

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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The Difference Race Makes: Outcomes and Causes

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THE UNITED STATES IS A MULTIRACIAL NATION

About 250 million people lived in the United States in 1990. Of these, almost 30 million (12%) were African Americans. Another 20 million (8%) were Hispanics with ancestors in Latin America. Asian Americans have been growing rapidly in numbers and totaled about 7 million (3%). More than 1.5 million Native Americans (0.6%) lived in the United States. Figure 2.1 shows how immigration changed in the 1980s, compared to the 1950s. Two out of three immigrants in the 1950s came

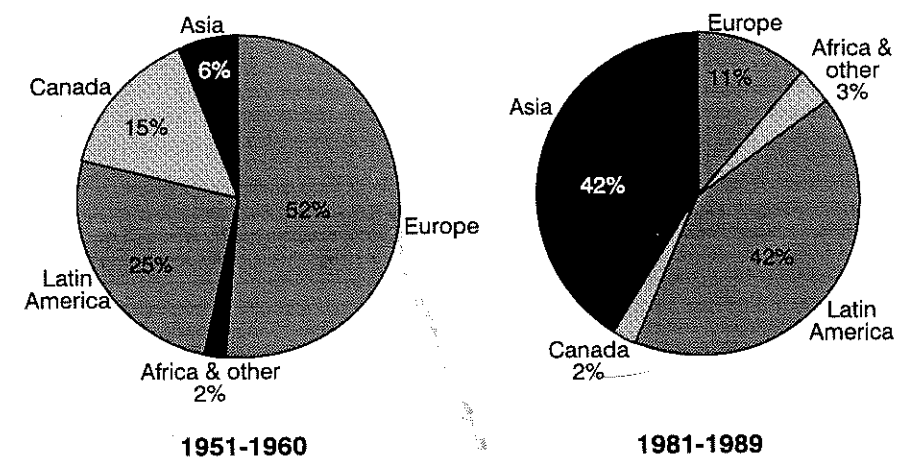


FIG. 2.1. Sources of U.S. immigrants, 1950s and 1980s. From O'Hare & Felt (1991).
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from Canada and Europe. In the 1980s, seven immigrants in eight came from Asia and Latin America. By the year 2000, Asian Americans will be at least 4% of the U.S. population, and Hispanics 10%. In some states, including California (the largest), whites will no longer be in the numerical majority. This has already happened in Hawaii. The United States is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic society, and it is becoming more diverse.

The previous paragraph relies on terms—*African Americans*, *Hispanics*, *Asian Americans*, *Native Americans*—that do not work very well. Classification is most difficult for Hispanics. Many Hispanics consider themselves—and are considered by others—to be people of color. But the term *Hispanic* does not refer to a racial category, and Hispanics can be of any “race.” When asked, more than half classify themselves “white,” about one tenth say “black,” a few say “Asian,” a few say “Native American” or “American Indian,” and growing numbers say “other” or “Hispanic”—some because they do not agree with labeling people by race. Filipinos may end up being classified as Asian Americans or Hispanics. Hispanics vary from prosperous Cuban American business leaders in Florida and New Jersey, who usually vote Republican, to very poor Mexican and Mexican American migrant farm workers in California, who do not vote at all. Puerto Ricans, especially numerous in New York City and New Jersey, enter the United States without immigrating, because Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States. Hispanics also include people from Spain who, like immigrants from Latin America, have Hispanic surnames and speak the Spanish language, but who resemble other European immigrants more closely than they do refugees from Central America. Some Hispanics use the term *Latino* to exclude Europeans.

Like Hispanics, Asian Americans come from many different countries. Large numbers originally came from Japan and China. Others are from the Philippines, Samoa, and other Pacific islands. Also, the Census Bureau now classes immigrants from India, Iran, Iraq, and nearby countries as “Asian Americans,” although they are not “Orientals” according to the old “Negro–Oriental–Caucasian” racial classification.

Columbus named Native Americans “Indians” because he thought he had reached the East Indies, or at least wanted others to think so. In the last 20 years, some Indians in the United States have rejected the term and called themselves Native Americans. Others, including the American Indian Movement (AIM), stick with the term *Indians*. Because Native people use both, this chapter also uses both terms. As with other groups, Native Americans self-report their racial identity. Owing to intermarriage, increasing numbers of Indians also have European and African ancestors. During times in our history when to be Indian meant to face exceptional social pressure, the number of Americans who claimed to be Native declined. Since AIM, more Americans identify themselves as Native. Terms like *half-breed* are offensive, however, because they are typically applied to animals.¹

¹These terms also offend because they emphasize the biological component of “Indianness,” whereas Native Americans stress that Indian identity is primarily social and cultural (Churchill, 1992a).

Majority and *minority* are other problematic words. Some people of color take offense when called “minority” Americans. They argue that people referred to in America as “minorities” are in the majority worldwide. They also note that conferring majority status on whites may imply that others are supposed to acculturate to white culture, whereas actually the majority culture has been influenced by all groups and is thus culturally plural.² At the same time, Caucasians assuredly are not translucent, and the term *people of color* is not an accurate synonym for *minority* either.

Thus, apparently simple matters like terms prove not to be simple at all. The census relies on self-identification, and people can misreport their race (and other facts) if they want to. Increasing numbers of people of mixed racial ancestry refuse to choose any one of their backgrounds listed on the census form, and instead select “other.”

BUT WHAT IS “RACE”?

As the last few paragraphs imply, “race” is hard to define. Biologically, all humans are one species. In the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, social scientists and biologists tried to define distinct races, by which they usually meant people who looked different and were presumed to behave differently, supposedly owing to different innate capabilities. Some proposed three races: “Mongoloid” or “Oriental,” “Negroid,” and “Caucasoid.” Others pointed out that Australian Aborigines did not really fit into these three. The Khoisan people (Khoi and San, formerly called “Hottentots and Bushmen” by Europeans) in South Africa did not fit in either. Native Americans might be “Oriental,” but the relationship is not very close, so some classifiers listed them as a distinct race. Some smaller groups, such as the Pygmies and Watutsi in Central Africa and Ainu in Northern Japan, also provided problems for the classifiers. Thus, depending on the scientist, there were three, four, five, or as many as three dozen distinct races.

What about ethnic groups? Were the Irish a race? In the 19th century some people called them one. Nazis claimed that the Jews were a race, as were the Rom (also called “Gypsies”). Finally, overt racists claimed that each group except their own had unfortunate characteristics, probably innate, and made racial and ethnic terms into slurs—for example, to “nigger-rig” (fix temporarily and poorly), “welsh” on a bet, to “jew” down a price, or to “gyp” someone.

