Nazis. In 2004, there were 762 such groups in the United States.

Number of Hate Groups

- 40 or above
- 30–39
- 20–29
- 10–19
- 1–9
- None
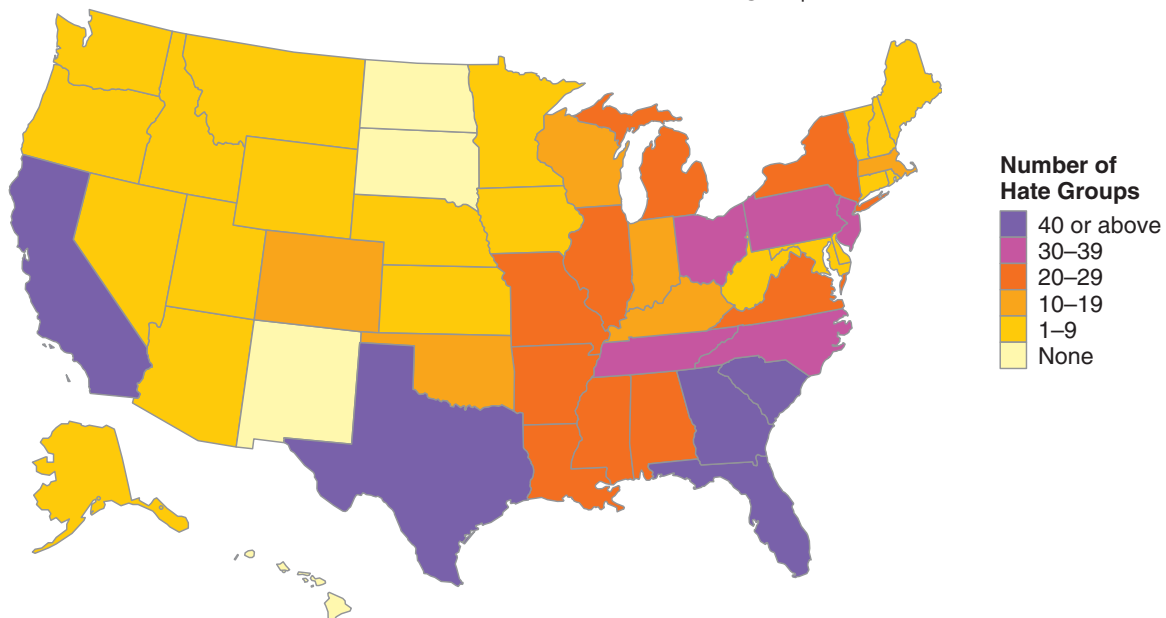
Interpreting the Map

1. Which states had the most hate groups in 2004? Which states had no active hate groups?

2. About how many hate groups are active in your state? Does this number surprise you? Explain.

3. Do you think it is important to track the number of hate groups in the United States? Why or why not?

Source: Adapted from Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Project, "Active U.S. Hate Groups in 2004."

repeatedly hear parents malign a minority, they will reject all members of the group, on all counts and in all situations.

Symbolic interactionists also point out that language itself can reflect prejudices. For example, in Anglo culture, many terms that include *black* are negative. Such terms as *blackball, blacklist, black mark,* and *black eye* illustrate the negative slant associated with the word *black*.

Figure 9.3	Prejudice and Discrimination

This table illustrates how a particular theoretical perspective views a central sociological concept. Switch the concepts around and illustrate how each theoretical perspective would view a different concept. For example, discuss some functions and dysfunctions of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Theoretical Perspective	Concept	Example
Functionalism	Ethnocentrism	White colonists used negative stereotypes as a justification for taking Native American land.
Conflict Theory	Competition for power	African Americans accuse Latinos of using their political clout to win advantages for themselves.
Symbolic Interactionism	Self-fulfilling prophecy	Members of a minority fail because of the low expectations they have for their own success.

● **self-fulfilling prophecy**
an expectation that leads to behavior that causes the expectation to become reality

Symbolic interactionism underlies the concept of the **self-fulfilling prophecy**—an expectation that leads to behavior that then causes the expectation to become a reality. For example, if a student is continually encouraged and told that she is capable of succeeding at a task, she will likely act as if she can succeed. If, however, she is discouraged from trying and told she will probably fail, that same student will likely act in a manner that will cause her to fail. Similarly, if members of any minority are continually treated as if they are less intelligent or less competent than the majority, they may eventually accept this limitation. This acceptance, in turn, may lead them to place less emphasis on education as a way of succeeding. Given this negative interaction, and the lack of opportunity to develop their abilities, members of minorities may become locked in low-level jobs.

Section 3 Assessment

1. Can you hold a prejudice about a group without discriminating against that group? Why or why not?
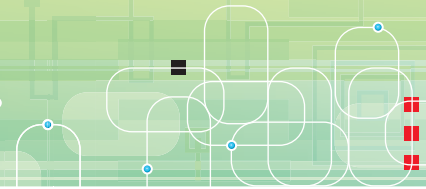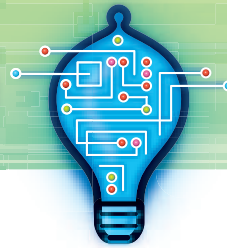2. Why do you think most stereotypes are negative? Can you think of any positive stereotypes?
3. Why does conflict exist between African Americans and Latinos?

Critical Thinking

4. **Evaluating Information** Discuss specific ways in which African Americans and Latinos have attempted to resolve their role conflicts.

TECH TRENDS

Spinning a Web of Hate

White supremacists, neo-Nazis, and members of other hate groups have discovered the Internet as a channel to spread hatred of Jews, African Americans, and homosexuals, among others (Sandberg, 1999). From one hate site in 1995, the Anti-Defamation League estimates that there are now thousands of Web sites advocating racism, anti-Semitism, and violence. Aryan Nations identify Jews as the natural enemy of whites; White Pride World Wide targets African Americans and Jews; Posse Comitatus defends alleged abortion-clinic bomber Eric Robert Rudolph; World Church of the Creator is violently anti-Christian.

