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.”
Local Organizations and Community

Meso: Exclusion of ethnic group members

Macro: Policies in large organizations that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate

Macro: Laws or court rulings that set policy related to discrimination

Macro: Racial and ethnic hostilities resulting in wars, genocide, or ethnic cleansing

Society

National Organizations, Institutions, and Ethnic Subcultures

Local Organizations and Community

Me (and My Minority Friends)
Think About It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me (and My Inner Circle)</th>
<th>What makes you look different from those around you? What relevance do these differences have for your life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Community</td>
<td>Why do people in the local community categorize “others” into racial or ethnic groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institutions; Complex Organizations; Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>How are privilege and disprivilege embedded in institutions—so that they operate independently of personal bias or prejudice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Society</td>
<td>Why are minority group members in most countries economically poorer than dominant group members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Community</td>
<td>In what ways might ethnicity or race shape international negotiations and global problem solving? What can you do to make the world a better place for all people?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 15 men she had sex with the night before. Siri is 15 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 2002:207–209)

Siri is a sex slave, just like millions of other young women around the world. Slavery is not limited to poor countries: Dora was enslaved in a home in Washington, D.C., and domestic slaves have been discovered in London, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports that thousands of women and children are smuggled into the United States and European countries each year as sex and domestic slaves or locked away in sweat shops (Bales 2004). International agencies estimate that more than 1 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 (Free the Slaves 2005). An estimated 27 million people, mostly women and children from poor families in poor countries, are slaves, auctioned off or lured into slavery each year by kidnap gangs, pimps, and cross-border syndicates (Bales 2004, 2007; Bales Kevin and Trodd 2008). As a global phenomenon, human trafficking in slaves from places such as Ukraine, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Nepal, and the Philippines, mostly for the 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).

International events such as the Olympics and major soccer matches bring new markets for the sex trade. Young foreign girls are brought in from other countries—chosen to be sex slaves because they are exotic and free from AIDS and because they cannot escape due to insufficient money and knowledge of the language of 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 6 are held captive as prostitutes or as domestic workers. Child labor, a problem in many parts of the world, requires poor young children to do heavy labor for long hours in agriculture as well as brickmaking, match-making, and carpet factories. Although they earn little, their income helps families pay debts. Much of the cacao (used to make chocolate) and coffee (unless they are Fair Trade Certified products) that we buy also supports slavery. Cacao especially is grown and harvested at slave camps where young boys are given a choice of unpaid hard labor (with beatings for any disobedience) or death by starvation or shooting (Bales 2000, 2004). Very little chocolate is produced without slave labor.

Debt bondage is another form of modern-day slavery. Extremely poor families—often people with differences in appearance or culture from those with power—work in exchange for housing and meager food. Severe debt, passing from generation to generation, may also result when farmers borrow money because they face drought or need cash to keep their families from starving. 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. The poor families may find themselves enslaved. The lack of credit available to marginal people contributes to slavery. Because those in slavery have little voice and no rights, the world community hears little about this tragedy (Bales 2007). A recent successful international movement in impoverished areas provides women very small loans—called micro credit—to help them start small businesses and move out of desperate poverty and slavery. We will read more about this in future chapters.

In the slavery of the 19th 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 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 are cheap. They can be procured from poor countries for an average of $90 (Bales 2004). The cost is $40 in Mali for a young male and $1,000 in Thailand for an HIV-free female (Free the Slaves 2008). Slaves worldwide produce an estimated $1.4 billion in produce and profits for their owners each year. Employers can legally exploit and abuse them with long hours and without legal interference because the slaves owe money.

What is the significance of slavery for our discussion of race and ethnic group stratification? What all these human bondage situations have in common is that poor minority group members are victimized. Because many slaves are members of ethnic, racial, religious, tribal, gender, age, caste, or other minority groups with no cultural capital 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. Visible barriers include 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 subervient group.

Minority- or dominant-group status affects most aspects of people’s experiences in the social world. These include status in the community, socialization experience, residence, opportunities for success in education and occupation, the religious group to which they belong, and the health care they receive. In fact, it is impossible to separate minority status from position in the stratification system (Aguirre and Turner 2006; Farley 2009; Rothenberg 2007).

In this chapter, we explore the characteristics of race and ethnic groups that lead to differential placement in stratification systems, including problems at the micro, meso, and macro levels—prejudice, racism, and discrimination. 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, the consequences for both the individuals and the society, and some actions or policies that deal with differential treatment.
Minority Groups

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

1. Minority groups can be distinguished from the group that holds power by factors that make them different—physical appearance, dress, language, or religion.

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

3. Minority groups have less access to power and resources within the nation and are evaluated less favorably 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.

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

Because minority status changes with time and ideology, the minority group may 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 they were a minority under Saddam Hussein’s Sunni rule. Map 8.1 indicates the location of major minority groups in the United States today, although you should be aware that the density of groups in a particular location changes over time.

Dominant groups are not always the numerical majority. In the case of South Africa, possession of advanced European weapons placed the native African 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. Until recently, each major group—White, mixed colored, and Black—had its own living area, and members carried identification cards showing the “race” to which they belonged. In this case, racial classification and privilege were defined by the laws of the dominant group.

The Concept of Race

Racial minority is one of the two types of minority groups most common in the social world. The other is ethnic groups. A race is a group identified by a society because...
of 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 18th and 19th centuries, scientists attempted to divide humans into four major groupings—Mongoloid, Caucasoid, Negroid, and Australoid—and then into more than 30 racial subcategories. In reality, few individuals fit clearly into any of these types. The “Sociology in Our Social World” on page 248—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 their earliest origins in East Africa more than 7 million years ago, humans slowly spread around the globe, south through Africa, north to Europe, and across Asia. Many scholars believe that humans crossed the Bering Straits from Asia to North America around 20,000 BCE and continued to populate North and South America (Diamond 1999). 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 genetically isolated people, 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.
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 Linne (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, and Malay.

By the 19th 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, Comte 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 *Essay on Inequality of the Human Races*, published in 1853–1855, 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* (1858) 1909). Among his many ideas was that human races might represent the stages or branches of a tree of evolution. 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. From Darwin’s ideas emerged the concepts of *survival of the fittest* and *ever-improving races*.

These two late-19th-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 (1899/1911) 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).

*M 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 genomes do not always 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 the 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 whether race is at all a biological reality.
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 (a) all people are born free and equal both in dignity and in rights, (b) prejudice retards personal development, (c) conflicts (based on race) cost nations money and resources, and (d) 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. Biologically speaking, a “race” exists in any life form when two groups cannot interbreed, and if they do, the offspring are infertile/sterile. This is not true of any group of human beings. So what is the problem?

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, the famous cognitive psychologist, described the human tendency to classify objects as one of our most basic cognitive tools (Piaget and Inhelder [1955] 1999). This inclination has often been linked to the classifying of “racial” 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 become 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 differential laws based on their definitions of racial groups and specified the privileges and restrictions allotted to each group (Marger 2009). Bantu populations (the native Africans) and Coloreds (those of mixed blood) were restricted to separate 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, while 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 14 generations. A single ancestor who was not Dutch or English might cause 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 system began to break down in the 1990s due to international 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.