Even before the horror of the Third Reich’s “final solution” to its “Jewish” and “Gypsy problems” became clear, such racist thinking was losing prestige in the biological and social sciences. Anthropologists pointed out that, biologically, what we mean by a “race” merely indicates a period of relative isolation from the world’s overall human genetic pool. Because this isolation has never been total, racial purity does not and cannot exist. Within the United States, at least 70% to 80% of “black”

²Following Nigerian American anthropologist John Ogbu and others, I still use the term *minority* but often substitute the term *people of color*.

people have some European ancestry, and at least 20% of "whites" have some recent African ancestry.³

Socially, the definition is clearer: A race is any group of people who share physical characteristics that are used to determine social status. Thus, the definition lies in the culture of the group doing the defining. In most countries that formerly practiced racial slavery, like Brazil and South Africa, persons of mixed African-European or African-European-Native American ancestry were assigned to positions between "black" and "white." The United States has been unusual in labeling people legally black if they had one eighth black ancestry—that is, if one of their eight great-grandparents were black. But because that great-grandparent may have been only one eighth black him- or herself, the definitions of black and white end up with inconsistent genealogical components. Some people thus designated black in the United States look entirely white.

The conclusion must be that the social meanings of race, not the biological, are the important ones (see Berkowitz & Barrington, chap. 1, this volume).

RACE IS MEANINGFUL IN THE UNITED STATES

Racial and ethnic group memberships, socially defined, assuredly influence basic life chances in the United States. For example, Anglos murdered Chinese Americans by the score in race riots in the West in the 19th century. The federal government interned California's Japanese Americans in what U.S. Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts called "concentration camps" during World War II. White ethnic groups, such as Irish Americans in New England and Italian Americans in Louisiana, have sometimes faced severe discrimination in American society. Dwelling on victimization in the past is pointless, according to Huggins and Kilson (1971), black sociologists who liken it to "biting on an aching tooth, sucking pleasure from the pain" (p. 15). Thus, there is little point in playing the "who has been most victimized" game. Nonetheless, in his important book, *Minority Education and Caste* (1978), Ogbu observed that, historically, the United States (and its predecessor European colonies) systematically attacked Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Using force, European Americans took the land of the first two groups and the labor of the third. As part of the process of justifying American history, European Americans have therefore systematically stigmatized these groups as inferior. That is why Ogbu called Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans "caste minorities." *Caste* means a group locked in place in a hierarchy with almost no way for individuals to move up or down. This has accurately described these three groups for most of their history in the United States. Also, unlike Irish, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese Americans, until recently the caste minorities could not point to strong foreign

³Since humans probably originated in Africa, all of us have distant African ancestry.

nations as their point of origin.⁴

If, in the minds of whites, there is a stigma attached to being black, Indian, or Hispanic (particularly Mexican American), and if whites control most institutions in the society (most colleges, companies, religious organizations, governmental agencies, etc.), then to be defined as black, Indian, or Hispanic is a disadvantage. Race will then correlate with many other social variables.

Minorities have less than their fair share of power and receive less than their share of money, status, and other societal rewards. Median family income is even more important. Because money is the key to so many things in our society, median family income is probably the single most important statistic to examine. Figure 2.2 shows median family incomes for European Americans and for Ogbu's three caste minorities. These latter three groups—African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics—make far less money, on average, than do non-Hispanic whites. The median income of black families was only 57% of the income for white families. Indians and Hispanics averaged about 65% of white income per capita.⁵

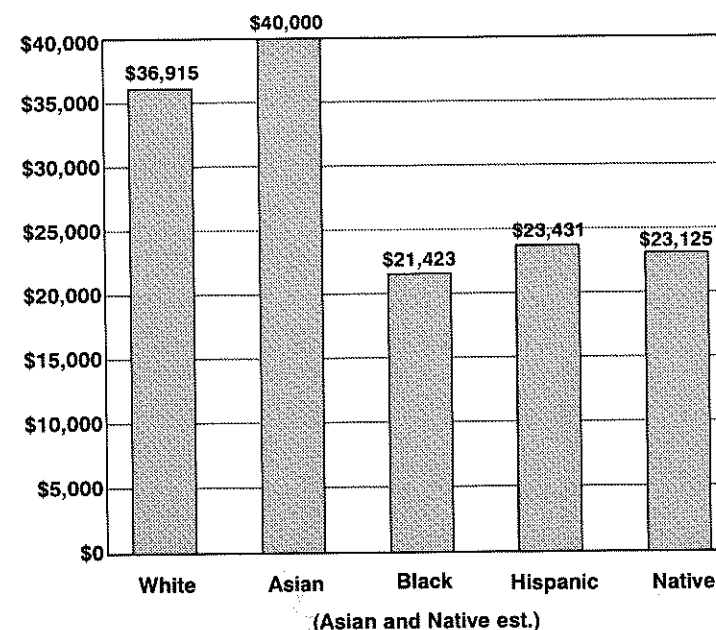


FIG. 2.2. 1990 median family income, by race. Data from Census Bureau.

⁴American Indian nations have not been independent since at least 1890 (Brown, 1971). Most African nations were under colonial rule until the 1960s and are still unequal partners in the global setting. Mexico has been independent but clearly under United States influence; the United States sent troops to Mexico 11 times during Woodrow Wilson's presidency alone. Of course, in the precolonial past all three groups can point to important accomplishments.

⁵Although some Hispanics do not fit Ogbu's definition of caste minority, sources usually describe Hispanics as a group. Mexican Americans comprise about 62% of all Hispanics, Puerto Ricans 13%, Cubans 5%, and those from other Latin American countries 12%.

Income buys access to everything from attorneys to the Boy Scouts to computer camps to dictionaries to x-rays to Yellowstone to zoos. African American, Hispanic, and Native American families lag in their use of all these things. Ultimately, money buys life itself, in the form of better nutrition and health care and freedom from danger and stress. Thus, it comes as no surprise that African and Native Americans have median life expectancies at birth that are several years less than that of whites (see Fig 2.3).⁶

Many of these differences in income and life expectancy come about because many people of color hold very low-paying jobs or no jobs at all. Figure 2.4 shows unemployment for African Americans and Native Americans, compared to European Americans. On some Indian reservations and in some urban ghettos, unemployment among young men reaches 75%.