Organized racists use high technology to deliver their message to a mass audience. While members of hate groups used to be recognized by their white hoods or neo-Nazi swastikas, they can now just as easily be wearing business suits instead of brown shirts. The Southern Poverty Law Center is especially concerned about the repackaging of hate-based ideologies to make them appear more respectable to mainstream America. To reach the young, hate Web sites offer such child-friendly attractions as crossword puzzles, jokes, cartoons, coloring books, contests, games, and interactive comic strips.

Not all hate-group activity comes from white supremacists who target African Americans. The Southern Poverty Law Center also tracks the activities of Black Separatists and documents several recent hate crimes committed by blacks against whites. In addition, the continued immigration of Asians and Central and South Americans is drawing the angry attention of hate groups of all types. More information on hate group activities can be found at the Southern Poverty Law Center Web site, www.splcenter.org.

Analyzing the Trends

When the economy is not performing well, membership in hate groups rises, and membership declines when the economy is doing well. Relate this fluctuating membership pattern to scapegoating and conflict theory.

How is propaganda used by hate groups to deliver their message?

Young people today may grow up to be "Internet police officers." A number of software companies now design and market programs that prevent children from accessing Web sites their parents think unsuitable.

Minority Groups in the United States

Key Terms

- **institutionalized discrimination** *(p. 290)*
- **hidden unemployment** *(p. 293)*
- **underclass** *(p. 293)*

- **institutionalized discrimination**
  unfair practices that grow out of common behaviors and attitudes and that are a part of the structure of a society

Section Preview

Discrimination in the United States has caused some ethnic and racial groups to lag behind the white majority in jobs, income, and education. Progress is being made, but gains remain fragile. African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American, and white ethnics are the largest minority groups in this country.

Institutionalized Discrimination

Many people believe that discrimination in the United States ended when civil rights legislation was passed in the 1960s. These laws did stop many discriminatory practices. Nevertheless, minorities in this country still suffer from what sociologists call **institutionalized discrimination.** This type of discrimination results from unfair practices that are part of the structure of society and that have grown out of traditional, accepted behaviors.

Seniority systems, in which promotion and pay increase with years of service, for example, can discriminate against minority workers. Because they were shut out of jobs in the past, members of minorities are just now beginning to enter seniority systems. Having fewer years of service than majority members who have been in the system for years, minority members' chances

Institutionalized discrimination has contributed to the deterioration of some inner-city public schools.

for quick promotion are slight, even though the seniority systems may not have been intentionally designed to obstruct their progress.

Another example of institutionalized discrimination exists in public education. Schools with large numbers of minority students are more likely to be located in large urban areas than in wealthier suburbs. This is the case in part because of white flight to the suburbs. As a result, minority children in many states are more concentrated in school districts with a tax base too low to provide resources equal to those in the suburbs. This lack of funding means that teachers in minority schools receive fewer opportunities for training. Textbooks, when students have them, are outdated. Parental and community support is generally not as strong. There is little, if any, money for new technology, and buildings are badly in need of repair.

Institutionalized discrimination in the United States is reflected in the experiences of minorities—African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, white ethnics, and Jewish Americans. For each minority, the social and economic costs of discrimination have been enormous.

African Americans

African Americans make up the largest racial minority group in the United States, numbering over 37 million, or about 13 percent of the total population. They are also one of the oldest minorities, first brought to America as indentured servants and slaves in the early 1600s.

What are the barriers to African American assimilation?

There are many reasons for the lack of acceptance of African Americans into the mainstream of U.S. society. Skin color and physical features make it possible to identify at a glance people of African American lineage. This makes it easy for the dominant white ethnic group to create negative stereotypes based on physical characteristics.

A second reason for the continuing minority status of African Americans has its roots in early American history. Brought into the country to labor on plantations, African Americans were immediately assigned to the lowest class status. Even when freed, ex-slaves and their descendants in the United States

Minority group	Number (in thousands) 2000	Number (in thousands) 2003	Percent change 2000–2003
African American (non-Latino)	34,410	35,593	3.7
Latino	35,153	39,338	13.0
Asian (non-Latino)	10,457	11,673	12.7
Native American/Alaska Native (non-Latino)	2,104	2,180	4.0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (non-Latino)	369	391	6.4

Figure 9.4 U.S. Resident Minority Populations, 2000 and 2003
This table shows the percentage increase in the larger minority populations in the United States from 2000 to 2003. Are you surprised by the growth of any group?

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004–2005.*

Could institutionalized discrimination help to account for the near absence of African Americans in this corporate merger meeting?

were rarely accepted as equal to free whites. Upward social mobility for freed slaves (or any African Americans) was virtually impossible.

Slavery was legally abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment (1865), but the legacy of prejudice and discrimination that grew out of slavery affects African Americans to this day. Practices and laws that segregated the races became institutionalized, especially in the South, but also throughout the country. Such practices continued until the late 1960s, when they were made illegal by the passage of civil rights legislation and by key Supreme Court decisions. In a very real sense, then, African Americans have experienced barely forty years of constitutional equality. The gap between African Americans and whites in education, income, and employment represents the legacy of centuries of prejudice and discrimination.

What are average income levels for African Americans? As noted in the Applying Sociology feature opening this chapter, average African American income in the United States is far from equal to the average income for whites. Specifically, African American income is approximately 62 percent that of whites. This means that for every $100 an average white family earns, an average African American family earns $62. Figure 9.5 shows differences in household income for various minority groups.

Not surprisingly, African Americans and whites also differ in wealth (home and car, business assets, and the like). The average African American household holds less than 20 percent of the wealth of the average white household (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005).