In 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 race is based on nearly opposite criteria in Brazil and South Africa, illustrating the arbitrary nature of racial classification attempts (Keith and Herring 1991; Walker and Karas 1993).

Before civil rights laws were passed in the United States in the 1960s, a number of states had laws that spelled out differential treatment for racial groups. These were commonly 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 to which category an individual belonged. 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, 1/32 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 the latter half of the 20th century, several U.S. states still attempted to classify the race of newborns by the percentage of Black blood or parentage (Lopez 1996). Federal law now prohibits discrimination on the basis of “racial” classifications, and most state laws that are explicitly racial have been challenged and dropped.

The Significance of Race Versus Class

From the time of slavery in the Americas until the late 20th 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 21st century is a question that has occupied sociologists, politicians, educators, and other scientists in recent years. Some scholars argue that race is the primary cause of different placement in the stratification system, whereas others insist that race and social class are both at work, with socioeconomic factors (social class) more important than race.

Sociologist William Julius Wilson believes that the racial oppression that characterized the African American experience throughout the 19th century was caused first by slavery and then by a lingering caste structure that severely restricted upward mobility. However, the breakdown of the plantation economy and the rise of industrialism created more opportunities for African Americans to participate in the economy (W. Wilson 1978, 1993a, 1993b).

Wilson (W. 1978) argues that after World War II, an African American class structure developed with characteristics similar 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 stratification 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 (W. 1978, 1984, 1993a) calls this group the underclass.

Some researchers assert that the United States cannot escape poverty because well-paid, unskilled jobs requiring few skills and little education are disappearing from the economy and because the poor are concentrated in segregated urban areas (Massey 2007; Massey and Denton 1998). Poorly educated African American teenagers and young adults see their job prospects limited to the low-wage sector (e.g., work at fast-food joints at minimum wage), and they experience record levels of unemployment. Movement out of poverty becomes almost impossible (Farley 2009; W. Wilson 1996).

Wilson’s point is illustrated by the following: More than 2 in 5 African Americans are middle-class, compared with 1 in 20 in 1940. Thus, many African Americans are now middle-class. On the other hand, many adults in 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 (W. Wilson 1996). The new global economic system is a contributing factor as unskilled jobs go abroad to cheaper labor (Friedman 2005, 2008; Massey 2007). Without addressing these structural causes of poverty, we cannot expect to reduce the number of people in the underclass—even if they are White, Black, or other minority.

A big debate among scholars surrounds the following question: 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 education level (12.4 years in school) is almost the same as Whites’ (12.7 years), suggesting that they have comparable qualifications for employment. However, this equity stops at the high school level; 27.6% of Whites are college graduates, compared with 17.3% of Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau 2005c). More important, African Americans earn less than Whites in the same occupational categories. As Tables 8.1 and 8.2 make clear, income levels for African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites are not even close to being equal. Unemployment and poverty affect a higher percentage of Black families than White ones. Economics alone does not seem a complete answer to who is in the underclass.

### Table 8.1 Race/Ethnicity 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</td>
<td>64,427</td>
<td>40,143</td>
<td>40,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of White family income</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009a:table 681). Note: Figures are for 2007.*
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, the interplay of race, class, and gender is complex, and part contributes to class status; physical traits such as skin color cannot be dismissed (Wallace 2004).

Thinking Sociologically

On what bases do you classify people into social groups? How do you describe someone to another person? Do you use racial terms only for people of color? Why? Are people who are White “just normal”? If so, what does that say?

Ethnic Groups

The second major type of minority group—the ethnic group—is based on cultural factors: language, religion, dress, foods, customs, beliefs, values, norms, a shared group identity or feeling, and sometimes loyalty to a homeland, monarch, or religious leader. Members are grouped together because they share a common cultural heritage, often connected with a national or geographical identity. Some social scientists prefer to call racial groups "ethnic groups" because the term ethnic encompasses most minorities and avoids problems with the term race (Aguirre and Turner 2006).

Visits to ethnic enclaves in large cities around the world give a picture of ethnicity. Little Italy, Chinatown, Greek Town, and Polish neighborhoods may have non-English street signs and newspapers, ethnic restaurants, culture-specific houses of worship, and clothing styles that reflect the ethnic subculture. Occasionally, an ethnic group shares power in pluralistic societies, but most often they hold a minority status with little power.

Ethnic enclaves have a strong sense of local community, holding festivals from the old country and developing networks in the new country. Such areas are called “ghettos” and are not necessarily impoverished. The photo depicts a street on the Lower East Side of New York, which was once a transition station and ghetto for recent immigrants.

Table 8.2 Income (in dollars) by Educational Level and Race/Ethnicity

<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>21,464</td>
<td>17,823</td>
<td>18,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>32,083</td>
<td>26,368</td>
<td>23,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>32,917</td>
<td>29,308</td>
<td>27,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>57,932</td>
<td>47,903</td>
<td>43,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>71,063</td>
<td>55,654</td>
<td>56,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>117,787</td>
<td>101,376</td>
<td>82,627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009e:table 224).
Note: Figures are for 2007.
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 category—called *panethnicity*—emphasizes that ethnic identity is itself socially shaped and created.

**Biracial and Multiracial Populations: Immigration, Intermarriage, and Personal Identification**

Our racial and ethnic identities are becoming more complex as migration around the world brings to distant shores new immigrants in search of safety and a new start in life. Keep in mind that our racial and ethnic identities come largely from external labels placed on us by governments and our associates but reinforced by our own self-identification. The important point is this: *Race is a social construct that can change with conditions in a country.*

Many European countries are now host to immigrants from their former colonies, making them multiracial. France hosts many North and West Africans, and Great Britain hosts large populations from Africa, India, and Pakistan. The resulting mix of peoples has blurred racial lines and created many multiracial individuals. Original migration patterns of early humans, shown in Map 8.2, illustrate that “push” factors drive people from some countries and pull them to other countries. The most common push-pull factors today are job opportunities, the desire for security, individual liberties, and availability of medical and educational opportunities. The target countries of migrants are most often in North America, Australia, or Western Europe, and the highest emigration rates are from Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South and Central America.

The United States was once considered a biracial country, Black and White (which of course, disregarded the Native American population). However, the nation currently accepts more new immigrants than any other country. Immigration from every continent has led to a more diverse population, with up to 16% of the U.S. population being foreign born. With new immigration, increasing rates of intermarriage, and many more individuals claiming multiracial identification, the picture is much more complex today, and the color lines have been redrawn (DaCosta 2007; Lee and Bean 2004, 2007). One in forty individuals claims multiracial status today, and estimates are that one in five will do so by 2050.

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**Map 8.2** The Spread of Humans Around the World

*Source: Diamond (1999:37).*
Chapter 8. Race and Ethnic Group Stratification: Beyond “We” and “They” 253

For the first time, the U.S. has a biracial president, although the application of the “one drop of blood” rule in the United States has caused many people to refer to President Obama as “Black.”