In turn, young men without jobs are the group most likely to commit crimes. African Americans are arrested more, are convicted still more often, and serve longer jail terms than do European Americans. The statistics showing higher rates of incarceration among African Americans, summarized in Fig. 2.5, indicate different treatment by race within the criminal justice system but also reflect a

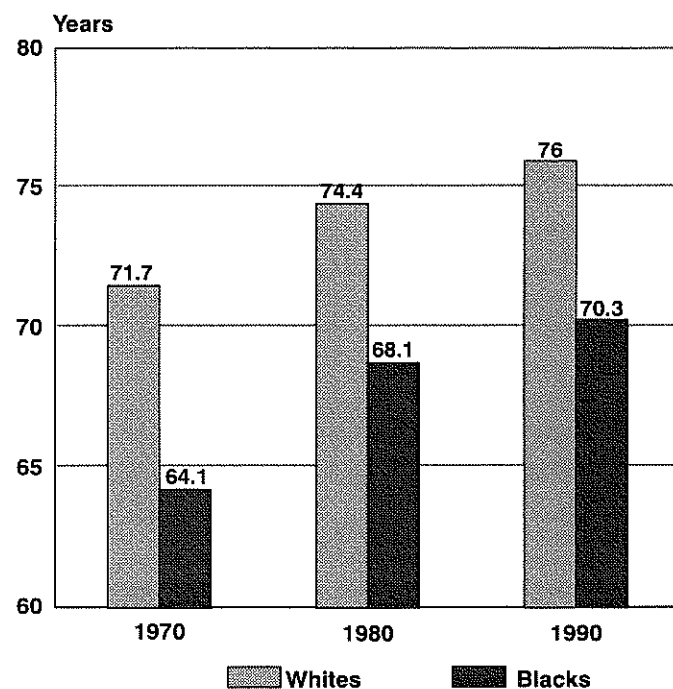


FIG. 2.3. Life expectancy at birth. Data from *Two Nations: Statistical Abstract*.

⁶European Americans' median life expectancy is 76, whereas African Americans (on average) die 6 years earlier, and Native Americans die younger still. Incidentally, these facts mean that Social Security is a massive transfer program, shifting retirement money away from African and Native Americans to white and Asian Americans.

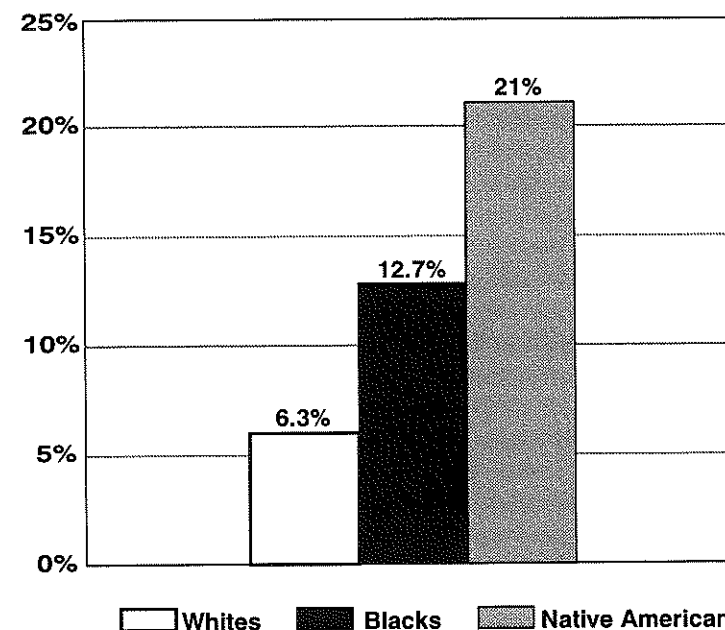


FIG. 2.4. Unemployment, by race (percentage of the labor force unemployed). B. L. S. data for December 1991 (projected for Natives).

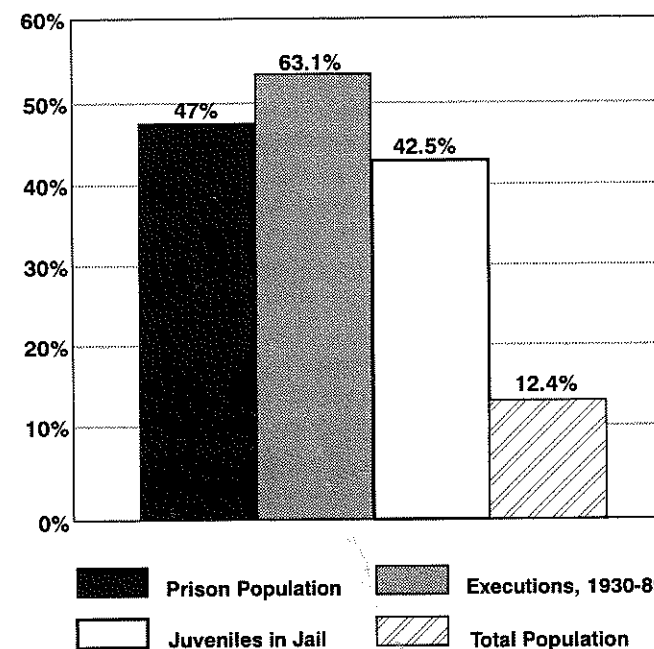


FIG. 2.5. Percentage of prison population categories who are black. Data from *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*.

higher rate of criminal behavior.

In the short run, drug dealing and other criminal occupations can appear to be a rational response to the opportunity structure in ghetto neighborhoods. In the long run, however, criminal behavior rarely leads to satisfying lives, as the careers of the African American men described in the recent bestseller *Brothers* demonstrate (Monroe, Goldman, & Smith, 1988). Because most victims of African American criminals are themselves African Americans, criminal behavior cannot provide a route to upward mobility for the group as a whole.

The statistics in Fig. 2.5 are thus both a result and a cause of low family income. Elements of African American and Latino subculture also hold back African Americans and Latinos. An inner-city youth subculture has developed that denies the importance of white society and does not help individuals meet its standards. Many inner-city black and Hispanic adolescents do not work hard in high school and deride those who do so. This is understandable: Segregated housing projects like that depicted in *Brothers* offer few role models who might demonstrate that conventional routes to success work in the ghetto. Despite this, crime proves to be an inappropriate response even if the system is biased and one's prospects seem bleak (Monroe et al., 1988; Ogbu, 1990).

DO ALL THESE STATISTICS IMPLY A RACIST SOCIETY?

Some observers place all the blame on the victim, believing that if African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics just "got their act together," they would face no more obstacles than anyone else in our society.⁷ However, as we show in this chapter, various processes in our society still function to keep out African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans.

The word *racism* is a red flag to most white Americans, who apply it only to self-proclaimed white supremacists like David Duke (the former Ku Klux Klan leader who, in 1993, won 55% of the white vote for governor of Louisiana). Duke is a racist, to be sure, but the term has a broader meaning than merely a label for overt racial extremism. We must learn to use it not as a swearword but as an analytic term, and not as an explanation but as a description. Thus, the term should cause us to grow thoughtful rather than defensive.