How do African Americans fare in the job market? Part of the reason for the economic differences can be traced to employment patterns. Compared with white men and women, a lower percentage of African American men and women are employed in professional, managerial, technical, and administrative occupations. African Americans are almost twice as likely as whites to work in low-level service jobs (U.S. Department of Labor, 2004).

Figure 9.5 Majority and Minority Median Household Incomes
Explain why sociologists consider Asian Americans a minority group despite their relatively high annual income.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005.

New long-term economic trends threaten to make matters even worse. These trends include a shift from higher-paying manufacturing jobs to lower-paying service jobs and replacement of workers because of the transfer of high-wage jobs to low-wage countries.

Patterns of unemployment also affect the economic status of African Americans. In 2005, for example, the jobless rate among African Americans was slightly more than double that of whites. Moreover, official jobless rates do not in reality account for all unemployed persons. Traditional unemployment rates are based on the number of unemployed people who are actively looking for work. They do not include so-called **hidden unemployment**— discouraged workers who have stopped looking or part-time workers who would prefer to have full-time jobs. When hidden unemployment is considered, the jobless rate for the nation is considerably higher than official numbers indicate. This is particularly true for African Americans (National Jobs for All Coalition, 2005).

● **hidden unemployment**
unemployment that includes people not counted in the traditional unemployment categories

Differences in unemployment rates between white and African American workers exist even for college-educated people. These differences, however, are not as large as for the nation as a whole (Hocker, 2004). The greatest unemployment problem exists among African American teenagers. According to official statistics, nearly 33 percent of African American teenagers were unemployed in 2005, compared to just over 13 percent of white teenagers.

To what degree are African Americans making advances?

Education is the traditional American path to economic gain and occupational prestige. The educational story for African Americans is mixed. As of 2003, 85 percent of whites had finished high school, compared with 80 percent of African Americans. Similarly, whereas nearly 28 percent of whites had completed college, only slightly more than 17 percent of African Americans had done so.

United States senator Barack Obama of Illinois has made helping working families a top priority.

Moreover, higher educational attainment doesn't pay off for African Americans as it does for whites. Although income tends to rise with educational level for all races, it increases much less for African American men (and for women of both races) than for white men. White male high school graduates, on the average, earn nearly as much each year as African American men with college associate degrees. At each level of schooling, black men tend to gain less than their white peers.

While these figures may seem discouraging, real gains have been made. More than 25 percent of African Americans now work in professional and managerial occupations. These occupations include chief executives, lawyers, accountants, computer scientists, and teachers. Also, business ownership by African Americans has been increasing dramatically. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of black-owned businesses rose 45 percent, to 1.2 million. These businesses earned nearly $93 billion. As a result of the recent upward mobility of educated African Americans, some scholars see the emergence of two black Americas—a growing black middle class and a black **underclass** composed of unemployed people whose families have been poor for generations.

● **underclass**
people typically unemployed who come from families that have been poor for generations

African Americans have also increased their political presence. Forty-three African Americans, a record number, now serve in Congress. More than 5,400 African Americans serve as city and county officials, up from 715 in 1970. In total, there are more than 9,000 black elected officials in the United States,

a sixfold increase since 1970. The election of African Americans in predominantly white areas is a hopeful sign. African Americans, though still vastly underrepresented, have entered the "power elite" of America:

Although the power elite is still composed primarily of Christian white men, there are now . . . blacks . . . on the boards of the country's largest corporations; presidential cabinets are far more diverse than was the case forty years ago; and the highest ranks of the military are no longer filled solely by white men (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1999:176).

Latinos

Latino is a term that refers to ethnic minorities from Latin America, a region that includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and the islands of the Caribbean. High birth rates and immigration rates make Latinos (along with Asian Americans) one of the fastest-growing minorities in the United States. In fact, early in the twenty-first century, Latinos overtook African Americans as America's largest minority group (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). By the time you are nearing retirement—about the year 2050—it is predicted that nearly one out of every four Americans will be Latino. (See Figure 9.6.)

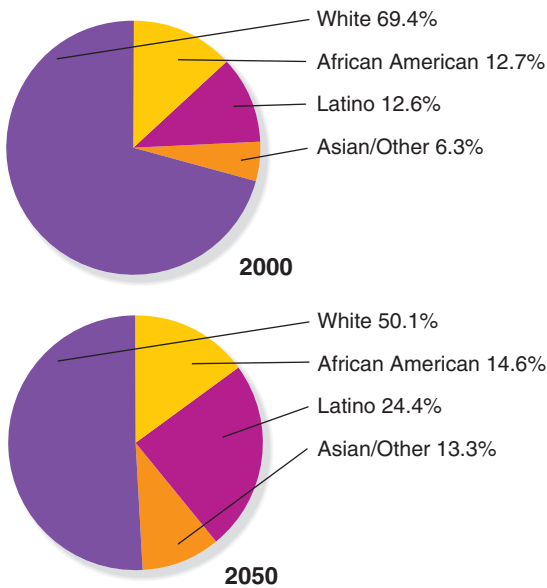## What are the largest Latino groups in the United States?

Nearly 67 percent of Latinos today are of Mexican descent. Puerto Ricans make up a little less than 9 percent of the total Latino population. Most Puerto Ricans are concentrated in or near New York City, although the population is beginning to shift to the outlying areas. Cubans make up the third most populous group of Latinos, with nearly 1.4 million people. Most Cuban Americans are located in the Miami, Florida, area (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005).

Like Anglos, Native Americans, and African Americans, Latino peoples are diverse. Each group came to the United States under different circumstances

Figure 9.6 The U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000 and 2050
The racial and ethnic composition in the U.S. is expected to look very different by 2050. Discuss some social consequences of this changing composition.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004.