Census data are used in countries to determine many characteristics of populations. In the United States, questions about race and ethnic classification have changed with each 10-year study. The important point is that government-determined categories thereafter define the racial and ethnic composition of a country. In the 2000 census, citizens were for the first time given the option of picking more than one racial category. Seven million people or 2.3% of the U.S. population selected two or more racial categories, with White/American Indian being the most common mixed category (Schaefer and Kunz, 2008).

Latinos, sometimes called Hispanics, made up 14% of the population in 2007. This is an increase of more than 50% since the 1990 census, making them the largest and fastest-growing minority group. Among Latinos, Mexicans made up roughly 63%, Puerto Ricans 9%, Cubans 3.5%, Central Americans 7.6%, and South Americans 5.4% (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a). Many Latinos identify themselves as panethnic, identifying with a broad ethnic category (“Hispanic” or “Latino”) rather than with a specific ethnic group (e.g., Mexican-American or Cuban American; McConnell and Delgado-Romero 2004). Blacks follow Latinos with 12.4% of the population. Whites make up 74%, Asians 4.3%, and Native Americans/Native Alaskans 0.8% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a).

Thinking Sociologically

Identify one dominant and one minority group in your community or on campus. Where do that group’s members fall in the stratification system? How are the life chances of individuals in these groups influenced by factors beyond their control?

<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>Discrimination</td>
<td>Poor jobs, income, education, housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Systems that limit access to resources</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 prejudge 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 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 2007). 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 people 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 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. The problem is that both those stereotyping and those being stereotyped come to believe the “pictures” and act accordingly.

Prejudice is difficult to change because it is rooted in traditions, cultural beliefs, and stereotypes of groups. Individuals grow up learning these ingrained beliefs, which 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 the political and economic climate of 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 economic and political competition for jobs and power (Farley 2009; Glaser 1994).

In wartime, the adversary may be the victim of racial slurs, or members of the enemy society may 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 intern 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 prophesy, involves the
adoption of stereotypical behaviors (see Chapter 4). No group is born dumb, lazy, dirty, or money hungry, but its members can be conditioned to believe such depictions of themselves or be forced into acting out certain behaviors based on expectations of the dominant group.

Thinking Sociologically

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—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 backs of their cars, approached the rally, and opened fire for 88 seconds, then, they left as calmly as they had arrived. Four White men and a Black woman were dead (Greensboro Justice Fund 2005). 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 poorly adjusted people who displace their frustration with aggressive attacks on others. Hate groups evolve from like-minded individuals, often because of prejudice and frustration (see Map 8.3).

Scapegoating. When it is impossible to vent one's frustration on the real target—one's boss, teachers, the economic system—this 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 on which people had written their sins. 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 the failures of others. It is difficult to look at oneself to seek reasons for failure but easy to transfer the blame 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.

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 retire in large numbers. Until that happens, there will be a good deal of frustration about the 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, and other minorities become easy scapegoats.

Although this theory helps explain some situations, it does not predict when frustration will lead to aggression or explain why only some people who experience frustration vent their feelings on the vulnerable and why some groups become targets (Marger 2009).

### Racism

Racism is any institutional arrangement that favors one racial group over another, and this favoritism may result in intentional or unintentional consequences for minority groups (Farley 2009). Racism is often embedded in the 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—whereas most social scientists see the problem as occurring at the meso and macro levels. Still, issues at the micro level continue to be real. Ideological racism is an attempt to justify racism on the basis of a pseudo-scientific set of ideas. It 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, as Hitler’s actions against the Jews and other groups illustrate (Marger 2009). (This is illustrated in the discussion “Historical Attempts to Define Race” in “Sociology in Our Social World” on p. 248.)

In symbolic racism, people insist that they are not prejudiced or racist—that they are colorblind and committed to equality—but at the same time, they oppose any social policies that would eliminate racism and make true equality of opportunity possible (Farley 2009). Symbolic racists reject ideological racism as blatant, crude, and ignorant, but they fail to recognize that their own actions may perpetuate institutional inequalities and oppose policies that would correct the problems.

Institutional racism involves discrimination that is hidden within the system, and symbolic racism allows it to remain in place. This will be discussed under meso-level analysis below.

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 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 those of the majority. However, for the past several years, incidents in the United States have declined from 1,554 in 2006 to 1,460 in 2007 and 1,352 in 2008. Anti-Semitic incidents take the form of vandalism, assaults, or threats directed at Jewish citizens or Jewish establishments (Morrison 2009). Unfortunately, until there are better economic opportunities for more people, individual racism is likely to be one result of economic competition for jobs (Feagin, Vera, and Batur 2001).
Although social-psychological theories shed light on the most extreme cases of individual or small-group prejudice and racism, there is much that 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, 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, symbiotic 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 and discriminated against by the school system without 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.
Thinking Sociologically

How might schools unintentionally misunderstand Wind-Wolf and other minority children in ways that have negative consequences for the children’s success?

Discrimination is based on race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, social class, religion, or whatever other category members of a society choose to make significant (Feagin and Feagin 2007). Individual discrimination, actions taken against minority group members by individuals, can take many forms, from avoiding contact by excluding individuals from one’s club, neighborhood, or even country to physical violence against minorities, as seen in hate crime attacks on Asian Americans, who are perceived to be taking jobs away from White Americans.

Institutional discrimination, or meso-level discrimination, is often a normal or routine part of the way an organization operates. It includes both intentional actions, such as laws restricting minorities, and unintentional actions, which have consequences that restrict minorities. Institutional discrimination is built into organizations and cultural expectations in the social world. Even nonprejudiced people can participate in institutional racism quite unintentionally. For example, many schools track students into classes based on standardized test results. Minority children end up disproportionately in lower tracks for a number of reasons (see Chapter 11). Thus, a policy that is meant to give all children an equal chance ends up legitimizing the channeling of some minority group members into the lower-achieving classroom groupings.

Sometimes purposeful discrimination, called de jure discrimination or discrimination by law, is built into the law or is part of the explicit policies of an organization. Jim Crow laws, passed in the late 1800s in the United States, and laws that barred Jewish people in Germany from living, working, or investing in certain places are examples. In contrast, unintentional discrimination results from policies that have the unanticipated consequence of favoring one group and disadvantaging another. This is sometimes called de facto discrimination because there is discrimination “in fact” even if not in intent. It occurs through the meso systems. It can be more damaging than discrimination by individuals at the micro level because it is often implemented by organizational officials who are not the least bit prejudiced and may not recognize the effects of their actions (Merton 1949a). Still, those actions or policies can have sweeping consequences for minorities.

Unintentional discrimination usually occurs through one of two processes: (1) side-effect discrimination or (2) past-in-present discrimination (Feagin and Feagin 2007). 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 discrimination in the education or health care systems.