The 1992 riots in Los Angeles and other cities, triggered by the verdict in the trial of police officers acquitted of police brutality toward Rodney King, point to the fact that the tragedies associated with intergroup hostility are too severe for some people to indulge in name calling or others in mindless defensiveness.

Sociologists Simpson and Yinger (1972) defined racism as "a complex of discriminations and prejudices directed against an allegedly inferior race" (p. 721). However, not all persons who discriminate against African Americans, for instance,

⁷Representatives of this point of view include Charles A. Murray, Thomas Sowell, and probably Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

do so because they believe them to be inferior. Lynch, a black Republican legislator from Mississippi during Reconstruction, summed up the argument of white supremacists as follows: "'We must proscribe the Negro because he is inferior and incapable,' but when he attempts to be successful, it says, 'We must proscribe the Negro, or he will equal us'" (Azug & Maizlish, 1986, p. 117). Thus, in 1911 the Kentucky Derby barred black jockeys, but not because anyone thought they were inferior—they had won 15 of the first 28 derbies!

Not everyone who discriminates realizes that he or she is doing so. Imagine that a personnel officer in charge of hiring census takers used a difficult aptitude test similar to the SAT, with complex math and verbal questions. Many white and Asian suburbanites would probably do well on it. Hiring applicants with the highest scores would virtually exclude inner-city African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics, even though the exam would have little directly to do with the skills required for successful census interviewing. Our census personnel officer who used the test to hire only whites and Asians shows that prejudice is not required for discrimination. Such an exam would be racist in effect, but probably not in intent. This example is not merely hypothetical: Educational Testing Service (ETS) and other test makers have prepared pencil-and-paper tests used for hiring for jobs ranging from welding to selling insurance to pumping gas. (A fairer welding test would be to ask the person to weld!)

A better operational definition of racism might be: treating people unfavorably because of their racial or cultural group membership, not because of any task-related qualifications. This definition says nothing about motivation; the unequal treatment can be on purpose or by accident. To the nonhired would-be census taker, after all, it makes no difference. Discrimination against racial or cultural groups who do not really vary physically from the majority (e.g., Jews) is included under this definition. Discrimination against people owing to other physically noticeable characteristics—gender, age, physical handicap—or owing to characteristics not so noticeable—sexual orientation or social class—shares many features of racism but should not be construed as racism itself. Becoming more aware of the processes linked to racism, however, usually helps one to become more aware of the very similar processes linked to discrimination along other lines. As with racism, discrimination owing to gender, sexual orientation, and so on may be inadvertent, cannot usually be defended as relevant to the task at hand, stunts careers, and amounts to a poor talent search for the society as a whole.

Many social scientists divide racism into three types: individual, institutional, and cultural. Acts of individual racism are committed by one or more persons to another person(s) and usually involve an element of intent. A landlord who refuses to rent an apartment to a couple because of their race would be an example.

Institutions and institutional policies can also be racist, however, without entailing individual racism. The hypothetical census personnel officer offers an example: Hiring on the basis of written aptitude test scores is not intentionally racist. It is racist in effect, however, because it makes hiring African Americans, Native

Americans, and Hispanics difficult. Thus, that census office would be institutionally racist, because it would treat people differently according to their color.

The third form, cultural racism, is built into our language, religion, etiquette, law, and so on. It does not usually affect specific persons, such as job applicants, but instead affects entire groups. For instance, all the images of powerful supernatural figures in our culture are Caucasian, from angels to God to Santa Claus to the tooth fairy. When pressed, to be sure, most Americans would probably claim not to believe in a God or angels or a tooth fairy in human form, let alone in white human form. Nonetheless, the images permeate our culture. To some degree, they function to make people other than whites outsiders.

CAUSES OF RACIAL INEQUALITY MUST BE STUDIED HISTORICALLY

At any given point in time, racial inequalities are evident even to casual observers of our society. Their causes can be harder to understand, partly because inequalities interconnect. For example, income buys education. Public high schools are far better and classes far smaller in northern Long Island suburbs of New York City than in the lower class parts of Brooklyn. Income buys suburban housing. After graduation, affluent suburban high school children have a clear avenue to college, paved by parental incomes, with green lights provided by high SAT scores. Poor Brooklyn high school graduates have no clear path to any destination valued by the larger society. This is one reason why many Brooklyn students do not choose to work hard in high school. In turn, better education will help suburban Long Islanders earn higher incomes, continuing the cycle.

A snapshot in time can make it look as if the downtrodden are oppressed owing to their own fault. The visitor to Brooklyn may see children cutting school, dropping out, even selling drugs or sex, and may conclude that more money spent on education would only be wasted in the ghetto. In a now-famous book by the same title, sociologist Ryan (1971) called this attitude "blaming the victim." Few social scientists believe that genetic inferiority causes the lower incomes, shorter life spans, lower IQ test scores, and poorer swimming ability that African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics typically exhibit. Social scientists look for social causes to explain these racial inequalities. The trouble with blaming the victim is that it keeps us from perceiving the various processes in our society that work to keep people underprivileged. To see race relations in our society from a better perspective we need to take a longer view—a historical view.

Three groups in our history have been especially singled out for unfair treatment by European Americans. First were the Native Americans, whose land was taken. Several states continued to deny Native Americans basic civil rights, including the rights to appear in court and to vote, until well into the 20th century. "The problem" wasn't simply the Indians' "failure to acculturate" but continuing discrimination, which still exists in many parts of the United States.

Second were Hispanics, particularly Mexicans and Mexican Americans who lived in and governed half of what we now call the United States—from Florida through Arkansas to San Francisco. After the Anglo settlers took the Southwest, they pushed most Mexican Americans off their land and denied them civil and legal rights.

Europeans brought African Americans here in chains. Throughout the United States, those who had become free were liable to re-enslavement until the Civil War. Slavery officially ended in 1863, but it left a legacy to the present: the ideology known as white supremacy. Immediately after the Civil War, there was a brief period (Reconstruction, 1863–1877) during which African Americans made significant gains in legal status. Soon, however, the federal government stopped enforcing the civil rights laws. African Americans then entered a period of regression called the "nadir of American race relations" by historian Rayford Logan. African Americans began to regain a measure of legal equality in the United States only after the 1954 school desegregation decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, which helped trigger the civil rights movement. The three caste minorities are still far from achieving social or economic equality.

THE LEGACY OF PRIOR DISCRIMINATION LINGERS TO AFFECT THE PRESENT

Faulkner once wrote that the past is never dead. It's not even past. About race relations, the most direct influence from the past is, literally, our inheritance. Whites inherit more when relatives die; before they die, whites get more assistance in buying a home, starting a business, or meeting family emergencies (Blau & Graham, 1990). Income is unequal by race in America, but wealth is far less equal, for the very good reason that people with low incomes cannot accumulate savings, and in order to transfer wealth across generations you must accumulate it. Thus, the median African American family has just one tenth of the total wealth amassed by the median white family. Similarly, Native Americans and Hispanics control very few assets. Figure 2.6 shows wealth by race.