2000
White 69.4%
African American 12.7%
Latino 12.6%
Asian/Other 6.3%

2050
White 50.1%
African American 14.6%
Latino 24.4%
Asian/Other 13.3%

Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.
Note: The White, African American, and Asian/Other categories exclude Latinos, who may be of any race.

and retains a sense of its own identity and separateness. In addition, there are significant internal differences within individual Latino minorities. For example, the first large group of Cuban immigrants to enter the United States were successful middle- and upper-class people who fled from Cuba when Fidel Castro instituted a communist government there in the late 1950s. These Cuban Americans differ substantially from later Cuban immigrants, who were relatively uneducated members of the lower class.

What is the general level of education among Latinos?
Latinos fall behind white Americans in formal education. Just about 57 percent of adult Latinos have completed high school, compared with 85 percent of non-Latinos. Mexican Americans have the lowest levels of educational attainment. Cubans have the highest, owing to the fact that many Cuban immigrants to the United States were middle- and upper-class people, as explained earlier (Stefancic and Delgado, 1998).

The meager wages earned by migrant farm laborers still keep many Latino children in the fields and out of schools where they could receive an education.

What is the income level for Latinos?
Average income for Latinos ($34,241) is higher than that of African Americans but significantly lower than that of non-Latino whites ($48,977). Cubans are the most affluent Latinos, but their median income is only about 75 percent that of whites. The poorest among the large Latino groups are the Puerto Ricans, whose income is only half that of whites. Almost 22 percent of Latino families live below the poverty level, compared with slightly less than 9 percent of white non-Latinos (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005).

From the data above, it should come as no surprise that many Latinos work in low-paying and low-status jobs as semiskilled workers and unskilled laborers. Mexican Americans make up the majority of migrant workers in the country. Cuban men belong to the only Latino minority with occupations similar to those of the white Anglo majority (Moore and Pachon, 1985). The numbers of Latino-owned homes and businesses are increasing rapidly, but they still fall far behind the national averages.

How do Latinos stand politically?
Politically, Latinos are becoming a force in shaping American politics. As of 2005, a record number of 29 Latinos are serving in the U.S. Congress—27 in the House of Representatives and 2 in the Senate. In total, there are more than 4,400 Latino elected officials in the United States, a 10-percent increase since 1990. Issues of education and immigration, as well as employment, income, and the quality of life, promise to keep Latinos politically active in the years to come.

Native Americans
Today, Native Americans number just over 4 million. More than 500 separate tribes and bands have been identified in the United States. This great diversity is generally unrecognized because of stereotyped images of Native Americans based on dated Hollywood films and paperback adventures of the Old West. In fact, however, tribal groups such as the Navajo and Sioux are as different from one another as Anglo Americans are from Italians or Brazilians.

Some Native American tribes are becoming more economically independent through the gaming industry. Not everyone agrees that this will result in long-term gains.

What is the current situation of Native Americans? Native Americans, perhaps more than any other minority, are suffering today from the effects of hundreds of years of discrimination. Abject poverty remains a major fact of life among Native Americans, especially on reservations. Just over 24 percent of the Native American population live below the poverty line. Fewer Native Americans graduate from high school than any other major minority group.

Native Americans have the second-lowest annual income of any minority group in the United States ($33,132). Slightly more than 24 percent of all employed Native American people work in professional, managerial, and related occupations. Another 24 percent hold sales and office positions, and about 13 percent are in blue-collar jobs such as construction and maintenance. In 2005, only one Native American served in Congress, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

How has Native American gaming affected life on reservations? A relatively recent development on Native American reservations is the introduction of casino-type gaming establishments. Native American gaming both on and off reservations has grown unexpectedly into an enormous, rapidly expanding industry. In 2004, for example, approximately 200 tribes were operating 367 gaming facilities in the United States. Gaming revenues for that year exceeded $19 billion. Not surprisingly, many Native Americans have embraced the gaming industry as a source of money. Most tribal governments use the proceeds from gaming to provide services and to promote economic and community development.

A recently completed study by Harvard University evaluated the extent to which gaming has affected the lives of Native Americans living on reservations (Taylor and Kalt, 2005). According to this study, between 1990 and 2000, the growth in median household income for Native American-held areas was six times that of the overall U.S. growth rate. Moreover, during that same time period, unemployment decreased about 5 percent on reservations with gaming and about 2.5 percent on reservations without gaming. While these findings are promising, life on Native American reservations still presents many challenges that need to be met. These challenges include improving the lives of Native Americans in the areas of health care, education, income, and housing.

Asian Americans

Nearly 12 million Asians live in the United States, comprising approximately 4 percent of the total population. Like Latinos, Asians come from many different national and ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are from China, the Phillipines, Japan, India, Korea, and Vietnam.

If a success story can be told for any minority group in America, those groups are Chinese and Japanese Americans. Even for them, however, the road has not been smooth.

How have Chinese Americans fared over the years?

Attracted at first by the California gold rush, Chinese immigrants arrived in large numbers during the 1850s. They worked as agricultural laborers, on railroad crews, and in low-paying industrial jobs. When hard times hit in the 1870s, unemployed European Americans began to compete for jobs that the Chinese had held. Race riots erupted, and the children of Chinese immigrants were barred from attending schools in San Francisco. Chinese Americans were driven into large urban ghettos known as Chinatowns, where they are still concentrated today. Pressure by congressmen from California led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which virtually ended Chinese immigration to the United States for nearly a hundred years.

Although Chinese Americans, in many ways, remain isolated from American life, their situation began to improve after 1940. American-born Chinese college graduates began to enter professional occupations, and Chinese American scholars and scientists began to make publicly recognized contributions to science and the arts. Most Americans today recognize Chinese Americans' willingness to work hard, their dedication to education, and their contributions to American society.

What has been the history of Japanese Americans in the United States?

