What Characterizes Race and Ethnic Groups?
Prejudice and Racism: Micro-Level Analysis
Discrimination: Meso-Level Analysis
Dominant and Minority Group Contact: Macro-Level Analysis
The Effects of Prejudice, Racism, and Discrimination
Policies Governing Minority and Dominant Group Relations
So What?

As we travel around Our Social World, the people we encounter gradually change appearance. As human beings, we are all part of “we,” but there is a tendency to define those who look different as “they.”
1. Why do you look different from those around you? What importance do these differences make?

2. Is everyone prejudiced? If so, why? Why do people categorize others?

3. Why are minority group members in most countries poorer than dominant group members?

4. What can you do to make the world a better place for all people?
When Siri wakes it is about noon. In the instant of waking she knows exactly who and what she has become . . . the soreness in her genitals reminds her of the fifteen men she had sex with the night before. Siri is fifteen years old. Sold by her impoverished parents a year ago, she finds that her resistance and her desire to escape the brothel are breaking down and acceptance and resignation are taking their place . . . . Siri is very frightened that she will get AIDS . . . as many girls from her village return home to die from AIDS after being sold into the brothels. (Bales 2002:207–09)

Siri is a sex slave, just like millions of other young women around the world. Slavery is not limited to Third World countries: Dora was enslaved in a home in Washington, DC, and domestic slaves have been discovered in London, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The CIA reports thousands of women and children are smuggled into the United States each year as sex and domestic slaves or locked away in sweat shops (Bales 2004). International agencies estimate that over one million children in Southeast Asia have been sold into bondage, mostly into the booming sex trade.

It may be surprising to know that slavery is alive and flourishing around the world (Modern Slavery 2005). An estimated twenty-seven million people, mostly women and children from poor families in poor countries, are auctioned off or lured into slavery each year by kidnap gangs, pimps, and cross-border syndicates (Bales 2004; Kyle and Koslowski 2001). “As a global phenomenon, human trafficking in slaves from such places as Ukraine, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Nepal, and the Philippines, mostly for commercial sex industry, is so profitable that criminal business people invest in involuntary brothels much as they would in a mining operation” (Kyle and Koslowski 2001:1). In Africa, the primary use of slaves is in the chocolate industry. In Asia, young girls from Bombay (India) or Myanmar become unwilling “wives”; if the man grows tired of the girl, she has little option but to turn to prostitution to survive (Bales 2004).

International events such as the Olympics and major soccer matches bring new markets for the sex trade. Young foreign girls are chosen for sex slaves because they are exotic, free of AIDS, and cannot escape due to insufficient money and knowledge of the language or the country to which they are exported (Moritz 2001). Sometimes, poor families sell their daughters for the promise of high wages and perhaps money sent home. As a result, girls as young as six are held captive as prostitutes or as domestic workers. Child labor, a

In Calcutta’s red light district, over 7,000 women and girls work as prostitutes. Only one group has a lower standing: their children. Zana Briski became involved in the lives of these children in 1998 when she first began photographing prostitutes in Calcutta. Living in the brothels for months at a time, she quickly developed a relationship with many of the kids who, often terrorized and abused, were drawn to the rare human companionship she offered. Since the children were fascinated by her camera, Zana thought it would be great to see the world through their eyes. It was at that moment that she had the idea of teaching photography to the children of prostitutes. She produced a film based on her work that became a crusade to keep these children of prostitutes, pictured here, out of a life of prostitution. Her film won the Oscar for Best Documentary in 2006. Learn more about her organization, Kids with Cameras, at www.kids-with-cameras.org.

In India, many slaves are used to make bricks. Young children who have no family are often sucked into slavery, such as these children. One of the most common uses for slaves in the world is to make chocolate; very little chocolate is produced without slave labor.

Source: © Valli/Summers/CORBIS SYGMA.
problem in many parts of the world, requires poor young children to do heavy labor for long hours in agriculture, brick-making, match-making, and carpet factories, earning little but helping families pay debts. Many argue that this is slavery, although others say it is necessary for the families’ survival. The children dare not complain, for the sanctions may involve severe injury or death (Bobin 1995). Much of the work on cacao plantations is done by child slaves smuggled from poor countries.

Debt bondage is another form of modern-day slavery. Extremely poor families—often people with differences in appearance or culture than those with power—work in exchange for housing and meager food; they often find themselves in severe debt that passes from generation to generation or that is incurred when farmers face drought, need cash to keep their families from starving, and borrow money. The only collateral they have on the loan is themselves, put up for bondage until they can pay off the loan. No one but the wealthy landowner keeps accounting records, which results in there being no accountability; therefore, the poor families may find themselves enslaved. The lack of credit available to marginal people contributes to fraud and its consequence—slavery. Because those in slavery have little voice and no rights, the world community hears little about this tragedy (Bales 2004). A recent successful international movement in impoverished areas provides small loans—micro credit—mostly to women, to help them start small businesses and move out of desperate poverty and slavery.

In the slavery of the nineteenth century, slaves were expensive and there was at least some economic incentive to care about their health and survival. In the new slavery, humans are cheap and replaceable; there is little concern about working them to death, especially if they are located in remote cacao (used to make chocolate) or coffee plantations (Bales 2000). By current dollars, a slave in the southern United States would have cost as much as $40,000, but contemporary slaves can be procured from poor countries for as little as $90 (Bales 2004). Employers can legally exploit and abuse them with long hours and without legal interference because the slaves owe money.

What all of these human bondage situations have in common is that poor minority groups are victimized. Because many slaves are members of ethnic, racial, religious, tribal, gender, age, caste, or other minority groups and have obvious physical or cultural distinctions from the people who exploit them, they are at a distinct disadvantage in the stratification system. Although all humans have the same basic characteristics, few people have a choice about being born into a minority group, and it is difficult to change that minority status because of visible barriers—physical appearance, names, dress, language, or other distinguishing characteristics. Historical conditions and conflicts rooted in religious, social, political, and historical events set the stage for dominant or minority status, and people are socialized into their dominant or subservient group.

Minority or dominant group status affects most aspects of people’s experiences in the social world. These include the family’s status in the community, socialization experience, where one can live, opportunities for success and achievement in education and occupation, the religious group to which one belongs, and the health care one receives. In fact, it is impossible to separate minority status from one’s position in the stratification system (Aguirre and Turner 2004; Farley 2005; Rothenberg 2004).

In this chapter, we explore race and ethnic group membership that leads to differential placement in stratification systems. The next chapter considers ascribed status based on gender. The topics in this chapter and the next continue the discussion of stratification: who is singled out for differential treatment, why they are singled out, results for both the individuals and the society, and some actions or policies that deal with differential treatment.

AIDS is a major problem in South Africa, especially for poor populations. What role might the new puppet character, Kami, who has HIV on the South African version of Sesame Street, play in children’s attitudes toward the disease?
WHAT CHARACTERIZES RACE AND ETHNIC GROUPS?

Migration, war and conquest, trade, and intermarriage have left virtually every geographical area of the world populated by groups of people with varying ethnicities. In this section, we consider characteristics that set groups apart, especially groups that fall at the lower end of the stratification system.

Minority Groups
Several factors characterize minority groups and their relations with dominant groups in society (Dworkin and Dworkin 1999):

1. Minority groups are distinguishable from dominant groups due to factors that make them different from the group that holds power.

2. Minority groups are excluded or denied full participation in economic, political, educational, religious, health, and recreational institutions of society.

3. Minority groups are defined and valued usually less favorably by the dominant group based on their characteristics as minority group members.

4. Minority groups are stereotyped, ridiculed, condemned, or otherwise defamed, allowing dominant group members to justify and not feel guilty about unequal and poor treatment based on political or religious ideologies and ethnocentric beliefs.

5. Minority groups develop collective identities among members to insulate themselves from the unaccepting world; this in turn perpetuates their group identity by creating ethnic or racial enclaves, intra-group marriages, and segregated group institutions such as churches.

Minority group with highest percent of state population

Excludes White, not Hispanic

Source: Map courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.
Where do you and your family fall in the dominant-minority stratification system in your community? What minority group characteristics listed above helped you determine this?

Because minority status is determined by history and ideology, the minority group could be the dominant group in a different time or society. Throughout England’s history, wars and assassinations changed the ruling group from Catholic to Protestant and back several times. In Iraq, Shiite Muslims are dominant in numbers and now also in power but were a minority under Saddam Hussain’s Sunni rule.

Dominant groups are not always a numerical majority. In the case of South Africa, advanced European weapons placed the native Bantu population under the rule of a small percentage of white British and Dutch descendants in what became a complex system of planned discrimination called Apartheid.

The Concept of Race
Racial minority is one of the two types of minority groups most common in the social world. A race is a group within the human species that is identified by a society as presumably having certain biologically inherited physical characteristics. However, in practice, it is impossible to accurately identify racial types. Most attempts at racial classifications have been based on combinations of appearance, such as skin color and shade, stature, facial features, hair color and texture, head form, nose shape, eye color and shape, height, and blood or gene type. Our discussion of race focuses on three issues: (1) origins of the concept of race, (2) the social construction of race, and (3) the significance of race versus class.

Origins of the Concept of Race
In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scientists attempted to divide humans into four major groupings—Mongoloid, Caucasoid, Negroid, and Australoid—and then divided them into more than thirty racial subcategories. In reality, few individuals fit clearly into any of these types. The next Sociology in Your Social World provides insight into the origins of racial categories that have had a major impact on history and form the basis for many conflicts today.

From the earliest origins in Africa, humans slowly spread around the globe. Map 8.2 shows the likely human migration patterns. Physical adaptations of isolated groups to their environments originally resulted in some differences in physical appearance—skin color, stature, hair type—but mixing of peoples over the centuries has left few if any isolated “pure” races, only gradations as one moves around the world. Thus, the way societies choose to define race has come about largely through what is culturally convenient for the dominant group.