Along with name, race, and religion, parents pass this financial inequality on to their children. Families translate their financial capital into human capital when they use their savings to send their children to camp, buy *Sesame Street Magazine*, or take their tyke to the symphony. Parents are supposed to do what they can for their children, and some parents can do vastly more than others. Children in families worth \$3,397—the median African American family net worth—do not get the same childhood that affluent children receive. Moreover, 30% of black families and 24% of Hispanic families have a negative net worth (Blackwell, 1990).

Because money purchases opportunity, children raised with more money are likely to receive better training in skills ranging from swimming to computer awareness. Thus, even if all racial discrimination had miraculously ceased when students entering college in the year 2000 were born 18 years previously, caste

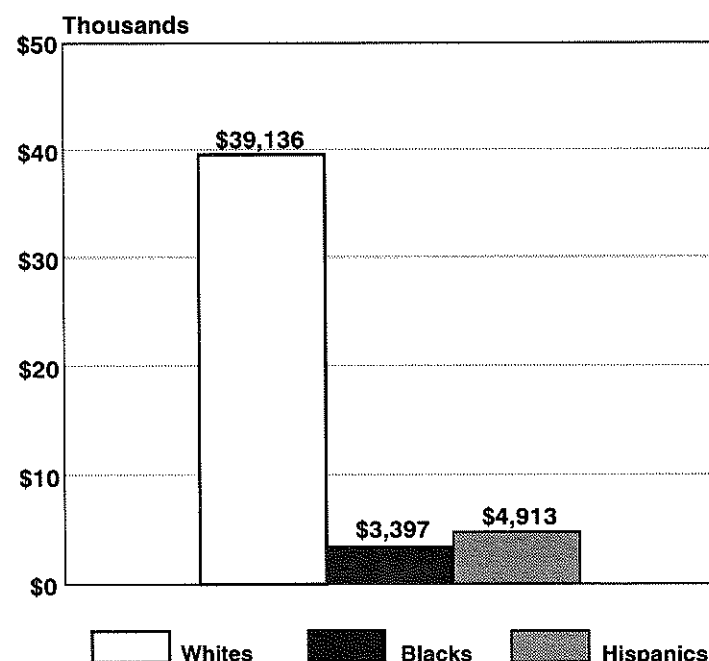


FIG. 2.6. Wealth by race (median family net worth), 1986. Data from Census Bureau.

minority children on average would still be way behind—particularly in academic vocabulary—owing to discrimination in their parents' generation. Partly as a result of their better skills training, whites' SAT scores in the late 1980s averaged 160 points higher than those of African American children, 125 more than Hispanics, and 100 more than Native Americans (Rosser, 1989). Affluent European American children are not inherently more able than their caste minority peers, but SAT scores reflect socioeconomic background as well as racial and cultural test bias. Wilson (1978) and others who emphasize social class pointed out that much of the gap is related to differences in family income. Wilson's critics, like Willie (1986), pointed out that much is also related to continuing racial discrimination.

Regardless of the origin of the gaps, when colleges use SAT scores to help select their student bodies without considering the social and economic milieu in which students achieved their scores, the colleges are using past discrimination to justify denial of admission or rejection for scholarship aid. In turn, adults who do not get into college are more likely to raise children with low SAT scores, and the vicious circle repeats itself.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION STILL GOES ON TODAY

Unfortunately, racial discrimination continues. In the area of sports, for example, Braddock (1990) studied the selection of coaches (head, offensive, and defensive

coaches) in the National Football League in the 1970s. He looked at the race, education, leadership, and accomplishments of players to see which factors predicted promotion to coaching. He found that if race were not a factor, African Americans would occupy 102 of the 329 coaching positions. Instead, they held just 20. Race was a factor "even after black and white players' differences in educational attainment, leadership ..., and professional accomplishments have been equated or controlled [for] statistically" (p. 116).⁸

Bank credit is often a key to success in U.S. society, whether in small business or home improvement. Many banks draw a "red line" around neighborhoods that are not predominantly white and refuse mortgages for homes in those areas, even when the property is sound and the family's income, credit history, and assets equal those of white families who do get mortgages in the area. A 1992 study by the Federal Reserve Bank found that minorities were 60% more likely to be denied mortgages than whites, even when they were equally credit worthy ("Blacks' woes," 1991; Loewen, 1982; Zuckoff, 1992).

A segment shown in 1991 on television's "60 Minutes" titled "All American" documented straightforward discrimination at a large employment firm in New York City. Producers sent two young women with secretarial training to interview for jobs. They were matched as to age, educational background, and even beauty, but the African American had slightly better secretarial skills. Nonetheless, the agency gave the European American woman several referrals, whereas it told the African American woman "We'll call you." The segment showed how the company coded applications "AA" for "All-American" if the applicant was attractive and European American, but used different codings and treated the applicant differently if he or she was not European American and not attractive.

Overt racial discrimination is no longer legal, to be sure, but it is not easy to prove. The employment agency, having been caught on videotape by "60 Minutes," settled the lawsuit that plaintiffs then brought. However, more often in such cases an individual has only the uneasy feeling that he or she has not been treated equally, but no proof of discrimination and no systematic knowledge of how other applicants fared.

OTHER SOCIETAL PROCESSES DISCRIMINATE INDIRECTLY

Probably the most severe hurdles faced by African, Native, and Hispanic Americans today are more subtle than plain discrimination. Various processes operate in our society that treat whites better than other people. Institutions in our society operate to discriminate, with or without conscious design. These processes affect every

⁸Colleges and universities are reluctant to hire African Americans as head coaches, according to Reed (1990). Braddock used multiple regression and path analysis to examine the effects of several factors at once. He defined leadership operationally as "centrality of position," with quarterback, center, and coordinating defensive linebacker considered central positions.

institution in America, such as traditionally white colleges and universities, that does not take specific steps to overcome them. They combine to mock the slogan almost every college and large corporation applies to itself: "An Equal Opportunity Institution."

In this section we consider seven racist processes: historical, economic, psychological, cultural, social structural, ecological, and political. Each of these processes is racist, in that each affects other people differently and more harshly than it does Euro-Americans. Yet each is institutionally racist, not individually racist. Together they contribute to an overall condition: unequal opportunity.

Historical: High School History Encourages Identification With White Supremacist Heroes

The year 1992 marked the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus' arrival on Haiti,⁹ whom the United States honors with a holiday. Recently I studied how 15 history textbooks used in U.S. high schools portray Columbus. They present him as a hero and invite us to identify with him (Loewen, 1992a).