Early diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan were warm and cordial. But beginning in 1885, large numbers of Japanese men immigrated to the West Coast of the United States. Their arrival coincided with the attempt described above to exclude Chinese immigrants. The Japanese suffered prejudice and discrimination during these early years. Nevertheless, they moved from being laborers in certain industries (railroads, canning, logging, mining, meat packing) to being successful farmers.

When the Japanese began to compete with white farmers, however, anti-Japanese legislation was passed. The California Alien Land Bill of 1913, for example, permitted Japanese to lease farmland for a maximum of three years; it did not allow land they owned to be inherited by their families. In 1924, the U.S. Congress halted all Japanese immigration, and the 126,000 Japanese already in the United States became targets for still more prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, and scapegoating.

In 1941, Japan attacked the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii, an act that brought the United States into World War II. Wartime hysteria generated a fear of a possible Japanese invasion that led President Franklin Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066. This emergency law moved more than 110,000 Japanese people into internment camps away from the West Coast. Historians later agreed that the Japanese Americans had posed no security threat during World War II. (Immigrants from Germany and Italy were not relocated, even though their countries were also at war with the United States.) Eventually, in the 1980s, the U.S. government formally apologized to Japanese American internees and paid them $20,000 each in compensation.

Over 100,000 Japanese residents in America were sent to internment camps during World War II. Many lost homes and businesses as a result.

Focus on Research

Survey Research: The Legacy of Racism

According to many scholars, African Americans today suffer more from low economic class than from racism. In a well-known study of the early 1990s, one sociologist, Joe Feagin, challenged this line of argument. Feagin set up a study that looked at African Americans' access to public accommodations, including restaurants, hotels, and motels.

Feagin interviewed middle-class African Americans in several cities. He wished to study African Americans in the middle class because they would have the economic resources needed to take advantage of public accommodations. His research was guided by several questions:

Do middle-class African Americans still experience racism in public accommodations?

If so, how is it manifested?

What means do middle-class African Americans use to handle discrimination?

What are the effects of discrimination on its victims?

Feagin conducted 37 in-depth interviews. Those interviewed were drawn from a larger group of 135 middle-class African Americans in several large cities.

The interviewees were representative of the larger sample based on such characteristics as occupation, age, income, education, sex, and location. The initial participants in the study were identified as middle class by city-based consultants. Names of additional participants were suggested by the first people interviewed. (This is known as "snowball" sampling.) Middle class was defined as "those

Because of decades of racism and discrimination, this obviously successful African American couple may still have trouble getting a cab driver to stop for them.

holding a white-collar job (including those in professional, managerial, and clerical jobs), college students preparing for white-collar jobs, and owners of successful businesses."

Middle-class African Americans, Feagin concluded, still experience discrimination based on race. Several types of discrimination were reported by the respondents, including avoidance, verbal attack, physical abuse, and subtle slights. Rejection and poor service were the most common forms of discrimination, however.

According to Feagin, the most tragic cost of this continuing discrimination is the ongoing physical and psychological drain felt by the victims. Isolated discriminatory acts may appear insignificant to whites, but years of being the target of discriminatory actions have a cumulative effect. Many African Americans report having developed a "second eye" to analyze interracial situations. As one respondent said:

I think that it causes you to have to look at things from two different perspectives. You have to decide whether things that are done or slights that are made are made because you are black or they are made because the person is just rude, or unconcerned and uncaring. So it's kind of a situation where you're always kind of looking to see with a second eye or a second antenna just what's going on (Feagin, 1991:115).

Feagin concluded that what may appear to American whites as "black paranoia," then, is actually a developed sensitivity to continuous discriminatory encounters. Despite decades of legal protection, Feagin says, African Americans have not attained the full promise of the American dream. Although middle-class African Americans work hard for their success, it is too often overshadowed by the legacy of past racist actions.

Working with the Research

1. Do you agree that disadvantages related to economic class are currently more harmful to African Americans than racism and discrimination? Why or why not?

2. Do you believe that Feagin adequately tested his hypothesis? Explain your conclusion.

3. Which of the three major theoretical perspectives best fits Feagin's research study? Defend your choice.

Figure 9.7   Socioeconomic Characteristics of Minorities

This figure presents some important social and economic characteristics of the majority and larger minorities in the U.S. Can you make sociological generalizations about income level and education based on these data?

	Whites	African Americans	Latinos	Native Americans	Asian Americans
Percent of Families in Poverty	8.6%	24.7%	21.9%	24.0%	9.8%
Median Income	$48,977	$30,134	$34,241	$33,132	$57,518
Percent with High School Diploma	85.1%	80.0%	57%	76.0%	87.6%
Percent with College Degree	27.6%	17.3%	4.4%	14.0%	49.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005.

Japanese Americans have not had to deal with the centuries of prejudice and discrimination endured by African Americans and Native Americans. Nevertheless, they have overcome great hardship and have become one of the most successful racial minorities in the United States (Zwiegenhaft and Domhoff, 1998).

Why have so many Asian Americans been successful? In large part, Asian Americans have been successful because they have used the educational system for upward mobility. This is reflected in the academic achievement of school-aged Asian Americans, whose average SAT scores are more than 60 points higher than the general high school population. Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of Asian Americans have completed four years of college, compared with approximately 28 percent of whites and 17 percent of African Americans (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005).

White Ethnics

White ethnics are the descendants of immigrants from Eastern and Southern European nations, particularly Italy and Poland. They also include Greek, Irish, and Slavic peoples. The majority are blue-collar workers living in small communities surrounding large cities in the eastern half of the United States.

During the 1960s, white ethnics gained the undeserved reputation of being conservative, racist, pro-war "hardhats." In fact, surveys conducted during the 1960s showed white ethnics to be more against the Vietnam War than white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Catholic blue-collar workers were found to be more liberal than either Protestant blue-collar workers or the country as a whole. They were more likely to favor a guaranteed annual wage, more likely to vote for an African American presidential candidate, and more concerned about the environment. Finally, white ethnics tended to be more sympathetic to government help for the poor and more in favor of integration.