In the 1970s, the United Nations, concerned about racial conflicts and discrimination, issued a “Statement on Race” prepared by a group of eminent scientists from around the world. This and similar statements by scientific groups point out the harmful effects of racist arguments, doctrines, and policies. The conclusion of their document upheld that (1) all people are born free and equal both in dignity and in rights, (2) racism stultifies personal development, (3) conflicts (based on race) cost nations money and resources, and (4) racism foments international conflict. Racist doctrines lack any scientific basis as all people belong to the same species and have descended from the same origin. In summary, problems arising from race relations are social, not biological, in origin; differential treatments of groups based on “race” falsely claim a scientific basis for classifying humans. One anthropologist sums it up: “Human populations...are all mongrels” (Wheeler 1995). So what is the problem?
Historical Attempts to Define Race

Throughout history, political and religious leaders, philosophers, and even scientists have struggled with the meaning and significance of race. The first systematic classification of all living phenomena was published in 1735 by Carl von Linné (Linnaeus). His hierarchy of species was actually quite complex, including monkeys, elephants, and angels! His work was based on the study of fossil remains of various species, implying evolution of the species over time. Then in 1758, he published *Systema Naturae*, in which he suggested four human types: Americanus (Native Americans), Asiaticus, Africanus, and Europeanus (Cashmore and Troyna 1990); other scientists proposed other divisions. Johann Blumenbach was the first to use the word *race* in his 1775 classification system: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay.

By the nineteenth century, race began to take on a biological meaning and to signify inherent physical qualities in humans (Goldberg 1990). From there, it was a short step to theorizing about inherent inequalities between races. For instance, Joseph Arthur, known as Count de Gobineau (1816–1882), questioned why once great societies had declined and fallen. He argued that each race has specific characteristics, and he attributed the demise of societies to the inequality of races. His book published in 1865 earned him the title “father of modern racism.”

A major event in theories of race was the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (originally published in 1858). Among his many ideas was that human races *might* represent stages or branches of a tree of evolution (Darwin 1909). This idea implied that those groups of humans who were biologically best suited to the environment would survive. He argued that “natural selection,” or “survival of the fittest,” was true of all races in the human species, not of individuals within a species. However, from Darwin’s ideas emerged the concepts of *survival of the fittest* and *ever-improving races*.

These two late-nineteenth-century concepts were taken out of context and became the foundation for a number of theories of superior races. For instance, in 1899, the Brit-turned-German Houston Stewart Chamberlain published an aristocratic, anti-Semitic work in which he argued that northern and western European populations, Teutonic in particular, were superior. He argued for racial purity, a theme the Nazis of the 1930s and 1940s adopted. Gustaf Kossina introduced the idea of “Volk” in his writings, claiming a commonality of traits among Germans that, he felt, qualified the German people to become the “ruling elite” (Cashmore and Troyna 1990).

*Mein Kampf* (1939) was Adolf Hitler’s contribution to the concept of a superior race. In it, he conceptualized two races, the Aryans and Others. He focused attention on several groups, in particular the Jews. German economic and social problems were blamed on the Jews. What followed in the name of German purity was the extermination of millions of Jews, Poles, Catholics, Gypsies, homosexuals, and other groups and individuals who were deemed “less human” or who opposed the Nazis. The extent to which Hitler succeeded exemplifies what can happen when one group needs to feel superior to others, blames other groups for its shortcomings, and has the power to act against those minorities. More recent attempts to classify groups have been based not on external characteristics but on blood or gene type, even though blood types or genome usually do not correlate with other traits.

As applied to mammals, the term *race* has biological significance only when it refers to closely inbred groups in which all family lines are alike—as in pure breeds of domesticated animals. These conditions are never realized in humans and are impossible in large populations of any species (Witzig 1996). Many groups have been mislabeled “races” when differences are actually cultural. Jews, Poles, Irish, and Italians have all erroneously been called “races.” In short, when it comes to humans, scientists do not agree about how many races there are in the biological sense of that word or whether race is a biological reality at all.

Social Construction of Race: Symbolic Interaction Analysis

Why are sociologists concerned about a concept that has little scientific accuracy and is ill defined? The answer is its social significance. The social reality is that people are defined or define themselves as belonging to a group based in part on physical appearance. As individuals try to make meaning of the social world, they may learn from others that some traits—eye or nose shape, hair texture, or skin color—are distinguishing traits that make people different. Jean Piaget, famous cognitive psychologist, described the human tendency to classify objects as one of our most basic cognitive tools (Piaget and Inhelder 1999); this inclination has often been linked to classifying “racial” groups. Motives for classifying individuals into racial groups have ranged from the scientific study of humans to the desire to subjugate and exploit minority groups. Once in place, racial categories provide individuals with an identity based on ancestry—“my kind of people have these traits.”

Symbolic interaction theory contends that if people believe something is real, it may be real in its consequences. It does not matter whether scientists say that attempts to classify people into races are inaccurate and that the word is biologically meaningless; people on the streets of your hometown think they know what the word race means. Moreover, people do look different as we traverse the globe. That people think there are differences has consequences. As a social concept, race has not only referred to physical features and inherited genes but has carried over to presumed psychological and moral characteristics, thus justifying discriminatory treatment. The following examples illustrate the complex problems in trying to classify people into “races.”

With the enactment of Apartheid Laws in 1948, the white government in South Africa institutionalized different laws based on their definitions of racial groups and specified the privileges and restrictions allotted to each group (Stanford University Webpage 2006). Bantu populations—the native Africans—lived in restricted areas; Coloreds—those of mixed blood—were restricted to other living areas and types of work; Asians—descendants of immigrants from India and other Asian countries—received higher salaries than the Bantu groups but less than whites; and whites of European descent, primarily Dutch and English, had the highest living standard and best residential locations. Under the Apartheid system, race was determined by tracing ancestry back for fourteen generations; a single ancestor who was not Dutch or English caused an individual to be considered “colored” rather than white. Physical features mattered little; individuals carried a card indicating their race based on genealogy. Although this
South African Riots: Blacks charge toward the photographer
during a riot in which police opened fire to disperse 10,000
demonstrating black students in Soweto township, 15 miles south
of Johannesburg, after tear gas failed to curb them. At least six
persons, including four whites, were killed and at least 40 injured
in the day-long rioting. The students were continuing a two-week
protest against the compulsory teaching of Dutch-based Afrikaans
in black schools. (Johannesburg, South Africa, June 16, 1976)
Source: © Bettmann/CORBIS.

system began to break down in the 1990s due to interna-
tional pressure and under the leadership of the first black
president (Nelson Mandela, elected in 1994), vestiges of
these notions of “reality” will take generations to change.

By contrast, in Brazil, an individual’s race is based on
physical features—skin tone, hair texture, facial features, eye
color, and so forth—rather than on the “one drop of blood” rule
in South Africa. Brothers and sisters who have the same parents
and ancestors may be classified as belonging to different races.
The idea of what determines one’s race is based on nearly
opposite criteria in Brazil and South Africa, illustrating the
arbitrary nature of racial classification attempts. That lighter
skinned blacks often have higher education, occupational
standing, and income than their darker fellow citizens illustrates
this fact (Keith and Herring 1991, Walker and Karas 1993).

Before civil rights laws were passed in the United States in
the 1960s, there were a number of states with laws that spelled
out differential treatment for racial groups. These were com-
monly referred to as Jim Crow laws. States in the South passed
laws defining who was African American or Native American.
In many cases, it was difficult to determine in what category to
place an individual. For instance, African Americans in Georgia
were defined as people with any ascertainable trace of “Negro”
blood in their veins; in Missouri, one-eighth or more Negro
blood was sufficient; whereas, in Louisiana, one-thirty-second
Negro blood defined one as black. Differential treatment
was spelled out in other states as well. In Texas, for example,
the father’s race determined the race of the child. In Vermont,
newborn babies of racially mixed parentage were listed as
“mixed” on the birth certificate. In West Virginia, a newborn
was classified as “black” if either parent was considered black.
Until recently, several U.S. states still attempted to classify the
race of newborns by the percentage of black blood or parent-
age (Lopez 1996). Federal law now prohibits discrimination
on the basis of “racial” classifications, and most of these state
laws have been challenged and dropped.

Arbitrary classifications such as those in the examples
above are frequently used as justification for treating individ-
uals differently despite the lack of scientific basis for such dis-
tinctions (Williams 1996). The legacy of “race” remains even
in countries where discrimination based on race is illegal.
Poverty and discrimination justify and reinforce differential
treatment in poor schools, employment, and other areas of life,
thus resulting in a vicious cycle of more poverty and discrim-
ination. The question remains: why is a baby with any African
or Native American heritage classified by minority status?

The Significance of Race versus Class
From the time of slavery until the late twentieth century, race
has been the determining factor in social stratification and
opportunity for people of African descent in the United
States, the Caribbean, and Brazil. Whether this is changing
in the twenty-first century is a question that has occupied
sociologists, politicians, educators, and other scientists in
recent years. Some scholars argue that race is a primary cause
doing different placement in the stratification system; others
insist that race and social class are both at work, with socio-
economic factors (social class) more important than race.

An influential participant in the debate, sociologist
William Julius Wilson, states that the racial oppression that
characterized the African American experience throughout
the nineteenth century was caused first by slavery and then
by a lingering caste structure that severely restricted upward
mobility for African Americans. However, the breakdown of
the plantation economy and the rise of industrialism created
more opportunities for African Americans to participate in

Wilson (1978) argues that after World War II, an African
American class structure developed with characteristics sim-
ilar to those of the white class structure. Occupation and
income took on ever greater significance in social position,
especially for the African American middle class. However, as
black middle class professionals moved up in the stratifica-
tion structure, lower-class African American ghetto residents
became more isolated and less mobile. Limited unskilled job
opportunities for the lower class have resulted in poverty and
stagnation so severe that some families are almost outside of
the functioning economic system. Wilson (1978, 1984,
1993a) calls this group the underclass.

The United States cannot escape poverty because well-
paid, unskilled jobs are disappearing from the economy and
because the poor are concentrated in segregated urban areas
(Massey, Gross, and Shibuya 1994). Poorly educated African American teenagers and young adults from the inner-city see their job prospects limited to the low-wage sector (e.g., fast food work), and they experience record levels of unemployment (Wilson 1987). Movement out of poverty becomes almost impossible.

Wilson's point is illustrated by the following: more than two in five African Americans are now middle class, compared to one in twenty in 1940. Thus, there is an ever-widening gap between poor African Americans and their middle class counterparts. On the other hand, most adults in many inner-city ghetto neighborhoods are not employed in a typical week. Thus, children in these neighborhoods may grow up without ever seeing someone go to work (Wilson 1996). The new global economic system is a contributing factor as unskilled jobs go abroad to cheaper labor (Massey and Denton 1993; McFate, Lawson, and Wilson 1995; Smith and Feagin 1995). Without addressing these structural causes of poverty, we cannot expect to reduce the number of people in the underclass—whether they are white or black (Massey 1990).