The crossing of the Atlantic by Columbus and his conquest of Haiti can be seen as amazing feats of courage and imagination. The latter can also be understood as a bloody atrocity. When Columbus arrived, Haiti had a population of about 3 million (Cook & Borah, 1971). Sixty years later, owing primarily to Spanish wars against the Arawaks—when the Spaniards enslaved the Arawaks, interfered with their food production, and disrupted their culture—full-blooded Indians had disappeared from Haiti. Haiti under the Spaniards was the site of one of the biggest genocides in all of human history.¹⁰

Both views of Columbus are legitimate. Indeed, his historic importance owes precisely to his being both a heroic navigator and a distinguished plunderer. If he were only the former, he would merely rival Leif Erikson. Columbus shows us both meanings of the word *exploit*—a remarkable deed and also to take advantage of. Textbooks should no more guarantee his "rightness" by what they include and exclude than his "wrongness"—they should present both sides. They do not.

⁹Again, there are questions of terminology. What was the original name of the island Columbus named *Hispaniola*, now Haiti and the Dominican Republic? Perhaps *Haiti*, an Arawak word probably meaning "highlands." Perhaps *Bohio*, an Arawak word probably meaning "home." For that matter, *Arawak* may not be the best word for the Indians Columbus met; some scholars use *Tainos*.

¹⁰Some writers argued that *genocide* is too harsh a term. They maintain that since the Spanish profited from Indian labor on Haiti they didn't want to wipe out the Arawaks, and that many Indians died from diseases like malaria, which the Spanish introduced unknowingly. However, smallpox—the big killer of Indians elsewhere in the Americas—did not appear on Haiti until after 1516, suggesting that war and slavery played a larger role than disease between 1492 and 1515. Moreover, disease and forced famine were factors in other genocides, according to Ward Churchill (1992b). Churchill argued that Europeans' treatment of Indians can be compared with the Nazi Holocaust against Jews and Gypsies. In *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (Stannard, 1992), David E. Stannard argued that the "destruction of the native peoples of the Americas was the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world."

Following are two stories written about Columbus and his arrival in the Americas. The contrast between them shows how our histories are still colonialist. The first story encourages identification with Columbus. The second one presents an Arawak view. It is part of a longer account, written shortly after the event, of an Arawak *cacique* (leader) who had fled from Haiti to Cuba.

A man riding a mule moved slowly down a dusty road in Spain. He wore an old and shabby cloak over his shoulders. Though his face seemed young, his red hair was already turning white. It was early in the year 1492 and Christopher Columbus was leaving Spain.

Twice the Spanish king and queen had refused his request for ships. He had wasted five years of his life trying to get their approval. Now he was going to France. Perhaps the French king would give him the ships he needed.

Columbus heard a clattering sound. He turned and looked up the road. A horse and rider came racing toward him. The rider handed him a message, and Columbus turned his mule around. The message was from the Spanish king and queen, ordering him to return. Columbus would get his ships. (Peck, Jantzen, & Rosen, 1987, p. 16)

Learning that Spaniards were coming, one day [the *cacique*] gathered all his people together to remind them of the persecutions which the Spanish had inflicted on the people of Hispaniola:

"Do you know why they persecute us?"

They replied: "They do it because they are cruel and bad."

"I will tell you why they do it," the *cacique* stated, "and it is this—because they have a lord whom they love very much, and I will show him to you."

He held up a small basket made from palms full of gold, and he said, "Here is their lord, whom they serve and adore To have this lord, they make us suffer, for him they persecute us, for him they have killed our parents, brothers, all our people Let us not hide this lord from the Christians in any place, for even if we should hide it in our intestines, they would get it out of us; therefore let us throw it in this river, under the water, and they will not know where it is."

Whereupon they threw the gold into the river. (Williams, 1963, pp. 92–93)

The first fragment comes from an American history textbook, in this case *American Adventures*. Most of what it describes never really happened (Peck et al., 1987).¹¹ Why was it included in *American Adventures*? It creates a mild air of suspense, although we know everything will turn out all right in the end. Certainly it encourages identification, making Columbus the underdog, riding a mule and dressed in a shabby cloak. It puts us on his side.

As best we can tell, the incident described in the second story did happen. It was written down by Bartolomé de las Casas, whose summaries of Columbus' original

¹¹The only accurate details would be that Spanish roads were sometimes dusty, Columbus' hair had turned white, and it did take 5 years to win the support of the monarchs. Columbus was not poor, he was not leaving Spain, and there was no last-minute message (de Madariaga, 1940/1967; Sale, 1990).

journals are the best record we have of these crucial undertakings. He apparently learned it orally from Arawaks in Cuba (Williams, 1963). Unlike the mule story, the *cacique's* story teaches important historic facts—that the Spanish sought gold, that they killed Indians, and that Indians fled and resisted. (Indeed, after futile attempts at armed resistance in Cuba, this *cacique* then fled “into the brambles.” Weeks later, when the Spanish finally caught up with him, they burned him alive.) No history textbook includes the *cacique's* story.

These passages show how our textbooks omit any story that might undermine the moral or technical superiority of Europeans. Including the perspective of the colonized people, rather than just the conqueror's, might help students understand both sides of the story. Excluding the second passage and including the first amounts to colonialist history. Such writing invites European Americans to feel comfortable in “their” country. Leaving out other points of view implies that American history is European American history and invites other Americans to feel uncomfortable. Presentations like these have prompted outcries from African Americans for history viewed from an Afrocentric point of view.

Economic: Unequal School Finance Hampers Inner-City Schools

Inner cities connect many school-age children with few tax dollars. Many families live in large apartment buildings. Some of these are publicly owned, whereas others are in such poor condition that they have low valuations for tax purposes. As transportation has shifted from rail to truck and air, industries have moved to the suburbs, so cities cannot tax them. Meanwhile, cities continue to house government agencies, hospitals, and universities, which either are not taxed at all or pay only nominal fees. As a result, cities have had to tax private property at high rates in order to afford even mediocre school systems (Kozol, 1991).¹² When they do this, they find themselves in a dilemma: High taxes induce more businesses to move to the suburbs, where taxes are lower, and the urban tax base erodes further. In *Savage Inequalities*, Kozol (1991) related how industries in the East St. Louis area even incorporated their own tiny towns, partly so that they would not have to pay to support East St. Louis schools, which are 98% African American (Kozol, 1991).¹³

In contrast, affluent suburbs boast single-family homes valued at between \$150,000 and \$750,000. When a new industry moves to a suburb, the school district can afford to lower its tax rate, while still taking in enough revenue for splendid teachers and equipment. Figure 2.7 compares the result for Manhasset, a suburb of New York City, and the city's school system.