White ethnics have not traditionally been the victims of occupational or income discrimination. Despite their relative success, many white ethnics have in recent years become very conscious of their cultural and national origins. There is, in fact, a white ethnic "roots" movement. The new trend toward white ethnic identity began with the black power movement of the 1960s. Just as many African Americans decided that they wanted to preserve their cultural and racial identities, many white ethnics now believe that "white ethnicity is beautiful." Many think that the price of completely abandoning one's cultural and national roots is simply too high.

Lillian Rubin (1994) links the continuing accent on white ethnicity to the rising demands of ethnic minorities. White ethnics, she believes, are attempting to establish a public identity that enables them to take a seat at the "multicultural table."

Section 4 Assessment

1. How are general discrimination and institutionalized discrimination different?

2. In what ways have white ethnics influenced American culture?

3. What does the level of Latino participation at the top of the American political structure suggest about the relationship between cultural group membership and political power in the United States?

4. Does the involvement of Native Americans in gaming operations today help or hurt the economy?

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** Do you think that affirmative action has affected American culture positively or negatively? Explain.

Summary

Section 1: Minority, Race, and Ethnicity

Main Idea: Sociologists have specific definitions particular to their field of study for minority, race, and ethnicity. Ethnic minorities have historically been subjected to prejudice and discrimination.

Section 2: Racial and Ethnic Relations

Main Idea: Patterns of racial and ethnic relations take two forms: assimilation and conflict. Patterns of assimilation include Anglo-conformity, melting pot, cultural pluralism, and accommodation. Conflict patterns include genocide, population transfer, and subjugation.

Section 3: Theories of Prejudice and Discrimination

Main Idea: Prejudice involves attitudes, while discrimination is about behavior. Prejudice usually leads to discrimination.

Section 4: Minority Groups in the United States

Main Idea: Discrimination in the United States has caused some ethnic and racial groups to lag behind the white majority in jobs, income, and education.

Sociology Online

Self-Check Quiz
Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at **glencoe.com** and click on **Chapter 9—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.

Reviewing Vocabulary

Complete each sentence, using each term once.

a. minority
b. stereotype
c. hate crime
d. self-fulfilling prophecy
e. race
f. institutionalized discrimination
g. ethnic minority
h. underclass
i. subjugation
j. assimilation
k. de jure segregation
l. de facto segregation
m. prejudice
n. discrimination
o. cultural pluralism
p. racism
q. genocide
r. hidden unemployment

1. An expectation that leads to behavior that causes the expectation to become a reality is called _____ .
2. _____ is a group identified by cultural, religious, or national characteristics.
3. A set of ideas based on distortion, exaggeration, and oversimplification is called _____ .
4. _____ is a group of people with physical or cultural characteristics different from the dominant group.
5. People living in poverty and either continuously unemployed or underemployed are known as _____ .
6. The denial of equal access based on law is called _____ .
7. A criminal act that is motivated by prejudice is called _____ .
8. _____ is a type of subjugation that takes place regardless of the law.
9. People who share certain inherited physical characteristics are known as _____ .
10. _____ refers to unfair practices that are part of the structure of a society.
11. Treating people differently because of their ethnicity, race, religion, or culture is called _____ .

12. _____ is the denial of equal access based on the law or everyday practice.

13. _____ is best described as negative attitudes toward some minority and its individual members.

14. _____ is the blending or fusing of minority groups into the dominant society.

15. Extreme prejudice is called .

16. _____ is assimilation that maintains elements of ethnic roots.

17. _____ is unemployment that includes people not counted in traditional work categories.

18. The systematic effort to destroy a population is known as _____ .

Reviewing the Facts

19. What is the name given to people who have some distinctive characteristic, are dominated by the majority, and are denied equal treatment?

20. What is a feature that is characteristic of a minority group?

21. Name the three patterns of assimilation.

22. How do we refer to the American historical phenomenon whereby immigrants eventually become part of the dominant class?

23. What does the lyric of the following song suggest about prejudice? "You've got to be taught to hate and fear, it's got to be drummed in your dear little ear."

24. How would sociologists explain the fact that on average, African Americans earn $62 for every $100 earned by whites?

25. What sociological perspective focuses on the majority's subjugation of minorities as a weapon of power and domination?

26 Examine Figure 9.7 on page 300. Which racial minority has come the closest to achieving mainstream white status?

27. How have white ethnics affected business in American society?

Thinking Critically

"*Sticks and stones may break your bones, but hate speech is actionable.*"

Lee Lorenz/Cartoonbank.com

28 Analyzing Visuals

In the cartoon above, the father is advising a young son about hate speech. Like *hate crime,* this term is relatively new, but it is usually taken to mean speech which encourages violence or fear in victims. What is the father's message to his son and is it a good one for a multicultural society? (If you do not understand *actionable* in the caption, use your dictionary.)
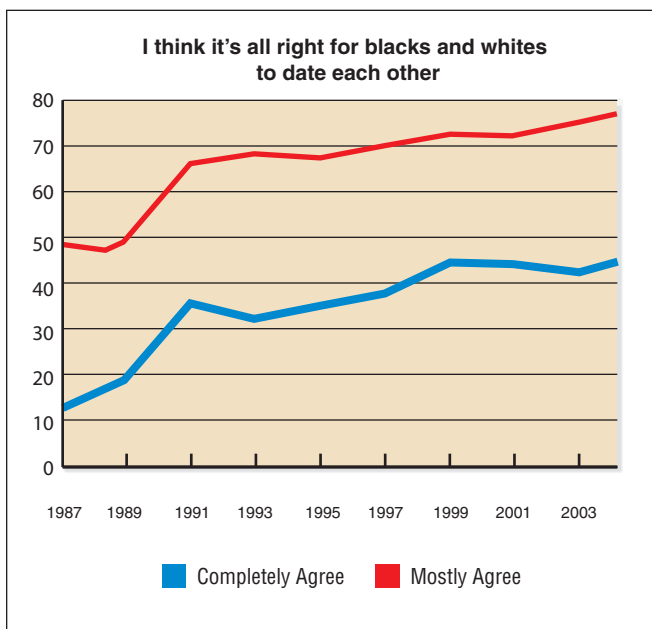
29. Applying Concepts

Recently, the students and administration at a largely Latino high school wanted to change the name of the school to honor a deceased Latino community leader. When the school had been built, the neighborhood had been primarily Anglo. Many of the old graduates protested the name change, and the original name was kept. Can you use what you have learned in this chapter about the relationship between cultural group membership and political power to explain why the decision was made to keep the school's old name?