Has race declined in significance and class become more important in determining placement in the stratification system? Tests of Wilson's thesis present us with mixed results (Jencks 1992). For instance, African Americans' average educational levels (12.4 years in school) are almost the same as whites' (12.7 years), showing comparable qualifications for employment. However, this equity stops at the high school level; 27.6 percent of whites are college graduates compared to 17.3 percent of blacks (U.S. Census Bureau 2005, Table 212). More important, African Americans earn less than whites in the same occupational categories. As Table 8.1 makes clear, income levels for African Americans and whites are not even close to being equal. Unemployment and poverty affect a higher percentage of black families than white ones, so economics alone does not seem a complete answer to what people are in the underclass.

Although racial bias has decreased at the micro (interpersonal) level, it is still a significant determinant in the lives of African Americans, especially those in the lower class. The data are complex, but we can conclude that for upwardly mobile African Americans, class may be more important than race. Still, physical traits such as skin color cannot be dismissed; they can be crippling for the underclass.

**TABLE 8.1 Race and Family Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Annual Income (2003 figures)</td>
<td>$55,768</td>
<td>$34,369 (62% of white-family income)</td>
<td>$34,272 (61% of white-family income)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2006, Table 679).

**Income (in $) by Educational Level and Race/Ethnicity (2003 figures)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a High School Graduate</td>
<td>19,110</td>
<td>16,201</td>
<td>18,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>28,708</td>
<td>23,777</td>
<td>25,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>30,316</td>
<td>25,616</td>
<td>27,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>52,259</td>
<td>42,968</td>
<td>43,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>62,981</td>
<td>57,449</td>
<td>56,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>119,712</td>
<td>87,713</td>
<td>78,190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2006, Table 217).
MAP 8.3  “Indian” Lands in the United States. Long before “white people” set foot in the Americas, many thriving societies of Native Americans lived in groups on the North and South American continents. Each group developed a lifestyle compatible with the geographical area and material goods available to it. Many different cultures, languages, religions, value systems, economies, and political systems emerged. Thus the term Native American refers to many different societies, each with its own identity.

Source: Adapted from Smith, 1989. Courtesy of Cherokee Publications, Cherokee, NC.
the pluralistic societies, but most often they hold a minority status with little power.

How is ethnicity constructed or defined? Many very different ethnic groups have been combined in government categories, such as the census, yet they speak different languages and often have very different religions. For example, in North America, group members did not view themselves as “Indian” or “Native American.” Instead, they used 600 independent tribal nation names to define themselves, including the Ojibwa (Chippewa), Dine (whom we call the Navajo), Lakota (whom we tend to call the Sioux), and many others. Likewise, Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and Malaysians come from very different cultures but were identified as “Asian Americans” in the census. People from Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba were grouped together in a category called “Hispanics” or “Latinos.”

When federal funds for social services were made available to “Asian Americans” or “American Indians,” these diverse people began to think of themselves as part of a larger grouping for political purposes (Esperitu 1992). The federal government essentially created an ethnic group by naming and providing funding to that group. If people wanted services (health care, legal rights, and so forth), they had to become a part of a particular group. This process of merging many ethnic groups into one broader group further emphasizes that ethnic identity is itself socially shaped and created.

**Thinking Sociologically**

Identify one dominant and one minority group in your community or on campus. Where do they fall in the stratification system? Does this placement reflect a similar racial, ethnic, or other minority group status in the nation as a whole? How are the life chances of individuals in these groups influenced by factors beyond their control?

**Prejudice and Racism: Micro-Level Analysis**

Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you were viewed as different, strange, undesirable, or “less than human”? Perhaps you have felt the sting of rejection, based not on judgment of you as a person but solely because of the ethnic group into which you were born. Then again, you may have been insulated from this type of rejection if you grew up in a homogeneous community or in a privileged group; you may have even learned some negative attitudes about those different from yourself. It is sobering to think that where and when in history you were born determine how you are treated, your life chances, and many of your experiences.

Racial and ethnic minorities experience disproportionate prejudice and racism. Several processes act to keep minority groups among the have-nots of society. Consider the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stratification</td>
<td>Minority status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Poor self-concept, negative relations with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Negative attitudes, stereotypes, self-fulfilling prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Poor jobs, income, education, housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative contact</td>
<td>Hostilities, war, conflict between groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prejudice**

When minority groups are present within a society, prejudice influences dominant-minority group relations. Prejudice refers to attitudes that prejudice a group, usually negatively and not based on facts. Prejudiced individuals lump together people with certain characteristics as an undifferentiated group without considering individual differences. Although prejudice can refer to positive attitudes and exaggerations (as when a mother is prejudiced in thinking her own child is gifted), in this chapter we refer to the negative aspects of prejudice; we also focus on the adverse effects brought on minority group members by prejudice. While prejudice can be stimulated by events such as conflicts at the institutional level and war at the societal level, attitudes are held
PHOTO ESSAY

Prejudice and Discrimination Against Japanese Americans

On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Fear of a Japanese invasion and of subversive acts by Japanese Americans prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. The order designated the West Coast as a military zone from which “any or all persons may be excluded.” Although not specified in the order, Japanese Americans were singled out for evacuation. More than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry were removed from California, southern Arizona, and western Washington and Oregon and sent to ten relocation camps. Those forcibly removed from their homes, businesses, and possessions included Japanese immigrants who were legally forbidden to become U.S. citizens (Issei), the American born (Nisei), and children of the American born (Sansei).

▲ After the internment of Japanese Americans from the Seattle region, barber G. S. Hante points proudly to his bigoted sign that reads, We Don’t Want Any Japs Back Here . . . EVER!
Source: © Bettmann/CORBIS.

▼ Persons of Japanese ancestry arrive at the Santa Anita Assembly Center from San Pedro. Evacuees lived at this center at the former Santa Anita race track before being moved inland to relocation centers. (Arcadia, CA; April 5, 1942)
Source: © CORBIS/Clem Albers.

▼ Dust storm blows at this War Relocation Authority center (Manzanar) where evacuees of Japanese ancestry spent the duration of World War II. (California; July 3, 1942)
Source: © CORBIS/Dorothea Lange.
by individuals and can be best understood as a micro-level phenomenon.

When prejudiced attitudes are manifested in actions, they are referred to as discrimination, differential treatment and harmful actions against minorities. These actions at the micro level might include refusal to sell someone a house because of the religion, race, or ethnicity of the buyer, or employment practices that treat groups differently based on minority status (Feagin and Feagin 2003). Both prejudice and discrimination affect the lives of both discriminators and those discriminated against. Discrimination, such as laws that deny opportunities or resources to members of a particular group, operates largely at the meso or macro level, discussed later in the chapter.

The Nature of Prejudice

Prejudice is an understandable response of humans to their social environment. To survive, every social group or unit—a sorority, a sports team, a civic club, or a nation—needs to mobilize the loyalty of its members. Each organization needs to convince people to voluntarily commit energy, skills, time, and resources so the organization can meet its needs. Furthermore, as persons commit themselves to a group, they invest a portion of themselves and feel loyalty to the group.

Individual commitment to a group influences one’s perception and loyalties, creating preference or even bias for the group. This commitment is often based on stressing distinctions from other groups and deep preference for one’s own group. However, these loyalties may be dysfunctional for out-group members and the victims of prejudice.

One reason people hold prejudices is that it is easier to pigeonhole the vast amount of information and stimuli coming at us in today’s complex societies, and to sort information into neat unquestioned categories, than to evaluate each piece of information separately for its accuracy. Prejudiced individuals often categorize large numbers of people and attribute to them personal qualities based on their dress, language, skin color, or other identifying racial or ethnic features. This process is called stereotyping.

Stereotypes, or the pictures in our heads, are often distorted, oversimplified, or exaggerated ideas passed down over generations through cultures. They are applied to all members of a group, regardless of individual differences, and used to justify prejudice, discrimination, and unequal distribution of power, wealth, and opportunities. Often, the result is unfair and inaccurate judgments about individuals who are members of the stereotyped groups.

Prejudice is difficult to change because it is rooted in traditions and cultural beliefs and is based on culturally imbedded stereotypes of groups. Individuals grow up learning these ingrained beliefs that often go unchallenged. Yet when studied scientifically, stereotypes seldom correspond to facts.

Social scientists know, for instance, that prejudice is related to the history and to the political and economic climate in a region or country, part of the macro-level cultural and social environment. For instance, in some southern U.S. states where African Americans constitute a majority of the population, there is evidence that white racial attitudes are more antagonistic due to perceived or real economic and political competition for jobs and power (Farley 2005; Glaser 1994).

In wartime, the adversary may be the victim of racial slurs or be depicted in films or other media as villains. During World War II, American films often showed negative stereotypes of Japanese and German people, stereotypes that likely reinforced the decision to inter more than 110,000 Japanese Americans, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens, in detention camps following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Similar issues and stereotypes have arisen for American citizens with Middle Eastern ancestry since the attacks on the New York World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Sometimes, minority group members incorporate prejudiced views about themselves into their behavior. This process, an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy, involves the adoption of stereotypical behaviors. (See Chapter 4.) No group is born dumb, lazy, dirty, or money hungry, but they can be conditioned to believe such depictions of themselves or be forced into acting out certain behaviors based on expectations of the dominant group.

Watch the Oscar-winning movie Crash. In what ways does this video raise issues of majority-minority stereotypes? How does it highlight labeling done by each group?

Explanations of Prejudice

We have all met them, the people who express hostility toward others. They tell jokes about minorities, curse them, and even threaten action against them. Why do these individuals do this? The following theories have attempted to explain the prejudiced individual.

Frustration-Aggression Theory. In Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1978, a group of civil rights activists and African
American adults and children listened as a guitarist sang freedom songs. A nine car cavalcade of white Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and American Nazi Party members arrived. The intruders unloaded weapons from the back of their cars, approached the rally, and opened fire for 88 seconds; they left as calmly as they arrived. Four white men and a black woman were dead (Cashmore and Troyna 1990). According to frustration-aggression theory, many of the perpetrators of this and other heinous acts feel angry and frustrated because they cannot achieve their work or other goals. They blame any vulnerable minority group—religious, ethnic, sexual orientation—and members of that group become targets of their anger. Frustration-aggression theory focuses largely on poor adjustment and individual initiative and individual bigotry—while most social scientists see the problem as at the meso and macro levels. Still, issues at the micro level continue to be real. Social science training sees racism as a micro-level issue—one involving individual initiative and individual bigotry—while most social scientists see the problem as at the meso and macro levels. Still, issues at the micro level continue to be real.