Kozol (1991) showed similar disparities in the metropolitan areas of San Antonio, St. Louis, Chicago, Boston, and Camden, New Jersey. Figure 2.8 shows the resulting disparity nationally in just one variable: access to computers in school.

¹² A few large city school systems maintain excellent “flagship” high schools, like Bronx Science or Boston Latin. Nevertheless, these systems are known for overall mediocrity, partly caused, according to Jonathan Kozol (1991), by the extra attention and expenditures they lavish on the flagships.

¹³ Kozol also showed how our tax system offers enormous subsidies to wealthy suburbanites.

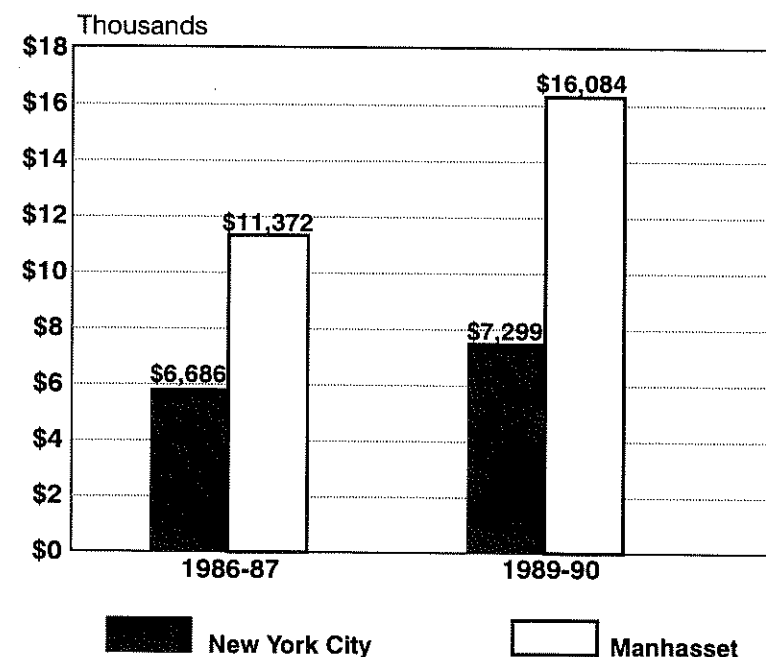


FIG. 2.7. School funding, New York City versus suburb, spending per pupil. Data from Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*. (1991).

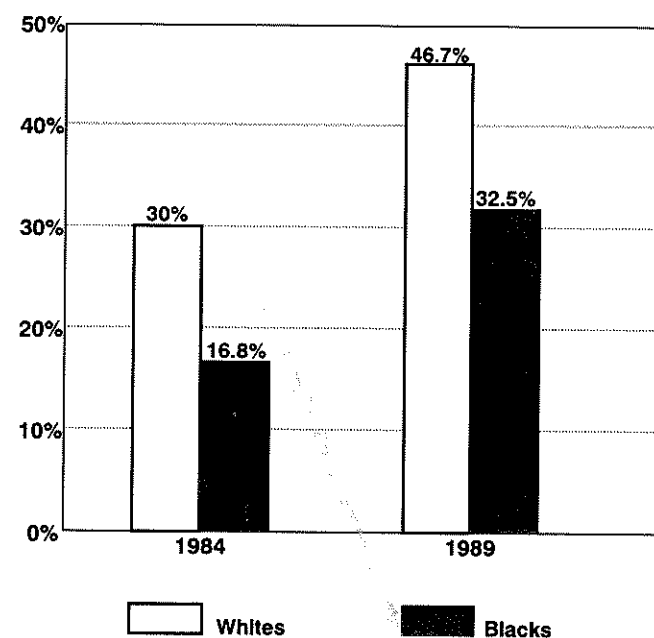


FIG. 2.8. Student computer use at school. Data from *Statistical Abstract: Digest of Educational Statistics*.

So much for equal opportunity in education. In addition, because houses cost so much and sometimes because of racial "steering" by realtors, people of color are often shut out of suburbs. Thus, because they cannot live in a suburb, they are shut out of its excellent school system, and because their urban schools are inferior, they are shut out of occupations that pay well. It is a vicious cycle.

Cultural: Stereotypes of "Place" Cause Whites to End Up on Top

According to Burns (1991), who made a public television series on the Civil War, the black-white rift "stands at the very center of American history. It is the great challenge to which all our deepest aspirations to freedom must rise." And he warned "If we forget that—if we forget the great stain of slavery that stands at the heart of our country, our history, our experiment—we forget who we are, and we make the great rift deeper and wider."

The key idea we inherited from slavery is that whites were meant to be on top and blacks on the bottom. In its core, our culture tells all of us that Europe's domination of the world came about because Europeans were smarter. Many whites and some non-whites who have internalized their oppression believe it. Martyred South African leader Steve Biko wrote of the colonized black man who "has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated," blaming "himself for not having been educated enough" (Biko, 1979, pp. 28–29). African American writers like Ntozake Shange (*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf*) and Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man*) described the wounds inflicted on the psyche when this low sense of self-esteem is absorbed from the surrounding culture (Ellison, 1952; Shange, 1977). More remains to be written about the damage to the white psyche from absorbing the racism that still permeates our slavery-influenced culture.

Thus, lawyers in a big city firm do not really notice that all the partners are European American, whereas half of the secretaries and all the people who clean up are African American or Hispanic. Whites do not notice because they do not really think about it. It seems natural because American culture has handed us a set of stereotypes about people of color that we have come to believe. Native Americans are often thought of as "drunken Indians." Mexican Americans may be pictured at siesta time—"Do it *mañana*." Announcers laud African American athletes for their "natural ability," but not for their brain power.

European Americans, on the other hand, so often head social institutions that we do not think this is unusual. Instead, we consider it unusual for a Hispanic, African American, or Native American to actually lead a university or company. The first two years of a recent advertising campaign, "The Most Beautiful Women of the World Wear Revlon," portrayed four different light-skinned white women in almost every panel, implying over the seasons that almost all of the most beautiful women are white and most of them are blonde. From Dr. Doolittle to Dr. Seuss, white male

characters dominate the classics of children's literature.¹⁴ Even the lowly Band-Aid plays a role in maintaining our "white is right" syndrome: We have no name for its color except "flesh color!"¹⁵

To some degree, these ways of thinking get internalized by minority and majority groups alike. Then they operate to make it harder for people of non-European descent to break out of the mold and challenge the stereotype. The same process also hinders disabled people, who report that they face *two* handicaps: their actual physical or mental impairment, and the stereotyped views of the rest of us as to their limitations.