Consider the following examples of side-effect discrimination. The first is in the criminal justice and employment systems. In a 1999 interview conducted by one of the authors, a probation officer in a moderate-size 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 pleaded guilty to a lesser charge even though they were innocent because they did not think they could receive a fair verdict in that city. When people apply for jobs, however, they are required to report the conviction on the application form. By using information about an
applicant’s criminal record, employers who clearly do 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.

Thinking Sociologically

Think of the information that is used in one organization (such as a business that is hiring people) that has been provided by another institution or organization (say, the criminal justice system). How might some of that information be a source of unintended side-effect discrimination for a minority group member?

The second example of side-effect discrimination shows that the Internet also plays a role in institutional discrimination and privilege. For example, in Alaska, 15.6% of the population is Native, but Natives hold only 5% 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 2006). No affordable Internet access is available in the 164 predominantly Native villages in Alaska (Denali Commission 2001). Other options for application include requesting applications by mail, if a person knows about the opening. The usefulness of this process is limited, however, 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 try 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 the 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. The discrimination may be completely unintentional (Rothenberg 2008). Put yourself in the position of a person who does not have these privileges (McIntosh 2002:97–101):

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.

Each circle represents a different institution—family, education, religion, health, political-legal system, and economics. These meso-level systems are interdependent, using information or resources from the others. If discrimination occurs in one institution, the second institution may unintentionally borrow information that results in discrimination. In this way, discrimination occurs at the meso level without awareness by individuals at the micro level.

Figure 8.1 Side-Effect Discrimination

Children play on the porch of their rustic home with no plumbing in the rural Alaska village of Akhiok, among the Aleutian Islands. Finding jobs through the Internet is not an option from this location.
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.

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 between 1951 and 1952, the average state expenditure to educate a White child was $147 per pupil, whereas the average was $34 per Black pupil in segregated schools (Luhman and Gilman 1980). Such blatant segregation and inequality in the use of tax dollars is no longer legal. This may seem like ancient history, yet some African Americans who were in school in the 1950s and 1960s are now 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.

Why do some minority groups do better than others? New immigrants to the United States from south, central, and Eastern Europe did better than African Americans, but why? Some explanations have focused on skin color and discrimination, yet Japanese and Chinese have fared well too. To address these questions, Stanley Lieberson (1980) did an extensive study and concluded that the new immigrants and Blacks who were arriving in the U.S. North held similar aspirations for education and good jobs, but discrimination against Blacks by employers, labor unions, realtors, and others was intense due to attitudes carried over from the slave period, a case of past-in-present discrimination. Immigrants were given better jobs and chances for mobility. Furthermore, Asians experienced less discrimination because their numbers were small and they were viewed as less of a threat to White jobs, whereas Blacks flooded the job market in large numbers when they moved north and became marginalized as a result. Another factor was the context of intergroup contact. Slaves and Native Americans were forced into contact with Whites, whereas immigrants came voluntarily, usually for economic betterment. Voluntary immigrants perceived the economic conditions to be better because they chose to come. They started out with better economic prospects and more “cultural capital”—education, useful language skills, knowledge of how the social system works, and established kinship or friendship networks (Lieberson 1980). In short, historical patterns made past-in-present discrimination a reality for a very long time.

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

Change has occurred since the election in 2008 of a biracial President of the United States. Conservative commentators and many journalists are fond of saying that this means we are now in a postracial society, that race is now irrelevant. While it is true that President Obama is the nation’s first African American president, it is also true that only 1 Senator (out of 100) is Black, and he was appointed rather than elected to the office. We have also seen in Table 8.2 that college-educated African Americans earn significantly less than White college graduates. Whites with a professional degree earn about $117,787 per year, professional African Americans earn $101,376, and Hispanics with the same degree earn $82,627 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a). Note also that on a typical Sunday morning, Whites and Blacks worship separately, with multiracial churches being a rarity (Marti 2005). As long as these and many other differences continue, it is hard to support the notion that the United States is a “postracial” society.

Thinking Sociologically

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

DOMINANT AND MINORITY GROUP CONTACT: MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Economic hard times hit Germany in the 1930s, following that nation’s defeat in World War I. 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, the hate rhetoric intensified, but even then, most Jews had little idea about the fate that awaited them. Millions perished in gas chambers because the ruling Nazi party defined them as an undesirable race (although being Jewish is actually a religious or ethnic identification, not biological).
Japan has a relatively homogeneous population, but one group, the Burakumin (also called “invisible race”), have been treated as outcasts. They make up 2% of the population, about 6 million people. Because their ancestors were relegated to performing work considered ritually unclean—butchering animals, tanning skins, digging graves, and handling corpses—they lived in isolated hamlets. Today, discrimination is officially against the law, but customs persist. Ostracized and kept within certain occupations and neighborhoods, the Burakumin rarely intermarried or even socialized with other Japanese. However, today there is much more intermarriage and blending into the society in large cities (Alldritt 2000; International Humanist and Ethical Union 2009).

Mexico, Guatemala, and other Central American governments face protests by their Indian populations, descendants of the 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—usurping of their land, inability to own land, absentee land ownership, poor pay, and discrimination by the government (DePalma 1995).

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

1. Which group has more power
2. The needs of the dominant group for labor or other resources (such as land) that could be provided by the minority group, sometimes as slaves
3. The cultural norms of each group, including the level of tolerance of out-groups
4. The social histories of the groups, including their religious, political, racial, and ethnic differences
5. Physical and cultural identifiers that distinguish the groups
6. The times and circumstances (wars, economic strains, recessions)

Where power between groups in a society is unequal, the potential for differential treatment is always present. Yet some groups live in harmony whether their power is equal or not (Kitano, Aqbayani, and de Anda 2005). The Pygmies of the Ituri rainforest 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 the 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 sent Jews and other non-Aryan groups into concentration camps to be gassed. Iraqis used deadly chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in 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). From 1975 to 1979, 2 million Cambodians, almost 25% of the population, suffered genocide as a result of leaders instituting new political philosophies. In Rwanda, people of the Tutsi and Hutu tribes carried out mass killings against each other in the mid-1990s. In Darfur, a section of western Sudan in Africa, the ongoing massive genocide is continuing while powerful nations of the world do little to stop it. The United Nations estimates that 2 million Sudanese people have died, disappeared, or become refugees in other countries (R. Smith 2005). Recently, villagers in Kenya, who had lived peacefully alongside their neighbors of different tribes, began killing each other after what was declared a rigged election. Genocide has existed at many points in history, and it still exists today. These examples illustrate the lethal consequences of racism, one group systematically killing off another, often a minority, to gain control and power.

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 Hispaniola in the Caribbean. Because many Haitians are poor, they are lured by promises of jobs in the sugarcane fields of the Dominican Republic.

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**Figure 8.2** Types of Dominant-Minority Group Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Hostile to “Others”</th>
<th>Most Accepting of “Others”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genocide</td>
<td>Pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extermination of minorities</td>
<td>Groups share power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjugation</td>
<td>Cultural blending of groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppression, slavery</td>
<td>Removal to new location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Transfer</td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural blending of groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal to new location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inequality

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, which may be impossible to do on their low wages.