**Scapegoating.** When it is impossible to vent frustration toward the real target—one’s boss, teachers, the economic system—frustration can take the form of aggressive action against minority group members who are vulnerable because of their low status. They become the scapegoats. The word scapegoat comes from the Bible, Leviticus 16:5–22. Once a year, a goat (which was obviously innocent) was laden with parchments that people had used to write their sins on. The goat was then sent out to the desert to die. This was part of a ritual of purification, and the creature took the blame for others.

Scapegoating occurs when a minority group is blamed for others’ failures or shortcomings. It is difficult to look at oneself to seek reasons for failure but easy to transfer the cause for one’s failure to others. Individuals who feel they are failures in their jobs or other aspects of their lives may blame minority groups. From within such a prejudiced mindset, even violence toward the out-group becomes acceptable. One example is the hostility represented in a notice distributed to a college campus mailboxes: “Earth’s Most Endangered Species: The White Male. Help Preserve It.” The notice expressed frustration with the “plight” of white males and blamed policies favoring minorities for their perceived problems.

Today, jobs and promotions are harder for young adults to obtain than they were for the baby boom generation, but the reason is mostly demographic. The baby boom of the 1940s and 1950s resulted in a bulge in the population; there are so many people in the workforce at each successive step on the ladder that it will be another few years before those baby boomers start retiring in large numbers. Until that happens, there will be a good deal of frustration about apparent occupational stagnation. It is easier—and safer—to blame minorities or affirmative action programs than to vent frustration at the next oldest segment of the population or at one's grandparents for having a large family. Blacks, Hispanics, other minorities, and affirmative action policies become easy scapegoats.

Although this theory helps explain some situations, it does not predict when frustration will lead to aggression, why only some people who experience frustration vent their feelings on the vulnerable, and why some groups become targets (Marger 2006).

**Racism**

Racism is any attitude, belief, or institutional arrangement that favors one racial group over another, and this favoritism may result in intentional or unintentional consequences for minority groups (Farley 2005). Racism is often embedded in institutions of society and supported by people who are not aware of the social consequence of their actions. Many people without social science training see racism as a micro-level issue—one involving individual initiative and individual bigotry—while most social scientists see the problem as at the meso and macro levels. Still, issues at the micro level continue to be real.

Ideological racism involves the belief that humans are divided into innately different groups, some of which are biologically inferior. Those who hold these views see biological differences as the cause of most cultural and social differences (Marger 2006), as Hitler's actions against the Jews and other groups illustrate. (Discussed in “Sociology in Your Social World,” p. 8)

Symbolic racism is the insistence that one is not prejudiced or racist, that one is color-blind and committed to equality, however, this insistence is often accompanied by opposition to any social policies that would eliminate racism and make true equality of opportunity possible.

Institutional racism involves discrimination that is hidden within the system, and symbolic racism allows it to remain in place. Symbolic racists reject ideological racism as blatant, crude, and ignorant but fail to recognize that their actions may perpetuate institutional inequalities.

Racism has psychological and social costs both to those on the receiving end and to the perpetrators. There is a waste of talent and energy of both minorities and of those who justify and carry out discriminatory actions. In the 1990s, individual membership in white supremacy groups in Europe and North America grew, as did attacks on blacks, Jews, immigrants, and those whose religious and cultural practices were...
different from the majority. For instance, in 1996 in the United States, racism resulted in a rash of African American church bombings (Feagin, Vera, and Batur 2001; Sack 1996), and in 2005 alone, there were 1,757 anti-Semitic incidents involving vandalism, assaults, or threats directed at Jewish citizens or Jewish establishments (Anti-Defamation League 2006). Unfortunately, until there are better economic opportunities for more people, individual racism is likely to be one result of economic competition for jobs (Feagin et al. 2001).

Although social-psychological theories shed light on the most extreme cases of individual or small group prejudice and racism, there is much these theories do not explain. They say little about the everyday hostility and reinforcement of prejudice that most of us experience or engage in, and they fail to deal with institutional discrimination.

**DISCRIMINATION:**
**MESO-LEVEL ANALYSIS**

Dear Teacher,

I would like to introduce you to my son, Wind-Wolf. He is probably what you would consider a typical Indian kid. He was born and raised on the reservation. He has black hair, dark brown eyes, and an olive complexion.

In 1966, the Rough Rock Demonstration school was begun on the Navajo Reservation. It became the model for many other tribally run schools. It taught reverence for Navajo ways, along with a typical grade school curriculum of English and mathematics skills.

Source: Photo © by Monty Roessel.
And, like so many Indian children his age, he is shy and quiet in the classroom. He is 5 years old, in kindergarten, and I can’t understand why you have already labeled him a “slow learner.”

He has already been through quite an education compared with his peers in Western society. He was bonded to his mother and to the Mother Earth in a traditional native childbirth ceremony. And he has been continuously cared for by his mother, father, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended tribal family since this ceremony.

Wind-Wolf was strapped (in his baby basket like a turtle shell) snugly with a deliberate restriction on his arms and legs. Although Western society may argue this hinders motor-skill development and abstract reasoning, we believe it forces the child to first develop his intuitive faculties, rational intellect, symbolic thinking, and five senses. Wind-Wolf was with his mother constantly, closely bonded physically, as she carried him on her back or held him while breast-feeding. She carried him everywhere she went, and every night he slept with both parents. Because of this, Wind-Wolf’s educational setting was not only a “secure” environment, but it was also very colorful, complicated, sensitive, and diverse.

As he grew older, Wind-Wolf began to crawl out of the baby basket, develop his motor skills, and explore the world around him. When frightened or sleepy, he could always return to the basket, as a turtle withdraws into its shell. Such an inward journey allows one to reflect in privacy on what he has learned and to carry the new knowledge deeply into the unconscious and the soul. Shapes, sizes, colors, texture, sound, smell, feeling, taste, and the learning process are therefore functionally integrated—the physical and spiritual, matter and energy, and conscious and unconscious, individual and social.

It takes a long time to absorb and reflect on these kinds of experiences, so maybe that is why you think my Indian child is a slow learner. His aunts and grandmothers taught him to count and to know his numbers while they sorted materials for making abstract designs in native baskets. And he was taught to learn mathematics by counting the sticks we use in our traditional native hand game. So he may be slow in grasping the methods and tools you use in your classroom, ones quite familiar to his white peers, but I hope you will be patient with him. It takes time to adjust to a new cultural system and learn new things. He is not culturally “disadvantaged,” but he is culturally different. (Lake 1990:48–53)

This letter expresses the frustration of a father who sees his son being labeled, discriminated against by the school system before even being given a chance. Discrimination refers to actions taken against members of a minority group; it can occur at individual and small group levels but is particularly problematic at the organizational and institutional levels, the meso level of analysis.
an equal chance ends up legitimizing the channeling of some minorities into the lower-achieving classroom groupings.

**Purposeful discrimination** that is built into the law or is part of the explicit policies of an organization is called *de jure discrimination*. Jim Crow laws, passed in the late 1800s in the United States, and laws that forbade Jewish people in Germany from living, working, or investing in certain places are examples. By contrast, *unintentional discrimination* results from broad policies that favor one group and disadvantage another. This is sometimes called *de facto discrimination*, for there is discrimination “in fact” even if not in intent; it can be more damaging than discrimination by individuals because it is often done by people who are not the least bit prejudiced and may not recognize the effects of their actions (Merton 1949).

*Unintentional discrimination* usually occurs through one of two processes: side-effect discrimination or past-in-present discrimination (Feagin and Feagin 1986). **Side-effect discrimination** refers to practices in one institutional area that have a negative impact because they are linked to practices in another institutional area. Figure 8.1 illustrates this idea. Each institution uses information from the other institutions to make decisions. Thus, discrimination in the criminal justice system, which has in fact been well documented, may influence decisions in other parts of society.

Consider the following examples of side-effect discrimination in the criminal justice and employment systems and of the Internet and job opportunities. In a 1999 interview conducted by one of your authors, a probation officer in a moderately sized city in Ohio said that he had never seen an African American in his county get a not-guilty verdict and that he was not sure it was possible. He had known of cases in which minorities had pled guilty to a lesser charge because they did not think they could receive a fair verdict in that city. When the person applies for a job, however, she or he is required to report the conviction on the application form. By using information about one’s criminal record, employers who may or may not intend to discriminate end up doing so whether or not the individual was guilty. The side-effect discrimination is unintentional discrimination; the criminal justice system has reached an unjust verdict, and the potential employer is swayed unfairly.

The Internet also plays a role in institutional discrimination and privilege. For example, in Alaska, 15 percent of the population is Native, but Natives hold only 5 percent of state jobs (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Consider that the State of Alaska uses the Internet as its primary means of advertising and accepting applications for state jobs (State of Alaska, Workplace Alaska 2006). One-hundred-sixty-four predominantly Native villages in Alaska lack affordable Internet access (Denali Commission 2001). Other options for application include requesting applications by mail, if one knows about the opening; however, this process is limited by the reliability and speed of mail service to remote villages and the often short application periods for state jobs. State officials may not intentionally use the mechanism to prevent Aleuts, Inupiats, Athabaskans, or other Alaska Natives from gaining access to state jobs, but the effect can be institutionalized discrimination. Here, Internet access plays a role in participation of minorities in the social world (Nakamura 2004).

The point is that whites, especially affluent whites, benefit from privileges not available to low-income minorities.
The privileged members may not purposely disadvantage others and may not be prejudiced, but the playing field is not level even though discrimination may be completely unintentional. Peggy McIntosh (2002) identifies several dozen privileges of being white in North America. Put yourself in the position of a person who does not have these privileges:

I can avoid spending time with people who mistrust people of my color. I can protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them. I can criticize our government and talk about how I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural “outsider.” I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race. (p. 97–101)

Past-in-present discrimination refers to practices from the past that may no longer be allowed but that continue to affect people today. In Mississippi in 1951–1952, the average state expenditure to educate a white child was $147 per pupil; the average was $34 per black pupil in segregated schools (Luhman and Gilman 1980). Such blatant segregation and inequality in use of tax dollars is no longer legal. This may seem like ancient history, yet some of those African Americans who were in school in the 1950s and 1960s are now in their 50s, trying to support a family and pay for their children’s college expenses. To those who received a substandard education and did not have an opportunity for college, it is not ancient history because it affects their opportunities today.