30. Interpreting Graphs

Recent studies have shown that many high school students have dated someone of another race, but interracial marriages are much less common. Attitudes toward interracial marriages have changed in recent years, however, as the graph below indicates.

a. What percentage of the public accepted interracial dating in the late 1980s?

b. By 2003, how much had that percentage increased by 2003?

I think it's all right for blacks and whites to date each other

■ Completely Agree   ■ Mostly Agree

Source: Pew Research Center, *The 2004 Political Landscape*

31. Drawing Conclusions

A recent documentary examined a suburb in the Midwest where the racial balance had gradually changed from mostly white to mostly African American. Even though statistics proved that school scores had not dropped and government services remained the same, the perception was that property values had declined. What do you think was responsible for this perception?

32. Implementing Solutions

Read the following scenario, and then answer the questions: Two people are in a twenty-mile race. The winner will receive a prize of $100,000. Two of the competitors—Lynn and Tony—are very good runners, and both are in good physical condition. At the beginning of the race Tony is told to put a set of ten-pound ankle weights on each leg, but Lynn is not. In fact, Lynn does not even know about the weights. When Lynn reaches the thirteen-mile marker, Tony is two miles behind. He is not only exhausted but is also experiencing a shortened running stride and is off-rhythm because of the weights. The judges decide to remove the ankle weights.

a. Is it fair to continue the race with each runner finishing from his or her present position, or should Tony be moved forward in the race?

b. What is fair to both parties?

c. Assume that the race cannot be restarted. How do we compensate the runner who had to carry extra weights for over half of the race?

d. Are there solutions to the problem?

e. Since the problem is difficult to solve, would it be fair simply to ignore it and conclude that things will eventually work out?
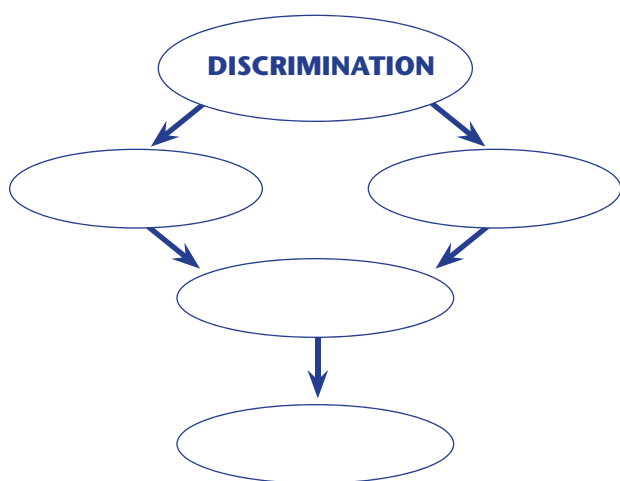
33. Evaluating Information

Explain how the experiences of various Native American tribes have been different from other racial and ethnic minority groups. Discuss whether you think allowing gaming on Indian reservations is a long-term benefit or disadvantage for Native Americans.

34. Making Comparisons

How has the African American experience in the United States been different from that of other racial and ethnic minority groups in thye United States?

35. Understanding Cause and Effect

Use the diagram below to show the cause-and-effect relationship between discrimination and poverty. Incorporate the elements of unequal educational opportunity, unfair hiring practices, and low-level jobs to complete your diagram.

```
        ┌──────────────────┐
        │  DISCRIMINATION  │
        └──────────────────┘
         ↙              ↘
   ┌─────────┐      ┌─────────┐
   │         │      │         │
   └─────────┘      └─────────┘
         ↘              ↙
        ┌──────────────────┐
        │                  │
        └──────────────────┘
                 ↓
        ┌──────────────────┐
        │                  │
        └──────────────────┘
```

Sociology Projects

36. Ethnic and Racial Heritage

This project will give you an opportunity to create a family tree. Ask parents and other relatives about your ethnic/racial heritage, going back as far as you can. Chances are you have relatives who have old photos with dates and other pieces of information. As you trace your family tree, note when new cultures, races, or ethnicities join the family. If this has happened several times in your family, consider how it complicates assigning yourself to a specific racial and ethnic category. You might want to turn this project into an album that your whole family can enjoy and pass on.

37. Native Americans and Immigrant Cultures

This chapter deals extensively with the effects of American culture on various racial and ethnic groups. Minorities, of course, also affect American culture. For example, Mexican Americans play a pivotal role throughout the Southwest, including in Texas, where Mexican restaurants serving enchiladas and fajitas compete with those serving traditional Texas barbecue. In many parts of the nation, Native Americans have opened tourist-based businesses. Asian Americans have a significant presence in California, where sushi bars serve fresh fish and Chinese groceries cater to a large clientele. Businesses often tailor their print, radio, and television advertising to cater to immigrant tastes. To do so, advertising companies often employ ethnic Americans as models and consultants. Work with one or two of your classmates to find information about immigrant and Native American cultures in your community. Analyze changes such as those in advertising, food, and business in your local culture that have resulted from adaptations to various immigrant or Native American cultures.