Slavery is one form of subjugation that has existed throughout history. When the Roman Empire defeated other lands, the captives became slaves. This included ancient Greeks, who 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, 2007).

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, and neighborhoods (Feagin and Feagin 2007; Massey and Denton 1998). Around the world, barrios, reservations, squatters' quarters, favela, and even regions of a country (e.g., Tibet) are sometimes maintained by the dominant group, usually unofficially but sometimes officially, which serves to isolate minorities in poor or overcrowded areas.

Domestic colonialism refers to exploitation of minority groups within a country (Blauner 1972; Kitano et al. 2005). African Brazilians and Native Americans in the United States and Canada have been “domestically colonized groups”—managed and manipulated by members of the dominant group.

Population transfer refers to the removal, often forced, of a minority group from a region or country. Generally, the dominant group wants land, or resources, or political and 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, 36 hours to pack their bags and leave, under threat that they would be arrested or killed. Many found homes in England, while others went to India. For the thousands who were born and raised in Uganda, this expulsion was a cruel act, barring them from their homeland. Because the Asian population had great economic resources, the primary motivation for their expulsion was to regain economic power for Africans. Their departure, however, 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” along which 40% 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. Many Afghani people fled to Pakistan to escape oppression by the ruling Taliban and—in 2001—to escape U.S. bombing. Today, civilians along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border still suffer displacement.

Movements of people and activities “that cross state borders, such as human migrations, flow of ideas and information, and movements of money and credit” are referred to as transnationalism (Calhoun 2002). This involves 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

Beginning in February 2003, there has been a massive genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan (eastern Africa), where the international community has not been effective in stopping the slaughter. Some people have survived in refugee camps with almost no food and little water, in “homes” like these.
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 social and cultural merging of minority and majority groups, a process by which minority members may lose most of their original identity. Interaction among racial and ethnic groups occurs in housing, schooling, employment, political circles, family groups, friendship, and social relationships (Kitano et al. 2005). 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.

However, forced assimilation occurs when a minority group is compelled to suppress its identity. This happened in Spain around the time of World War II, when the Basque people were forbidden by the central government to speak or study the Basque language. For several centuries—ending only a few decades ago—the British government tried to stamp out the Welsh language from Wales. 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 but has recognized equity in the society. For example, Switzerland 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. In Malaysia, 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. While tensions do exist, both Switzerland and Malaysia represent examples of pluralist societies. Legal protection of smaller or less powerful groups is often necessary to have pluralism. In the United States, pluralism as a policy was first embraced by the nation’s first president, George Washington, as is explained in the “Sociology in Our Social World” on page 264.

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 with dominant groups that can affect people’s lives as transitions take place.

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**Thinking Sociologically**

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 the issues raised in your examples?

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**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 meso-level organizations is helpful, and to understand the pervasive nature of prejudice and stereotypes over time in various societies, cultural explanations are useful. Although some 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, as the United States set out to build a railroad, large numbers of laborers immigrated from China to do the hard manual work. When the railroad was completed and competition for jobs became stiff, 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. (Non-Chinese Asian groups suffered discrimination as well because the bigoted generalizations were applied to all Asians [Winders 2004].)

Why does discrimination occur? Conflict theorists argue that creating a “lesser” group protects the dominant group’s advantages. Because 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
Inequality and physical differences and are therefore ready targets for prejudice and discrimination, especially in times of economic competition and slowing economies. This helps keep many of 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, with the pool often made up of identifiable minority groups. This pool allows people to remain in their higher-level positions and prevents others from moving up in the stratification system.

Three critical factors contribute to hostility over resources, according to one conflict theorist (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 unavoidable.

What happens is that the group with more power uses that power to ensure that its members (and their offspring) get the most valued resources. However, because they do not want to see themselves as unfair and brutish people, they develop stereotypes and derogatory characterizations of “those other people” so that it seems reasonable and justified not to give “them” access to the resources. 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 salaries and good advancement possibilities, whereas the secondary market involves undesirable, hard, and 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 up 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 lesser 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 among themselves—hence, the split labor market (Bonacich 1972, 1976). This theory maintains that competition, prejudice, and ethnic animosity serve the interests of capitalists because that atmosphere keeps the laboring classes from uniting.

Conflict theory has also been used to illuminate issues of ethnic hostility on other continents, for this theory has wide application. Kichiro Iwamoto, who does sociological work on race relations issues in Africa and elsewhere, discusses the conflicts in Africa in the next “Sociology in Our Social World” on page 266.

Conflict theory has taught us a great deal about racial and ethnic stratification. However, conflict theorists often focus on people with power quite intentionally oppressing others 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 and past-in-present discrimination, privilege and disgrivilege are often subtle and unconscious, which means they can continue even without ill will among those in the dominant group. Their privilege has been 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 or menial unskilled jobs, 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
In January 2008, violence gripped Kenya as rival political leaders representing different ethnic groups fought for control of the country in a contested election. Former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan said, while visiting western Kenya during the unrest, “What we saw was heart-wrenching. We saw houses burning, grandmothers and children being pushed out of their homes, and people suffering everywhere.” He told the rival political leaders to resolve the political conflict as the violence was out of control in the country (UPI 2008).

At a small Assembly of God church in Kiambaa, Kenya, armed men trapped Kikuyu women, children, and elderly people inside, barricaded all the doors, and burned the building down, killing an estimated 50 people. The attackers were reported to be members of a rival tribe, the Kalenjin (Gettleman 2008). The scientific eye of sociology can identify the key variables in this complex, tragic event.

Political conflicts over power can incite age-old rivalries and erupt into genocide, systematic killing of “others.” These ethnic differences between the tribal groups in Kenya generated prejudice and negative contact, with the Kalenjin and Kikuyu attacking each other. Tribalism leads to discrimination against other tribes that are viewed as economic and power rivals, “different,” and often inferior, and then resentments result in reprisals. The violence is perpetuated in a vicious cycle of “we” versus “they” animosity.

What are some meso- and macro-level sociological factors that could be contributing to this massacre? As in most ethnic conflicts, economic and political factors contribute to a violent racial or ethnic event. In Kenya, the mob violence and social chaos may have been advantageous for those in high political positions as the “reign of terror” kept frightened people from protesting the controversial national election of December 2007. “President Mwai Kibaki’s electoral victory, seen by the opposition as fraudulent, triggered days of ugly tribal violence,” one report said (Los Angeles Times 2008). The tribal violence kept the population fragmented, weakening any opposition and challenge to the current political structure. The situation was also exacerbated by roads that are too dangerous to use so that help could not reach villages, tremendous food scarcity in many parts of the country, and many citizens struggling for survival rather than focusing on immediate political justice.

Some argue that the roots of these (Kenyan) conflicts are not tribal. “A tribe in Africa is a particular (social) identity construction created by colonial powers in an effort to more easily dominate the population. Ethnicity is a group of people who share a common identity, rituals, and most commonly, language. There are ethnic differences in Kenya, however constructed, but they are commonly trumped by kinship, class, labor, religion and even geographic identities” (Marcus 2008). Still, it is clear that the horrific violence is rooted in conflicts over scarce resources and defense of the self-interests of one group against another.