Stanley Lieberson (1980) asked a difficult question: Why do some minority groups do better than others? He used multiple methods of gathering data to test various explanations. His study and conclusion are explained in “A Piece of the Pie,” on the opposite page. As you read it, think about the special structural circumstances that made things different for African Americans than for many other minority groups. How are side-effect discrimination and past-in-present discrimination at work?

Some countries have attempted to make amends for past institutional discrimination by passing laws that prohibit differential treatment on the basis of race, age, sex, or sexual preference. India has legal protection and education quotas for outcaste members, forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, and encourages the hiring of lower and outcaster members. However, tradition and unintentional discrimination make change a slow process.

Remember that prejudice is an attitude, discrimination an action. If neighbors do not wish to have minority group members move onto their block, that is prejudice. If they try to organize other neighbors against the newcomers or make the situation unpleasant once the minority family has moved in, that is discrimination. If minorities cannot afford to live in the neighborhood because of discrimination in the marketplace, that is institutional discrimination.

Burakumin (“people of the hamlet”), also known by the more negative term Eta (outcasts or “full of filth”), are a minority in the homogeneous country of Japan. They live in approximately 5,000 settlements and comprise 2 percent of the population, between two and three million people. Historically, they did the dirty work: butchers, executioners, leather workers, and “entertainers” or minstrels. Today, although discrimination is outlawed, they have low education and poor jobs.

Source: © The Cover Story/CORBIS. Photographer: James Nelson.

Discrimination can cause prejudice and vice versa, but they are most often found working together, reinforcing one another (Merton 1949; Myers 2003).

Think of some events in history that might have an effect on attitudes toward particular groups. Why might the events cause inter-group hostility? How does discrimination discussed above help us to understand world conflicts such as the intense hostility between Palestinians and Jews in Israel?

Economic hard times hit Germany in the 1930s; to distract citizens from the nation’s problems, a scapegoat was found—the Jewish population. The German states began restricting Jewish activities and investments; gradually hate rhetoric intensified, but even then most Jews had little idea about the fate that awaited them. Millions of these citizens perished in gas chambers because they were defined as an undesirable race (although being Jewish is actually a religious or ethnic identification, not biology) by the ruling Nazi party.

Japanese policies have resulted in a relatively homogeneous population over time, but one group, the Burakumin, have been treated as outcasts because their ancestors were relegated to performing work considered ritually
ments face protests by their Indian populations, descendants between Burakumin and others. They remain a minority.

In 1995), there is little intermarriage or even socializing within certain occupations and neighborhoods (Kristof 2006). Ostracized and kept unclean—butchering animals, tanning skins, digging graves, and handling corpses. Today, discrimination is officially against the law, but customs persist. Ostracized and kept within certain occupations and neighborhoods (Kristof 1995), there is little intermarriage or even socializing between Burakumin and others. They remain a minority.

Mexico, Guatemala, and other Central American governments face protests by their Indian populations, descendants of Aztecs, Maya, and Inca, who have distinguishing features and are generally relegated to servant positions. These native groups have been protesting against government policies and their poor conditions—absentee land ownership, usurping of their land, poor pay, inability to own land, and discrimination by the government (DePalma 1995).

These examples illustrate contact between governments and minority groups. The Jews in Germany faced genocide;
Burakumin in Japan, segregation; and Native Americans, population transfer. The form these relations take depends on the following:

1. who has more power;
2. the needs of the dominant group for labor or other commodities that could be provided by the minority group;
3. the cultural norms of each group, including level of tolerance of outgroups;
4. the social histories of the groups, including their religious, political, racial, and ethnic differences;
5. physical and cultural identifiers that distinguish the groups; and
6. the times and circumstances (wars, economic strains, recessions).

Where power between groups in society is unequal, the potential for differential treatment is always present. Yet some groups live in harmony whether their power is equal or unequal (Kitano 1997). The Pygmies of the Ituri rain forest have traded regularly with nearby local African settlements by leaving goods in an agreed place in exchange for other needed goods; there is often only minimal direct contact between these groups. Whether totally accepting or prone to conflict, dominant-minority relations depend on time, place, and circumstances. Figure 8.2 indicates the range of dominant-minority relationships and policies.

Genocide is the systematic effort of a dominant group to destroy a minority group. Christians were thrown to the lions in ancient Rome. Hitler threw Jews and other non-Aryan groups into concentration camps to be gassed. Turks slaughtered Armenians in 1915. To varying degrees, genocide has existed throughout history, and it still exists today. Iraqis used deadly chemical weapons against the Kurdish people within their own country. Members of the Serbian army massacred Bosnian civilians to rid towns of Bosnian Muslims, an action referred to as ethnic cleansing (Cushman and Mestrovic 1996). In Rwanda, Tutsi and Hutu tribespeople carried out mass killings against each other in the late 1990s. In Darfur, a section of western Sudan in Africa, massive genocide is occurring while powerful nations of the world do little to stop it. The United Nations estimates that two million Sudanese people have died, disappeared, or become refugees in other countries (Smith 2005).

Subjugation refers to the subordination of one group to another that holds power and authority. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are two countries sharing the island of Hispanola in the Caribbean. Because many Haitians are poor, they are lured by promises of jobs in the sugar cane fields of the Dominican Republic. However, they are forced to work long hours for little pay and are not allowed to leave until they have paid for housing and food, sometimes impossible on their low wages.

Slavery is one form of subjugation that has existed throughout history. When the Roman Empire captured other lands, captives became slaves. This included many Greeks...
who as a nation also kept slaves at various times in their history. African tribes enslaved members of neighboring tribes, sometimes selling them to slave traders, and slavery has existed in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia. As mentioned in the opening story for this chapter, slavery is flourishing today (Bales 2000, 2004).

Segregation, another form of subjugation, keeps minorities powerless by formally separating them from the dominant group and depriving them of access to the dominant institutions. Jim Crow laws, instituted in the southern United States after the Civil War, legislated separation between groups—separate facilities, schools, neighborhoods (Bobo and Smith 1998; Feagin and Feagin 1986; Massey and Denton 1993). Around the world, barrios, reservations, squatters quarters, and favela are sometimes maintained by the dominant group, usually unofficially but sometimes officially, and serve to isolate minorities in poor or overcrowded areas.

Domestic colonialism refers to exploitation of minority groups within a country (Blau ner 1972; Kitano 1997). African Brazilians and Native Americans in the United States and Canada have been “domestically colonized groups”—managed and manipulated by dominant group members.

Population transfer refers to the removal, often forced, of a minority group from a region or country. Generally the dominant group wants land, resources, or economic power held by the minority. In 1972, Uganda’s leader, General Idi Amin, gave the 45,000 Asians in that country, mostly of Indian origin, thirty-six hours to pack their bags and leave under threat that they would be arrested or killed. Many found homes in England; others went to India. Yet for the thousands who were born and raised in Uganda, this expulsion was a cruel act, barring them from their homeland. Since the Asian population had great economic power, the primary motivation for their expulsion was to regain economic power for Africans; however, their departure left the country in economic chaos with a void in the business class.

Examples of other population transfers are numerous: Native Americans in the United States were removed to reservations. The Cherokee people were forced to walk from Georgia and North Carolina to new lands west of the Mississippi—a “Trail of Tears” in which approximately 40 percent of the people perished. During World War II, Japanese Americans were forcibly moved to “relocation centers” and had their land and property confiscated. Many Chinese were forced to flee from Vietnam on small boats in the 1970s; homeless and even nation-less people, they were dubbed “the boat people” by the press. In 2001, many Afghani people fled to Pakistan to escape U.S. bombing; many others departed earlier to escape oppression by the ruling Taliban.

Movements of people across borders can result in transnationalism, people who fully participate in and have loyalty to two nations and cultures and often hold dual citizenship. An increasing number of naturalized U.S. citizens are also tax-paying members of their countries-of-origin, and they return often to help families and neighbors with financial needs or immigration plans (Levitt 2001). Yet dual citizenship can create dilemmas of identity and sense of belonging.

Assimilation refers to the structural and cultural merging of minority and majority groups, a process by which minority members may lose their original identity. It occurs when ethnic groups in a region disregard distinctions between groups. Interaction among racial and ethnic groups occurs in housing, schooling, employment, political circles, family groups, friendship, and social relationships (Kitano 1997). Forced assimilation occurs when a minority group is forced to suppress its identity. This happened in Spain around World War II when the Basque people were forbidden by the central government from speaking or studying the Basque language. For several centuries—ending only a few decades ago—the British government tried to stamp out the Welsh language from Wales. However, assimilation is often a voluntary process in which a minority group such as immigrants chooses to adopt the values, norms, and institutions of the dominant group.

Assimilation is more likely to occur when the minority group is culturally similar to the dominant group. For instance, in the United States, the closer a group is to being white, English speaking, and Protestant, or what is referred to as WASP (white Anglo Saxon Protestant), the faster its members will be assimilated into the society, adopting the culture and blending in biologically through intermarriage.

Pluralism occurs when each ethnic or racial group in a country maintains its own culture and separate set of institutions. In Malaysia, for example, three groups share power—Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Although the balance...
is not completely stable because Chinese and Indians hold more political and economic power than the native Malays, there is a desire to maintain a pluralistic society. Switzerland also has three dominant cultural language groups: French, German, and Italian. Three official languages are spoken in the government and taught in the schools. Laws are written in three languages. Each group respects the rights of the other groups to maintain a distinctive way of life. While tensions do exist, both Malaysia and Switzerland represent examples of pluralist societies.

Legal protection is often necessary in order to have pluralism. This occurs when governments act to protect a distinct, sometimes endangered, group. The government of the Philippines has restricted contact of Filipinos and archaeologists with tribes living on remote islands of the Philippines in order to protect their way of life from westerners and developers.

Many individuals in the world face disruptions during their lifetimes that change their position in the social structure. The dominant-minority continuum illustrates the range of relations that can affect people’s lives as transitions take place.

Think of examples from current news stories of positive and harmful intercultural contact. Where do your examples fit on the continuum from genocide to pluralism? What policies might address issues raised in your examples?

**Theoretical Explanations of Dominant-Minority Group Relations**

Are human beings innately cruel, inhumane, greedy, aggressive, territorial, or warlike? Some people think so, but the evidence is not very substantial. To understand prejudice in individuals or small groups, psychological and social-psychological theories are most relevant. To understand institutional discrimination, studying organizations is helpful; to understand the pervasive nature of prejudice and stereotypes over time in various societies, cultural explanations are useful. Although aspects of macro-level theories relate to micro- and meso-level analysis, their major emphasis is on understanding the national and global systems of group relations.