Technology Activity

38. The textbook describes a stereotype as a set of ideas based on distortion, exaggeration, and oversimplification that is applied to all members of a social category. Popular media often use stereotypes to convey assumed meanings about characters and situations. The Movies Cliché List at www.moviecliches.com/ provides an abundant list of stereotypes used in films.

a. Select "Women" from the Cliché Topics. Name some of the stereotypes about women suggested by the list.

b. Do the same for "Men" and "Minorities."

c. Based on what you have read in the text and on these lists, do you think stereotypes are helpful in understanding social categories?

The Skin Color Tax
by Patricia J. Williams

- **criteria**
  standards on which
  judgments or decisions
  are made

- **compliance**
  agreement with;
  following the terms of

- **unbeknownst**
  not knowing; unaware

- **creative variability
  of all illegality**
  cleverness of wrongdoers
  to get what they want

- **procured**
  obtained

- **recalcitrance**
  reluctance; unwillingness

Several years ago, at a moment when I was particularly tired of the unstable lifestyle that academic careers sometimes require, I surprised myself and bought a real house. Because the house was in a state other than the one where I was living at the time, I obtained my mortgage by telephone. I am a prudent little squirrel when it comes to things financial, always tucking away stores of nuts for the winter, and so I meet the **criteria** of a quite good credit risk. My loan was approved almost immediately.

A little while later, the contract came in the mail. Among the papers the bank forwarded were forms documenting **compliance** with the Fair Housing Act, which outlaws racial discrimination in the housing market. The act monitors lending practices to prevent banks from redlining—redlining being the phenomenon whereby banks circle certain neighborhoods on the map and refuse to lend in those areas. It is a practice for which the bank with which I was dealing, **unbeknownst** to me, had been cited previously—as well as since. In any event, the act tracks the race of all banking customers to prevent such discrimination. Unfortunately, and with the **creative variability of all illegality,** some banks also use the racial information disclosed on the fair housing forms to engage in precisely the discrimination the law seeks to prevent.

I should repeat that to this point my entire mortgage transaction had been conducted by telephone. I should also note that I speak a Received Standard English, regionally marked as Northeastern perhaps, but not easily identifiable as black. With my credit history, my job as a law professor and, no doubt, with my accent, I am not only middle class but apparently match the cultural stereotype of a good white person. It is thus, perhaps, that the loan officer of the bank, whom I had never met, had checked off the box on the fair housing form indicating that I *was* white.

Race shouldn't matter, I suppose, but it seemed to in this case, so I took a deep breath, crossed out "white" and sent the contract back. That will teach them to presume too much, I thought. A done deal, I assumed. But suddenly the transaction came to a screeching halt. The bank wanted more money, more points, a higher rate of interest. Suddenly I found myself facing great resistance and much more debt. To make a long story short, I threatened to sue under the act in question, the bank quickly backed down and I **procured** the loan on the original terms.

What was interesting about all this was that the reason the bank gave for its new-found **recalcitrance** was not race, heaven forbid. No, it was all about economics and increased risk: The reason they gave was that property values in that neighborhood were suddenly falling. They wanted more money to buffer themselves against the snappy winds of projected misfortune.

The bank's response was driven by demographic data that show that any time black people move into a neighborhood, whites are overwhelmingly

likely to move out. In droves. In panic. In concert. Pulling every imaginable resource with them, from school funding to garbage collection to social workers who don't want to work in black neighborhoods. The imagery is awfully catchy, you had to admit: the neighborhood just tipping on over like a terrible accident, whoops! Like a pitcher, I suppose. All that fresh wholesome milk spilling out running away . . . leaving the dark echoing, upended urn of the inner city.

In retrospect, what has remained so fascinating to me about this experience was the way it so exemplified the problems of the new rhetoric of racism. For starters, the new rhetoric of race never mentions race. It wasn't race but risk with which the bank was so concerned.

Second, since financial risk is all about economics, my exclusion got reclassified as just a consideration of class. There's no law against class discrimination, goes the argument, because that would represent a restraint on that basic American freedom, the ability to contract or not. If schools, trains, buses, swimming pools and neighborhoods remain segregated, it's no longer a racial problem if someone who just happens to be white keeps hiking up the price for someone who accidentally and purely by the way happens to be black. Black people end up paying higher prices for the attempt to integrate, even as the integration of oneself threatens to lower the value of one's investment.

By this measure of mortgage-worthiness, the ingredient of blackness is cast not just as a social toll but as an actual tax. A fee, an extra contribution at the door, an admission charge for the high costs of handling my dangerous propensities, my inherently unsavory properties. I was not judged based on my independent attributes or financial worth; not even was I judged by statistical profiles of what my group actually does. (For in fact, anxiety-stricken, middle-class black people make grovelingly good cake-baking neighbors when not made to feel defensive by the unfortunate historical strategies of bombs, burnings or abandonment.) Rather, I was being evaluated based on what an abstraction of White Society writ large thinks we—or I—do, and that imagined "doing" was treated and thus established as a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is a dispiriting message: that some in society apparently not only devalue black people but devalue *themselves* and their homes just for having us as part of their landscape.

"I bet you'll keep your mouth shut the next time they plug you into the computer as white," laughed a friend when he heard my story. It took me aback, this postmodern pressure to "pass," even as it highlighted the intolerable logic of it all. For by "rational" economic measures, an investment in my property suggests the selling of myself.

Read and React

1. What does the author mean when she writes "All that fresh wholesome milk spilling out running away . . . leaving the dark echoing, upended urn of the inner city"?

2. What are the main issues of what the author calls the "problems of the new rhetoric of racism"?

3. Why has the author titled this article "The Skin Color Tax"?

"Let's just forget for a moment that you're black."

© 1996 *The New Yorker Collection,* Mick Stevens. (Reprinted with permission.)

Source: Patricia J. Williams, "Of Race and Risk," *The Nation* (December 29, 1997):10.