Thinking Sociologically

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 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 institutions and organizations and must be dealt with through structural change. They argue that hard work is necessary but not sufficient for minorities to succeed.

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 (Schaefer 2008).
Chapter 8. Race and Ethnic Group Stratification: Beyond “We” and “They”

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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 stereotypes about them, selective perception reinforces the stereotypes, prejudices, and labels we have learned.

Cultural beliefs help 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, but beliefs alone do not lead to inequality. The phenomenon of symbolic racism in contemporary North America is a good example: The assertion that a society is already fair prevents an honest look at institutional discrimination, which operates so subtly and so pervasively at the meso and macro levels of society.

The Effects of Prejudice, Racism, and Discrimination

Pictures of starving orphans from Sudan and Ethiopia and broken families from war-torn Bosnia and Darfur 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 for 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, these citizens cannot use their full potential to contribute to society. In 2008, 46.3 million (or 15.4%) of U.S. citizens did not have health insurance (U.S. Census Bureau 2009f). The number of uninsured children is 8.3 million and growing (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2006). Yet the United States spends 16% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health care, the highest expenditure in the world. Still, the inequities in health care coverage are striking: 13% of Whites are without care, but the figure for African Americans is 21% and for Hispanics 34% (James et al. 2007).

Second, government subsidies cost millions in the form of welfare, food stamps, and imprisonment, but they 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 their concerns. Table 8.3 shows the representation of ethnic groups in Congress.

Indian women (originally from the state of Rajasthan) inspect red chili peppers and other spices, a niche market to make a living in the United States and Canada.

Sudanese children wait in line to receive food in the Sudanese refugee camp of Narus. A worldwide study by UNICEF reveals that some 5.6 million children die every year in part because they do not consume enough of the right nutrients and 146 million children are at risk of dying early because they are underweight.
Table 8.3  Representation in the U.S. Congress, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center on Congress (2009).

Thinking Sociologically

How might lack of health care and insurance affect other aspects of a person's life (work, family life, education)? Give some examples of how one's self-interests might be underrepresented in policy decisions if there is low representation of one's ethnicity in Congress.

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, although there has been more opportunity in basketball than in other sports (Eitzen and Sage 2003; Sage 2005). The number of African American and Mexican American actors and artists has increased, but the number of minority 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). Because 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 society are the poorer for it.

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 are micro-level responses. They do not address the meso- and macro-level issues.

Assimilation is an accommodation to prejudice and discrimination. 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 their own culture and turning their 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 as defined by their roots 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 included “whitening creams” or “skin bleaches.” Light-colored people with African ancestry would bleach their skin to pass as White. Skin-whitening creams can be found today on pharmacy shelves in many countries. Dissatisfaction with one’s body can have an impact on one’s self-concept.

Acceptance is another common reaction to minority status. Some minority groups have learned to live with their minority status with little overt challenge to the system. They may or may not hold deep-seated hostility, but they ultimately conclude that change in the society is not very likely and acceptance may be the rational means to survive within the existing system.

There are many possible explanations for this seeming indifference. For example, religious beliefs allow poor Hindus in India to believe that if they accept their lot in life, they will be reincarnated in a higher life-form. If they rebel, they can expect to be reincarnated into a lower life-form. Their religion is a form of social control.

Unfortunately, many children are socialized to believe that they are inferior or superior because minority group members are expected by the dominant group to behave in certain ways and often live up to that expectation because of the self-fulfilling prophesy (Farley 2009). Evidence to support stereotypes is easily found in individual cases—inferior” kids live in shabby houses, dress less well, speak a different dialect. At school and on the job, minority position is reaffirmed by these characteristics.

Avoidance means shunning all contact with the dominant group. This can involve an active and organized attempt to leave the culture or live separately as some political exiles have done. In the United States, Marcus Garvey organized a Back-to-Africa movement in the 1920s, encouraging Blacks
to give up on any hope of justice in American society and to return to Africa. Native Americans continually moved west in the 19th century—trying to or being forced to get away from the White Anglo settlers, who brought alcohol and deadly diseases. In some cases, withdrawal may mean dropping out of 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 from 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 oppressors in war is not always possible. Indeed, direct confrontation can be very costly to those lacking political or economic power. Suicide bombers from Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan represent the many disaffected youth who are frustrated and angry over their situations, with no means to fight back, express their anger, or bring about change.

Aggression usually takes one of two forms, indirect aggression or displaced aggression. Indirect aggression includes 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 dominant group by acting against the other minority groups to protest against their frustrating circumstances and limited resources.

The four responses discussed thus far address the angst and humiliation that individual minorities feel. Each strategy allows an individual person to try to cope, but none addresses the structural causes of discrimination. The final strategy is change-oriented action. 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. Minority groups pursue social change in the meso- and macro-level structures of society.

Nonviolent Resistance: Institutional and Societal Policy for Change

Another technique for bringing about change at the institutional and societal levels 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. Cesar 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.

In the United States, Martin Luther King Jr. followed in the nonviolent resistance tradition of India’s Gandhi, who sought to change India’s laws so that 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 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sought to bring about legal changes through lawsuits that created new legal precedents supporting racial equality. Often, these lawsuits addressed 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). Like King, who had an undergraduate degree in sociology, many sociologists have used their training to address issues of discrimination and disprivilege through empowerment and change.

Some other minority individuals have used their sociology degrees in business, both to enhance their own competence in the business world and to help their ethnic communities. One example is the work of David Staddon, who writes about his applications of sociology in consulting, administration, and business. See the next “Applied Sociologist at Work.”

### The Applied Sociologist at Work—Native American Cultures and Applied Sociology in Business

By David Staddon

I have had several positions in Indian Country, beginning with the YMCA of Michigan’s Native American Outreach Project. The program worked with every tribe in Michigan and included urban youth leadership development, family enhancement, and the preservation of traditional cultural values and behaviors. I left that position to attend graduate school at Central Michigan University where I eventually became director of their Native American Programs Office. Since then I have worked with a number of indigenous nations, including the Saginaw Chippewa in Michigan and the Northern Arapaho in Wyoming. A person with sociological/intercultural skills can have a distinct advantage in the marketplace, especially considering the changing demographics in the U.S. This is especially true where there are cultural intersections involved, and I experienced many of those working with native nations.

One of the first challenges (of many) that I needed to overcome was the fact that 98% of all our casino customers in Wyoming were tribal members. That really did not help the Arapaho people since we were simply churning money through the local economy. We needed to diversify our customer base and bring in “outside” money. Many organizations currently talk about “re-engineering their corporate culture” to be more friendly and accessible to minority groups. I was faced with the interesting challenge of creating an atmosphere where non-Indians felt safe, secure, and comfortable in our gaming environment, rather like “reverse engineering.”