**Conflict Theory**

In the 1840s, when the United States had a railroad to build, large numbers of laborers immigrated from China to do hard manual work at low wages. When the railroad was completed and competition for jobs became tight, the once-welcomed Chinese became targets of bitter prejudice, discrimination, and sometimes violence. Between 1850 and 1890, whites in California protested against Chinese, Japanese, and Chicano workers. Members of these minority groups banded together in towns or cities for protection, founding the Chinatowns we know today (Kitano 1997, 2001). Non-Chinese Asian groups suffered discrimination as well because the prejudiced generalizations were applied to all Asians (Son 1992; Winders 2004).

Why does discrimination occur? Conflict theorists argue that creating a “lesser” group protects the dominant group’s advantages. Since privileges and resources are usually limited, those who have them want to keep them. One strategy used by privileged people, according to conflict theory, is to perpetrate prejudice and discrimination against minority group members. A case in point is the *gastarbeiter* (guest workers) in Germany and other Western European countries, who immigrate from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa to fill positions in European economies. They are easily recognized because of cultural and physical differences and are therefore ready targets for prejudice and discrimination, especially in times of economic competition and slowing economies; this helps perpetuate them in low-level positions.

Karl Marx argued that exploitation of the lower classes is built into capitalism because it benefits the ruling class. Unemployment creates a ready pool of labor to fill the marginal jobs; the pool is often made up of identifiable minority groups. This pool protects those in higher-level positions from others moving up in the stratification system.

One conflict theorist identifies three critical factors that contribute to hostility over resources (Noel 1968): first, if
two groups of people are identifiably different in appearance, clothing, or language, then we-versus-they thinking may develop. However, this by itself does not establish long-term hostility between the groups. Second, if the two groups come into conflict over scarce resources that both groups want for themselves, hostilities are very likely to arise; the resources might be the best land, the highest paying jobs, access to the best schools for one's children, or positions of prestige and power. Conflict over resources is likely to create stereotypes and animosity. If the third element is added to the mix—one group having much more power than the other—then intense dislike between the two groups and misrepresentation of each group by the other is virtually inescapable. What happens is that the group with more power uses that power to ensure that they (and their offspring) get the most valued resources. However, since they do not want to feel badly about themselves as unfair and brutish people, they develop stereotypes and derogatory characterizations of "those other people" so the lack of access provided to "them" seems reasonable and justified. Discrimination comes first, and prejudiced ideology comes later to excuse the discrimination (Noel 1968). Thus, macro- and meso-level conflicts can lead to micro-level attitudes.

Split Labor Market Theory, a branch of conflict theory, characterizes the labor market as having two levels: the primary market involves clean jobs, largely in supervisory roles, and provides high salaried wages and advancement possibilities; the secondary market involves undesirable hard dirty work, compensated with low hourly wages and few benefits or career opportunities. Minorities, especially those from the urban underclass, are most likely to find dead-end jobs in the secondary market. For instance, when Mexicans work for little income picking crops as migrant laborers, they encounter negative stereotypes because they are poor and take jobs for low wages. Prejudice and discrimination build against the new, cheaper workers who threaten the next level of workers as the migrant workers seek to move up in the economic hierarchy. Thus, competition for low jobs pits minorities against each other and low-income whites against minorities. By encouraging division and focusing antagonism between worker groups, employers reduce threats to their dominance and get cheaper labor in the process. Workers do not organize against employers who use this dual system because they are distracted by the antagonisms that build up between workers—hence the split labor market (Bonacich 1972, 1976). This theory maintains that competition, prejudice, and ethnic animosity serves the interests of capitalists because it keeps laboring classes from uniting.

Conflict theory has taught us a great deal about racial and ethnic stratification. However, conflict theorists often focus on people with power intentionally oppressing others in order to protect their own self-interests. They depict the dominant group as made up of nasty, power-hungry people. As we have seen in the meso-level discussion of side-effect discrimination and past-in-present discrimination, discrimination and privilege are often subtle and unconscious, which means they can continue even without prejudice or ill-will by those who are in the dominant group, the privilege is institutionalized. Conflict theorists sometimes miss this important point.

Structural-Functional Theory
From the structural-functional perspective, maintaining a cheap pool of laborers who are in and out of work serves several purposes for society. Low-paying and undesirable jobs for which no special training is needed—busboys, janitors, nurse's aides, street sweepers, and fast food service workers—are often filled by minority group members of societies, including immigrant populations seeking to improve their opportunities.

Not only does this cheap pool of labor function to provide a ready labor force for dirty work, the menial unskilled jobs, but these individuals also serve other functions for society: they make possible occupations that service the poor, such as social work, public health, criminology, and the justice and legal systems; they buy goods others do not want—day old bread, old fruits and vegetables, second hand clothes; they set examples for others of what not to be; and they allow others to feel good about giving to charity (Gans 1971, 1994).

Sociologist Thomas Sowell (1994) contends that history and the situation into which one is born create the major differences in the social status of minority groups; minority individuals must work hard to make up for their disadvantages. Sowell's contentions are controversial in part because of the implication that institutional discrimination can be overcome by hard work. Conflict theorists counter his argument by saying that discrimination that reduces
opportunities is built into institutional and organizational structure and must be dealt with through structural change. They argue that hard work is necessary, but not sufficient, for minorities to get ahead.

Prejudice, racism, and discrimination are dysfunctional for society, resulting in loss of human resources, costs to societies due to poverty and crime, hostilities between groups, and disrespect for those in power (Bowser and Hunt 1996; Schaefer 2005).

What are some micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors that enhance the chances that minority persons can move up the social ladder to better jobs?

Cultural explanations point out that prejudice and discrimination are passed on from generation to generation through cultural transmission. Stereotypes about groups limit our perceptions of what these groups can do and thereby limit the opportunities available to minority group members. Cultural beliefs are passed on through micro-level socialization processes and macro-level institutional structure, aided by media stereotypes. Even when we see cases of minorities who do not conform to the prevalent images, selective vision reinforces stereotypes, prejudices, and labels we have learned.

Cultural beliefs help to explain why racism remains in place and why inequality is sustained over a long period of time. From this perspective, cultural beliefs serve to stabilize inequality once it is created in a society; beliefs alone do not cause inequality to form in the first place. The phenomenon of symbolic racism in contemporary North America is a good example: the assertion that the society is already fair prevents an honest look at institutional discrimination that operates so subtly and so pervasively at the meso and macro levels of a society.

Pictures of starving orphans from Sudan and Ethiopia and broken families from war-torn Bosnia remind us of the human toll resulting from prejudice and discrimination. This section discusses the results of prejudice, racism, and discrimination for minority groups and societies.

The Costs of Racism

Individual victims of racism suffer from the destruction of their lives, health, and property, especially in societies where racism leads to poverty, enslavement, conflict, or war. Poor self concept and low self esteem result from constant reminders of a devalued status in society.

Prejudice and discrimination result in costs to organizations and communities as well as to individuals. First, they lose the talents of individuals who could be productive and contributing members because of poor education, substandard housing, and inferior medical care. Table 8.2 shows the differences in health care for ethnic groups in the United States.

How might lack of health care affect other aspects of one’s life (work, family life)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8.2 Health Care in the U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Citizens Not Covered by Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Expenditure per Customer for Health Care in the United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2005, Table 125).
Second, government subsidies in the form of welfare, food stamps, and imprisonment cost millions but are made necessary in part by the lack of opportunities for minority individuals. Representation of ethnic groups in the U.S. political system can provide a voice for concerns of groups. Table 8.3 shows the representation of ethnic groups in Congress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8.3 Representation in Congress, 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How might one’s self-interests be underrepresented in policy decisions if there is low representation of one’s ethnicity?

Continued attempts to justify racism by stereotyping and labeling groups have cultural costs, too. There are many talented African American athletes who are stars on college sports teams, but very few of them have been able to break into the ranks of coaches and managers, though there has been more opportunity in basketball than in other sports (Edwards 1994; Eitzen and Sage 2003; Sage 2005). The number of African American and Mexican American actors and artists has increased, but the numbers of black playwrights and screenwriters who can get their works produced or who have become directors remains limited. African American musicians have found it much more difficult to earn royalties and therefore cannot compose full-time (Alexander 2003). Since these artists must create and perform their art “as a sideline,” they are less able to contribute their talents to society. The rest of us in the society are the poorer for it.

An accommodation to prejudice and discrimination is assimilation. Some minority group members attempt to pass or assimilate as members of the dominant group so as to avoid bigotry and discrimination. Although this option is not open to many because of their distinguishing physical characteristics, this strategy usually involves abandoning one’s own culture and turning one’s back on family roots and ties, a costly strategy in terms of self-esteem and sense of identity. People who select this coping strategy are forced to deny who they are and to live their lives in constant anxiety, feeling as though they must hide something about themselves.

In the 1960s, popular items advertised in African American magazines were “whitening creams” or “skin bleaches.” Light-colored persons with African ancestry would bleach their skins to pass as white. Skin-whitening creams can be found today on pharmacy shelves in many countries. Dissatisfaction with one’s body has an impact on one’s self-concept.

Passing also has been a common response of gays and lesbians who are afraid to come out. Homosexuals experience the costly impact on self-esteem and the constant fear that they may be discovered. Likewise, assimilated Jews have changed their religion and their names in order to be accepted. Despite the wrenching from one’s personal history, passing has allowed some individuals to become absorbed into the mainstream and to lose the stigma of being defined as a minority; to these people, it is worth the high cost.

Minority Reactions to Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism

How have minority groups dealt with their status? Five different reactions are common: assimilation, acceptance, avoidance, aggression, and change-oriented actions directed at the social structure. The first four do not address the meso- and macro-level issues; they are micro-level responses.

Think of a specific example of cultural costs of racism in your community. What might be done to address these costs?
to give up on any hope of justice in American society and to return to Africa. Native Americans continually moved west in the nineteenth century—trying to or being forced to get away from white Anglo settlers who brought alcohol and deadly diseases. In some cases, withdrawal may mean dropping out of the society as an individual—escaping by obliterating consciousness in drugs or alcohol. The escape from oppression and low self-concept is one reason why drug use is higher in minority ghettos and alcohol abuse is rampant on Native American reservations.