The situation was further complicated by the fact that I am from a different tribe than the Arapahos. Most people (including sociologists) have scant understanding of the intercultural differences between Indian tribes—an important factor in having a successful career in Indian Country. So I had to learn to deal with intersections between Arapaho-Ottawa-Mainstream-Male/female-Corporate values, outlooks, and behaviors. My challenge was to build a corporate culture that took all these factors into consideration and led to financial success of the business. So some of my first priorities were in image development and customer service.

Having spoken with many white folks in Riverton, I came away with the distinct view that many (if not all) of them felt that the casino was an unsafe place. I was told, “If I win money, I’ll just get knocked in the head in the parking lot.” We had to do many things to change the image, including designing a new logo for the casino and providing snazzy uniforms for all the staff. The logo was on everything, so we could unify the corporate image. I instituted customer service training and standards for interaction with customers, installed more lights in the parking lot, and started an escort service (not that kind!) where, upon request, our security staff would escort customers to their cars in the parking lot. I also took pictures of our security staff and developed some advertising materials emphasizing friendliness, safety, and security. I got active with the local chamber of commerce, establishing relationships with local business and opinion leaders.
By the time I left, we had experienced a completed turn-around with the business—both from the financial standpoint and its customer base. Our customer base is now over 90% non-Native, and we were bringing millions of dollars into the local native community. Prior to this, the casino had only had two years of profitability out of twelve.

A lot of other peripheral efforts went into developing the organization and improving its image. In short, we worked with “image-management” ideas from Goffman and notions of how people define a situation—a central idea in symbolic interactionism. I was doing applied sociology to help this business venture work—a business venture that also helped a minority community.

My background in social sciences was vital in melding the cultural considerations which contributed to an organizational culture conducive to employee creativity, success, and enjoyment. My training and education in social science has had direct relevance for my various jobs. One interesting aspect of applied social science in business is the examination of corporate culture and its relationship to behavior, public image, policies, planning, and other organizational behavior. A liberal arts education is becoming increasingly important in the U.S. workplace, especially one that emphasizes cross-cultural understanding. For me, coupling this knowledge with my business skills was the key to success.

Note: David Staddon is a member of the Wikwemikong Band of Ottawa Indians, located on Manitoulin Island, Lake Huron, Georgian Bay, Southern Ontario. David has been working with “first-nation” governments most of his working life. With a bachelor’s degree in sociology/social science and a master’s in administration, he is well prepared to deal with native issues. He now works with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe near Massena, New York, as their Director of Public Information.

Thinking Sociologically

The discussion above presents five types of responses by minorities to the experience of discrimination and rejection. Four of these are at the micro level and only one at the meso and macro levels. Why do you suppose most of the coping strategies of minorities are at the micro level?

Policies Governing Minority and Dominant Group Relations

Civilians, mostly women, children, and elderly people, are fleeing the Darfur region of Sudan in great numbers, trying to find a degree of safety, food, and shelter after people in their villages have been slaughtered by bullets and machetes. Towns have been pillaged and bombed, and planting fields have been burned (Polgreen 2008). Most of the 45,000 survivors are seeking refuge in camps in eastern Chad, places already crowded with more than 300,000 survivors (United Nations Commission on Human Rights 2006a). Darfur, Sudan, is only one recent site of war resulting in refugees. Kenya is also experiencing internal refugee displacement as a result of conflicts over the recent elections. In the 1990s, residents fled from Albania, Bosnia, Cuba, Haiti, Rwanda, Zaire, and other nations.

These conflicts are complex and represent different ethnic and religious groups fighting for power, land, and resources. For our purposes, the important point is that the refugees come from minority groups in the country, civilians caught in a conflict they cannot control.

War, famine, and economic dislocation force families to seek new locations where they can survive and perhaps improve their circumstances. About 17 countries have policies to host or accept refugees from war-torn countries as new citizens. Refugees who cannot return home may end up in a new country, perhaps on a new continent.

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, finding solutions to ethnic tensions around the world leaves many experts baffled. Consider the ethnic strife in Bosnia and Croatia in Eastern Europe; conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis in the Middle East; conflicts between Shiites and Sunni Muslims in Iraq; tribal genocide in Kenya, Sudan, and Rwanda in 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 policymakers 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 Solutions

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 level, the more likely they are to respect and like others and to 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 and focus on individuals, not judging of groups.

Two groups with strong multicultural education programs are the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance Program. Both groups provide schools and community organizations with literature, videos, and other materials aimed at combating intolerance and discrimination toward others.

However, these strategies do not address the social conditions underlying the problems because they reach only a few people. 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 and break down stereotypes and fears. Although not all contact reduces prejudice, many studies have shown the benefits of contact. Some essential conditions for success are equal status of the participants, noncompetitive and nonterrorning contact, and projects or goals on which to cooperate (Farley 2009).

In a classic study of group contact, social psychologists Muzafer Sherif and Caroline Sherif (1953) and their colleagues ran summer camps for boys of ages 11 and 12 and studied how groups were established and reestablished. On 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. The experimenters tried several methods to resolve the conflicts and tensions:

1. **Appealing to higher values (be nice to your neighbors):** This proved of limited value.
2. **Talking with the natural leaders of the groups (compromises between group leaders):** The group leaders agreed, but their followers did not go along.
3. **Bringing the groups together in a pleasant situation (a mutually rewarding situation):** This did not reduce competition; if anything, it increased it.
4. **Introducing a superordinate goal that could be achieved only if everyone cooperated:** This technique worked. The boys were presented with a dilemma: The water system had broken, or a fire needed to be put out, and all were needed to solve the problem. The groups not only worked together, but their established stereotypes eventually began to fade away. Such a situation in a community might arise from efforts to get a candidate elected, a bill passed, or a neighborhood improved. At the global macro level, hostile countries sit together to solve issues.

Programs involving group contact to improve conditions for minorities have been tried in many areas of social life, including integrated housing projects, job programs to promote minority hiring, and busing children to schools, 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 tend to improve relations in groups on a micro level by breaking down stereotypes, but to solidify these 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). Groups such as the NAACP and ACLU have filed lawsuits and lobbied legislators for changes in laws that they believed were discriminatory.

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 the passage of civil rights legislation and equal employment opportunity legislation. Affirmative action laws, first implemented during Lyndon Johnson’s administration, have been used to fight pervasive institutional racism (Crosby 2004; Farley 2009).

**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. A societal policy for change, affirmative action actually involves three different policies. Its simplest and original form, which we call strict affirmative action, involves taking 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 the job requires an employee with a college education, then by federal law, employers must recruit through minority and women’s colleges as well as state and private colleges in the region. If employers are hiring in the suburbs, they are obliged to contact unemployment agencies in poor and minority communities as well as those in the affluent neighborhoods. After taking these required extra steps, employers are expected to hire the most qualified candidate who applies, regardless 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 where a court has found a company to have a substantial and sustained history of discrimination against minorities and where the employment position does not 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. Preference policies are based on the concept of equity, the belief that sometimes people must be treated differently in order to treat them fairly. This policy was enacted to level the playing field, which was not rewarding highly competent people because of institutional racism.