Aggression resulting from anger and resentment over minority status and subjugation may lead to retaliation or violence. Because the dominant group holds significant power, a direct route such as voting against the dominant group or defeating them in war is not always possible. Indeed, direct confrontation could be very costly to those lacking political or economic power.

Aggression usually takes one of two forms, indirect aggression and displaced aggression. Indirect aggression takes the form of biting assertiveness in the arts—literature, art, racial and ethnic humor, and music—and in job related actions such as inefficiency and slowdowns by workers. Displaced aggression, on the other hand, involves hostilities directed toward individuals or groups other than the dominant group, as happens when youth gangs attack other ethnic gangs in nearby neighborhoods. They substitute aggression against the other minority group for their frustrating circumstances.

The four responses discussed thus far address the angst and humiliation that individual minorities feel. They each allow an individual person to try to cope, but they do not address the structural causes of discrimination. The final strategy is change-oriented action: minority groups pursue social change in the meso- and macro-level structures of society. In the United States, Martin Luther King, Jr., followed in the nonviolent resistance tradition of India’s Mohandas Gandhi, who sought to change India’s laws so minorities could have equal opportunities within the society. King’s strategy involved nonviolent popular protests, economic boycotts, and challenges to the current norms of the society. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) sought to bring about similar kinds of change at the legislative level through legal suits that create new legal precedents on behalf of racial equality. Often, these lawsuits address side-effect discrimination—a meso-level problem. Many other associations for minorities—including the Anti-Defamation League (founded by Jews) and La Raza Unida (a Chicano organization) also seek to address problems both within organizations and institutions (meso level) and in the nation as a whole (macro level).

Minority groups in some countries embrace violent tactics as a means to bring about change—riots, insurrections, hijackings, and terrorist bombings aimed at the dominant group. Their hope is either to destroy the dominant power structure or to threaten the stability of the current macro-level system such that the group in power is willing to make some changes.

Sometimes minority reactions result in assimilation, but often the goal is to create a pluralistic society in which cultures can be different yet have economic opportunities open to all.

Do you think hip-hop or rap brings people together or tears them apart? Does it contribute to stereotyping or alleviate it? Explain.

THINKING SOCIOLOGICALLY

Between 1860 and 1920, the United States received 30 million immigrants from central and southeastern European countries. In the 1980s, refugees from war torn countries such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, Cambodia, and El Salvador sought political asylum in the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Norway, and several Latin American countries (Omi and Winant 1989). In the 1990s,
residents fled from Albania, Bosnia, Cuba, Haiti, Rwanda, Zaire, and other nations, mostly into neighboring countries such as Chad. In the early twenty-first century, Sudanese are fleeing to refugee camps in neighboring countries. These movements, brought about by war, famine, and economic dislocation, force families to seek new locations where they can survive and perhaps improve their circumstances. The degree of acceptance children and their families find in their newly adopted countries varies depending on the government’s policies, the group’s background, and economic conditions in the host country (Rumbaut and Portes 2001). Some formerly refugee-friendly countries are closing their doors to immigration because of the strain on their economy and threats of terrorism. In this section, we consider the policies that emerge as dominant and minority groups come into contact and interact.

**Policies to Reduce Prejudice, Racism, and Discrimination**

In the preceding pages, we considered some of the costs to individuals, groups, societies, and the global community inflicted by discriminatory behavior and policies. Discrimination’s influence is widespread, from slavery and subjugation to unequal educational and work opportunities, to legal and political arenas, and to every other part of the social world. If one accepts the premise that discrimination is destructive to both individuals and societies, then ways must be found to address the root problems effectively. However, solutions to ethnic tensions around the world have many experts baffled. Consider ethnic strife in Bosnia and Croatia; conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis; conflicts between Shiites and Sunni Muslims in Iraq; tribal genocide in Rwanda, Africa; and conflicts between religious groups in Northern Ireland. In places such as these, each new generation is socialized into the prejudice and antagonisms that perpetuate the animosity and violence. Social scientists and policy makers have made little progress in resolving conflicts that rest on century-old hostilities.

From our social world perspective, we know that no problem can be solved by working at only one level of analysis. A successful strategy must bring about change at every level of the social world—individual attitudes, organizational discrimination, cultural stereotypes, societal stratification systems, and national and international structures. However, most current strategies focus on only one level of analysis. Figure 8.3 shows some of the programs enacted to combat prejudice, racism, and discrimination at the individual, group, societal, and global levels.

**Individual or Small Group Therapy**

Programs to address prejudice, racism, and stereotypes through human relations workshops, group encounters, and therapy can achieve goals with small numbers of people. For instance, African American and white children who are placed in interracial classrooms in schools are more likely to develop close interracial friendships (Ellison and Powers 1994). Also, the higher the people’s education levels, the more likely they are to respect and like others and to tolerate—even appreciate and enjoy—differences. Education gives a broader, more universal outlook, reduces misconceptions and prejudices, shows that many issues do not have clear answers, and encourages multicultural understanding.

However, these strategies do not address the social conditions underlying the problems because they reach only a few people: those who are exposed through school or other programs, who voluntarily seek help, or who are required to participate in prejudice reduction programs. Thus, this approach alone achieves only limited results. It also does not begin to address dilemmas that are rooted in meso- and macro-level discrimination. Micro-level solutions are often blind to the structural causes of problems.

**Group Contact**

Many social scientists advocate organized group contact between dominant and minority group members to improve relations. Consider the following example from a classroom in an all white farming district in Iowa. The teacher, Jane Elliot, divided her third-grade class into two groups: brown eyed and blue eyed children. Then she told the class that brown eyed children were “superior,” were more intelligent, and would be given more privileges. The blue eyed children wore collars for identification, sat in the back of the room,

**Thousands of refugees fled Vietnam in the 1970s to escape violence and possible death. Most left in whatever vessels they could crowd on. These Vietnamese boat people, rejected by the Malaysian authorities, take refuge on the Indonesian archipelago of Anambas.**

Source: © Jacques Pavlovsky/SIGMA CORBIS.
and were treated as “inferiors.” The next day, the tables turned and the blue-eyed children were superior and brown-eyed children became inferior. The blue-eyed children, superior for the day, took their new roles even more to heart than the brown-eyed superior children had. Children who had formerly been friends were hostile toward each other. In each case, the inferior group for the day, whether blue- or brown-eyed, could not concentrate, did poorly on their work and tests, and seemed sullen and disinterested. The teacher had the children evaluate what it was like and how it felt to be in the minority (Peters 1987).

In another classic example of group contact, social psychologists Muzafer Sherif and Caroline Sherif (1953) and their colleagues ran summer camps for boys aged 11 and 12 and studied how groups were established and reestablished. Upon arrival, the boys were divided into two groups that competed periodically. The more fierce the competition, the more hostile the two cabins of boys became toward each other. In each case, the inferior group for the day, whether blue- or brown-eyed, could not concentrate, did poorly on their work and tests, and seemed sullen and disinterested. The teacher had the children evaluate what it was like and how it felt to be in the minority (Peters 1987).

### Solutions and Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Problems at Each Level</th>
<th>Types of Solutions or Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual level: stereotypes and prejudice</td>
<td>Therapy; tolerance-education programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group level: negative group interaction</td>
<td>Positive contact; awareness by majority of their many privileges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal level: institutional discrimination</td>
<td>Education, media, legal-system revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global level: deprivation of human rights</td>
<td>Human rights movements; international political pressures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 8.3 Problems and Solutions**

To achieve a higher level of racial and socioeconomic integration. For instance, the Chicago Housing Authority opened a refurbished mixed-income housing experiment with resident participation in decision making; although many predicted failure, the project thrived with long waiting lists of families wanting to participate (McCormick 1992). Positive contact experiences do tend to improve relations on a micro level by breaking down stereotypes, but in order to solidify gains, we must also address institutionalized inequalities.

**Institutional and Societal Strategies to Improve Group Relations**

Sociologists contend that institutional and societal approaches to reduce discrimination get closer to the core of the problems and affect larger numbers of people than do micro-level strategies. For instance, voluntary advocacy organizations pursue political change through lobbying, watchdog monitoring, educational information dissemination, canvassing, protest marches, rallies, and boycotts (Minkoff 1995). Two such groups are the Anti-defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance Program. Both groups provide schools and community organizations with their literature, videos, and other materials aimed at combatting intolerance and discrimination toward others. Some local efforts have been made through AmeriCorps and other agencies to do problem-solving, provide institutional support for schools, and create linkages across ethnic and racial boundaries, as illustrated in The Applied Sociologist at Work, on page ___ With a bachelor’s degree in sociology, Rachel Ernst was able to make a difference in her hometown.

The Civil Rights Commission, Fair Employment Practices Commission, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are government organizations that protect rights and work toward equality for all citizens. These agencies oversee practices and hear complaints relating to racial, sexual, age, and other forms of discrimination. Legislation, too, can modify behaviors; laws requiring equal treatment of minorities have resulted in increased tolerance of those who are “different” and have opened doors that previously were closed to minorities.

In the United States, executive action to end discrimination has been taken by a number of presidents. In 1948, Harry Truman moved to successfully end military segregation, and subsequent presidents have urged passage of civil rights legislation and equal employment opportunity legislation.
Affirmative action laws were first implemented during Lyndon Johnson’s administration; they have been used to fight pervasive institutional racism (Crosby 2004; Farley 2005).

**Affirmative Action.** One of the most contentious policies in the United States has been affirmative action. The following discussion addresses the intentions and forms of the policy (Gallagher 2004). A societal policy for change, affirmative action actually involves three different policies. Its simplest and original form, which we call **strict affirmative action**, involves affirmative or positive steps to make sure that unintentional discrimination does not occur. It requires, for example, that an employer who receives federal monies must advertise a position widely and not just through internal or friendship networks; if one needs an employee with a college education, then by federal law one must recruit through minority and women’s colleges as well as state and private colleges in the region. If hiring in the suburbs, one is obliged to contact the unemployment agencies in the poor and minority communities as well as those in the affluent neighborhoods. After taking these required extra steps, one is expected to hire the most qualified candidate that applies, irrespective of race, ethnicity, sex, religion, or other external characteristics. The focus is on providing opportunities for the best qualified people. For many people, this is the meaning of **affirmative action**, and it is inconceivable that this could be characterized as reverse discrimination, for members of the dominant group will be hired if they are in fact the most qualified. These policies do not overcome the problem that qualified people who have been marginalized may be competent but do not have the traditional paper credentials that document their qualifications.