The objectives of preference policies are to (a) eliminate qualifications that are not substantially related to the job but that unwittingly favor members of the dominant group and (b) 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. 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’s, 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 the merit of applicants.

Likewise, an African American police officer may have more credibility in a minority neighborhood and may be able to defuse 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.

A 1996 proposition in California to eliminate affirmative action programs in the state was passed in a popular referendum. The result was that colleges in California are allowed to offer preference to applicants based on state residency, athletic competency, musical skill, having had a parent graduate from the school, and many other factors—but not race or ethnicity. Many colleges and universities admit students because they need an outstanding point guard on the basketball team, an extraordinary soprano for the college choir, or a student from a distant state for geographic diversity. These students are shown preference by being admitted with lower test scores than some other applicants because they are “differently qualified.”

A landmark case filed in a Detroit district court in 1997 alleged that the University of Michigan gave unlawful preference to minorities in undergraduate admissions and in law school admissions. In this controversial case, the court ruled that these undergraduate admissions...
were discriminatory because numbers rather than individualized judgments were used to make the determination (University of Michigan Documents Center 2003). Consider the next “Engaging Sociology” on page 276 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 result in reverse discrimination. Others believe that 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.

**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. In this attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, a center housing national and international businesses and workers, citizens from 90 countries were killed when two hijacked commercial jetliners crashed into the towers. In addition to the worldwide condemnation of the attack, 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 the rich and poor peoples of the world. The perpetrators likely felt that Muslims were treated as inconsequential players in the global world and their values and way of life were threatened. 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 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since that time, many international organizations have been established, often under the auspices of the United Nations, to deal with health issues, world poverty and debt, trade, security, and many other issues affecting world citizens—World Health Organization, World Bank, World Trade Organization, and numerous regional trade and security organizations.

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 political prisoners and ethnic group spokespeople. When Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, the group’s visibility was dramatically increased. Even some activist sociologists have formed groups such as Sociologists Without Borders, or SSF (Sociólogos sin Fronteras; www.sociologistswithoutborders.org), a transnational organization committed to the idea that “all people have equal rights to political and legal protections, to socioeconomic security, to self-determination, and to their personality.”

Everyone can make a positive difference in the world, and one place to start is in our community (see “Contributing to Your 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.
Engaging Sociology

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 that they were not admitted because others had replaced them on the roster due to their racial or ethnic background.

The University of Michigan is a huge university, so a numbering system is needed to handle the volume (tens of thousands) of applicants; the authorities 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 are possible:

- 80 points for grades (a particular grade point average [GPA] in high school would result in a set number of points: 80 points for a 4.0 GPA, 56 points for a 2.8 GPA)
- 12 points for standardized test scores (ACT or SAT)
- 10 points for the academic rigor of the 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 are possible for any combination of the following (but no more than 40 in this “desired qualities” category):

- Geographical distribution (10 for Michigan resident, an additional 6 for underrepresented Michigan county)
- Legacy—a relative had attended Michigan (4 points for a parent, 1 for a 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 for the son or daughter of a large financial donor or 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 important to the university are also considered. Some schools also give points for being a military veteran. 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.

* * * * * *

Answer the following questions:

1. Does this process seem reasonable as a way to get a diverse and highly talented incoming class of students? Why or why not?
2. Does it disadvantage some students? Explain how.
3. How would you design a fair system of admissions, and what other factors would you consider?
Socioeconomic inequality combines with racial and ethnic disadvantages to create some problems for a society. However, a full understanding of inequality also requires insights into discrimination based on gender. In some ways, the most intriguing topic is the issues that arise when we look at the intersection and overlapping of race, class, and gender.

What Have We Learned?

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 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 with others, 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.

Key Points

- Although the concept of race has no real meaning biologically, race is a social construction because people believe it is real. (See pp. 246–251.)
- Minority group status—having less power and less access to resources—may occur because of racial status or because of ethnic (cultural) factors. (See pp. 251–253.)
- Prejudice operates at the micro level of society and is closest to people’s own lives, but it has much less impact on minorities than discrimination. Symbolic racism has become a significant problem—the denial of overt prejudice but the rejection of any policies that might correct inequities. (See pp. 253–257.)

- At the meso level, institutional discrimination operates through two processes: side effect and past-present. These forms of discrimination are unintended and unconscious—operating quite separately from any prejudice of individuals in the society. (See pp. 257–260.)
- When very large ethnic groups or even nations collide, some people are typically displaced and find themselves in minority status. (See pp. 260–261.)
- The policies of the dominant group may include genocide, subjugation, population transfer, assimilation, or pluralism. (See pp. 261–264.)
- The costs of racism to society are high, including loss of human talent and resources, and these costs make life more difficult for minority group members. (See pp. 267–268.)
- The coping devices used by minorities include five strategies: assimilation, acceptance, avoidance, aggression, and organizing for societal change. Only one of these, organizing for societal change, addresses the meso- and macro-level causes. (See pp. 268–271.)
- Policies to address problems of prejudice and discrimination range from individual and small-group efforts at the micro level to institutional, societal, and even global social movements. (See pp. 271–274.)
- Affirmative action policies are one approach, but the broad term affirmative action includes three different sets of policies that are quite distinct and have different outcomes. (See pp. 274–276.)
Contributing to Our Social World: What Can We Do?

At the Local Level

African American Student Associations, Arab American Student Associations, and Native American Student Associations: Most campuses have student organizations dedicated to fighting racism and promoting the rights of racial minorities. Identify one of these groups on your campus and arrange to attend a meeting. If appropriate, volunteer to help with its work.

At the Organizational or Institutional Level

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: This is a national coalition dedicated to combating racism and its effects. It maintains a Web site that includes a directory of more than 100 local chapters (www.civilrights.org). Explore ways in which you can participate in these programs.

Teaching Tolerance (www.splcenter.org/center/tt/teach.jsp): This program of the Southern Poverty Law Center has curriculum materials for teaching about diversity and a program for enhancing cross-ethnic cooperation and dialogue in schools. Check into internships in local primary and secondary schools, and explore with them ways in which the Teaching for Tolerance approach can be incorporated into the curricula.

At the National and Global Levels

American Indian Movement (AIM; www.aimovement.org): This highly activist organization has worked for many years to bring the plight of Native Americans to the attention of the public and the government and to promote the civil/human rights of community members. Explore ways in which you can assist in the community's educational and legislative initiatives.

Cultural Survival and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (www.cs.org and www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii): Organizations such as these provide opportunities for combating racism globally. You should also consider purchasing only coffee and, especially, chocolate that are Fair Trade products (packages are clearly marked as such).

Amnesty International (www.amnestyusa.org or www.amnesty.org): This worldwide movement of people campaigns for internationally recognized human rights. It relies heavily on volunteer workers.

For chapter-specific resources, including Frontline, TED, and YouTube videos; self-quizzes; web exercises; and more, visit www.pineforge.com/ballantine3e.