The second policy is a **quota system**, a requirement that employers **must** hire a certain percentage of minorities. For the most part, quotas are now unconstitutional. They apply only in cases in which a court has found a company to have a substantial and sustained history of discrimination against minorities and in which the employment position does not really have many requirements (if the job entails sweeping floors and cleaning toilets, there would not be an expectation of a specific academic degree or a particular grade point average).

The third policy and the one that has created the most controversy among opponents of affirmative action is **preference policies**, sometimes called **set-aside policies**. Preference policies are based on the concept of equity, the belief that sometimes people must be treated differently in order to treat them fairly and to create equality. This policy was enacted because of institutional racism in order to level the playing field.

The objectives of preference policies are to (1) eliminate qualifications that are not substantially related to the job but that unwittingly favor members of the dominant group and (2) foster achievement of objectives of the organization that are only possible through enhanced diversity. To overcome these inequalities and achieve certain objectives, employers and educational institutions take account of race or sex by making special efforts to hire and retain workers or accept students from groups that have been underrepresented because of race. In many cases, these individuals bring qualifications others do not possess. Consider the following examples.

A goal of the medical community is to provide access to medical care for underserved populations. There is an extreme shortage of physicians on the Navajo reservation. Thus, a Navajo applicant for medical school might be accepted even if her scores are slightly lower than another candidate because she speaks Navajo and understands the culture. One could argue that she is more qualified to be a physician on the reservation than someone who knows nothing about Navajo society but has a slightly higher grade point average or test score. Some argue that tests should not be the only measure to determine successful applicants.

Likewise, an African American police officer may have more credibility in a minority neighborhood and may be able to diffuse a delicate conflict more effectively than a white officer who scored slightly higher on a paper-and-pencil placement test. Sometimes being a member of a particular ethnic group can actually make one more qualified for a position. 
Others believe such programs have encouraged employers, involving any sort of preference are reverse discrimination. Colleges are required to use numbers rather than individualize judgment to make the determination (University of Michigan Documents Center 2003). Consider "Sociology in Your Social World," page __, and decide whether you think the policy was unfair, and whether only race and ethnicity should have been deleted from the preferences allowed.

A lawsuit filed in a Detroit district court in 1997 alleged that the University of Michigan gave unlawful preference to minorities in undergraduate admissions and in the law school admissions. In this controversial case, the court ruled that undergraduate admissions were discriminatory because they used numbers rather than individualize judgment to make the determination (University of Michigan Documents Center 2003). Consider "Sociology in Your Social World," page __, and decide whether you think the policy was unfair, and whether only race and ethnicity should have been deleted from the preferences allowed.

The question remains, should preferences be given to accomplish diversity? Some people feel that programs involving any sort of preference are reverse discrimination. Others believe such programs have encouraged employers,
educational institutions, and government to look carefully at hiring policies and minority candidates and that many more competent minority group members are working in the public sector as a result of these policies.

**Nonviolent Resistance: Institutional and Societal Policy for Change.** Another technique for bringing about change at the institutional and societal level is nonviolent resistance by minority groups. The model for this technique comes from India where, in the 1950s, Mahatma Gandhi led the struggle for independence from Britain. Although Britain clearly had superior weapons and armies, boycotts, sit-ins, and other forms of resistance eventually led to British withdrawal as the ruling colonial power. Jesse Jackson, a U.S. presidential candidate in 1984 and 1988, led his Chicago-based organization, PUSH, in economic boycotts against companies such as Coca Cola to force them to hire and promote blacks, and César Chavez led boycotts against grape growers to improve the working conditions of migrant workers. This strategy has been used successfully by workers and students to bring about change in many parts of the world.

**Global Movements for Human Rights**

A unique coalition of world nations has emerged from a recent international event—the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center in New York City, a center housing national and international businesses and workers. Citizens from ninety countries were killed when two hijacked commercial jetliners flew into the towers. In addition to the world condemnation, many countries’ governments have pledged to fight against terrorism. Yet why did such a heinous act occur? Many social scientists attempting to identify a cause point to the disparities between rich and poor peoples of the world; the perpetrators likely felt Muslims were treated as inconsequential players in the global world and they struck out to make a dramatic impact on the world community and the United States. The point is that global issues and ethnic conflicts in the social world are interrelated.

The rights granted to citizens of any nation used to be considered the business of each sovereign nation, but after the Nazi holocaust, German officers were tried at the Nuremberg Trials and the United Nations passed the Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Probably more than any other U.S. president, Jimmy Carter made human rights the centerpiece of his foreign policy. In addition, the United Nations, several national governments (Britain, France, and Canada), and privately funded advocacy groups speak up for international human rights as a principle that transcends national boundaries. The most widely recognized private group is Amnesty International, a watchdog group that does lobbying on behalf of human rights and supports imprisoned political prisoners and ethnic group spokespersons. When Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, the group’s visibility was dramatically increased. Even some activist sociologists have formed Sociologos sin Fronteras, or SSF (Sociologos sin Fronteras; http://www.sociologoswithoutborders.org).

Everyone can make a positive difference in the world, and one place to start is in our community (see Contributing to Our Social World); we can counter prejudice, racism, and discrimination in our own groups by teaching children to see beyond “we” and “they” and by speaking out for fairness and against stereotypes and discrimination.
Preference Policies at the University of Michigan

To enhance diversity on the campus—a practice that many argue makes a university a better learning environment and enhances the academic reputation of the school—many colleges have preference policies in admissions. However, the University of Michigan was sued by applicants who felt they were not admitted because others replaced them on the roster due to their racial or ethnic background.

The University of Michigan is a huge university where a numbering system is needed to handle the volume (tens of thousands) of applicants; they cannot make a decision based on personal knowledge of each candidate. Thus, they give points for each quality they deem desirable in the student body. A maximum of 150 points is possible, and a score of a 100 would pretty much ensure admission. The university felt that any combination of points accumulated according to the following formula would result in a highly qualified and diverse student body.

For academics, up to 110 points possible:
- 80 points for grades (a particular grade point average in high school resulted in a set number of points; a 4.0 resulted in 80 points; a 2.8 resulted in 56 points.)
- 12 points for standardized test scores (ACT or SAT)
- 10 points for the academic rigor of high school (so all students who went to tougher high schools earned points)
- 8 points for the difficulty of the curriculum (e.g., points for honors curriculum vs. keyboarding courses)

For especially desired qualities, including diversity, up to 40 points possible of any combination of the following (but no more than 40 in this category):
- Geographical distribution (10 for Michigan resident; 6 for underrepresented Michigan county)
- Legacy (a relative had attended Michigan (4 pts for a parent; 1 pt for grandparent or sibling)
- Quality of submitted essay (3 points)
- Personal achievement—a special accomplishment that was noteworthy (up to 5 points)
- Leadership and service (5 points each)
- Miscellaneous (only one of these could be used):
  - Socioeconomic disadvantage (20 points)
  - Racial or ethnic minority (20 points; disallowed by the court ruling)
  - Men in nursing (5 points)
  - Scholarship athlete (20 points)
  - Provost’s discretion (20 points; usually the son or daughter of a large financial donor or of a politician)

In addition to ethnicity being given preference, athleticism, musical talent, having a relative who is an alum, or being the child of someone who is noteworthy to the university were also considered. Some schools also give points for being a military veteran or for coming from a distant state. The legal challenge to this admissions system was based only on the racial and ethnic preference given to some candidates, not to the other items that are preferred.

Does this process seem reasonable as a way to get a diverse and highly talented incoming class of students?


Should colleges consider an applicant’s state of origin, urban or rural background, ethnicity, musical or athletic ability, alumni parent, or other factors in admitting students if it helps the college achieve its goals? Should men with lower scores be admitted because the college wants to have balanced gender enrollment? Is ethnic diversity so important to in-and-out-of-classroom learning to be considered an admissions criterion? Why or why not?
SO WHAT?

Why are minority group members in most countries poorer than dominant group members? This and other chapter opening questions can be answered in part by considering individual causes of prejudice and racism; physical and cultural differences that distinguish groups of people; and the fact that human beings have a tendency to create “we” and “they” categories and to treat those who are different as somehow less human. The categories can be based on physical appearance, cultural differences, religious differences, or anything the community or society defines as important. Once people notice differences, they are more inclined to hurt “them” or to harbor advantages for “us” if there is competition over resources that both groups want. Even within a nation, where people are supposedly all “us,” there can be sharp differences and intense hostilities.

Indeed, “we” and “they” thinking can invade some of the most intimate settings. Inequality is not limited to social classes, race or ethnic groups, or religious communities; it can infect relations between human males and females in everything from the home to the boardroom and from the governance of nations to the decisions of global agencies. More on this in the next chapter: “Gender Stratification.”

CONTRIBUTING TO OUR SOCIAL WORLD

At the Local Level: Big Brothers Big Sisters helps a child with few resources and little cultural capital get a broader picture of society. By becoming a mentor, you could provide advice, support, and know-how to help develop skills that could make for success.

Commission on human relations: Most communities have organization(s) working for positive ethnic relations. Contact them to ask how you can become involved.

At the Organizational or Institutional Level: Teaching Tolerance (www.splcenter.org/center/tt/teach.jsp) is a program of the Southern Poverty Law Center that has curriculum materials for teaching about diversity and a program for enhancing cross-ethnic cooperation and dialogue in schools. Consider using their ideas and materials to enhance ethnic relations on a campus.

AmeriCorps (www.americorps.org) is a network of national service programs involving over 70,000 people in education, public safety, health, the environment . . . . Members selected by and serve with local and national organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

At the National and Global Levels: Free the Slaves (http://www.freetheslaves.net) fights slavery worldwide by helping people to freedom and helps to abolish slavery around the world.

Sociologists without Borders (http://www.sociologistswithoutborders.org) promotes human rights globally. Advocates that sociologists participate, democratically, with others to set standards for human well-being and devote energies to understanding how to achieve these standards.

Amnesty International (www.amnestyusa.org or www.amnesty.org) is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights.

Kids with Cameras (www.kids-with-cameras.org) can be successful in fulfilling its mission of empowering children through the art of photography only when people are involved and excited about the work! Assist Kids with Cameras gain momentum and strength; donate, volunteer, buy a print, email the kids, and join the email list.

Visit www.pineforge.com/ballantinestudy for online activities, sample tests, and other helpful information. Select “Chapter 8: Race and Ethnic Group Stratification” for chapter-specific activities.