Psychological: Differing Teacher Expectations Hurt Caste Minority Children

Within classrooms, from kindergarten on, teachers expect more from some students than from others. Unfortunately, like the rest of us, teachers are products of our culture. Therefore, like the rest of us, teachers are likely to think it is usual for whites to be on top. As a result, many teachers expect less from minority students, without even realizing it, unless the students are of Asian descent—in which case teachers often expect more. Over time, many students internalize these expectations. Similarly, from subtle ways in which teachers treat them, female students can infer that they are bad at math—so that they *become* bad at math. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The fact that most physical scientists, engineers, and architects are male does not help girls develop confidence that they are equal to boys in math. The fact that most highly educated and influential people in our society are white does not help caste minority youth develop confidence that they are as capable academically as are whites. Thus, "evidence" from society reinforces these lower expectations from teachers.

In May 1964, two social scientists, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968a, 1968b), began an experiment to show the power of expectations. They gave an IQ test to classes of kindergarten through fifth-grade students at the Oak School in San Francisco. But they duped the teachers and students into believing that the exam identified students in each grade who were about to spurt. When school opened the next fall, Rosenthal and Jacobson casually mentioned to the teachers the names of four or five children in each classroom who were likely to show unusual intellectual

¹⁴Visiting an all-black kindergarten in Illinois, Kozol watched a teacher read from a "worn and old" Mother Goose book and noted, "Mary is white. Old Mother Hubbard is white. Jack is white. Jill is white. Little Jack Horner is white. Mother Goose is white. Only Mother Hubbard's dog is black" (Kozol, 1991, p. 45).

¹⁵Some corporations have broken out of this "appropriate place" corral. Benetton deliberately includes all groups in its "United Colors of Benetton" ads. Digital seeks women for traditionally male technical jobs, people of color for traditionally white management positions, and people with physical handicaps for jobs previously thought to require able-bodied workers. Revlon, too, finally desegregated its "Women of the World" campaign.

gains in the year ahead. Actually, the spurters had been chosen randomly.¹⁶

At the end of the school year, Rosenthal and Jacobson retested the students (see Fig. 2.9). In the first two grades, the experiment had clearly worked. Spurters in first grade gained an average of 27 IQ points. How had this happened? The researchers concluded that through "tone of voice, facial expression, touch," and other means, teachers communicated different expectations to different children. The Oak School findings have been called the *expectancy effect* and are considered a classic example of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Other researchers have shown that when African American children excel they are *less* liked by their teachers, whereas when white children excel they are *more* liked (Brophy & Good, 1974). Even Hispanic and African American teachers sometimes participate in expecting more from European American children. Thus, individual racism may not be the culprit; rather, teachers have a sense for the "right order," "the way things should be." Students who are "not supposed to" know the right answer do not get rewarded the same way as students who are supposed to know. What is the "right order"? Harvey and Slatin (1975) showed photographs of children to teachers, and found the teachers all too willing to predict different levels of school performance based solely on snapshots. "White children were more often

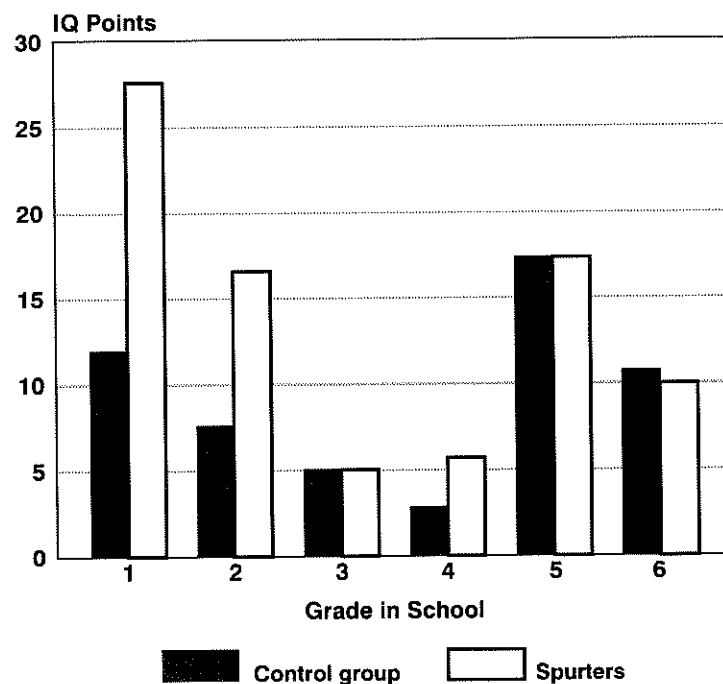


FIG. 2.9. IQ gains at Oak School. Data from *Pygmalion in the Classroom*.

¹⁶This research led to more than a thousand subsequent studies. Although some researchers questioned the findings, enough studies confirmed them to give reason to believe in their generality.

expected to succeed and black children more often expected to fail" (p. 141), Harvey and Slatin reported.

Special note must be taken of the expectations placed on Asian Americans. Many European Americans stereotype Asian Americans as a "model minority"—studious, docile, hardworking. Although this image is generally positive, it still constrains and limits Asian Americans. Some Asian American students report that their high school teachers always expected them to know the right answers, especially in math and science classes, so that they had to be extra prepared. At the same time, some whites point to Asian academic success as proof that "the system works," America is no longer racist, and the problem really resides within those *other* minorities. Research by Tang indicates that a "glass ceiling" keeps Asian American engineers from advancing to management, however. Thus, the stereotype that "Asians are good at math" cuts both ways, enhancing and limiting Asian American careers. In reality, Asian American success partly underscores the power of expectation. This point was brought home to me while I was researching in Mississippi, when I discovered that children of mixed African and Chinese ancestry excelled in then-segregated black schools, because their black teachers expected them to always know the right answer (Loewen, 1988).

When different expectations by race, class, or gender dominate a classroom, students do not have an equal chance to succeed. Such a classroom does not provide equal educational opportunities to all its students.

Social Structural: Segregated Networks Keep Opportunity Within the In Group

According to information circulated by American Express in 1985, 85% of all jobs are not advertised but instead are filled by word of mouth. This is the meaning behind the old cliché "It's not what you know but who you know that counts" (Baber & Waymon, 1992; Granovetter, 1973).

Many college students have used networking to land summer jobs. Their parents may have suggested that they contact a friend of the family, told them of a company that was hiring, or put in a good word for them so that they would be hired. Networking also helped many of them learn about specific college opportunities in the first place: A friend went there, or a counsellor knew the campus and passed on the word.¹⁷

Networking is also a way of life in the faculty. Professors in departments with entry-level openings contact friends in large graduate departments to learn of their recent Ph.D.s. Through countless informal connections like these, people learn about the vacancies, decide to apply, get recommended by people known to the senior faculty, and get hired. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this informal process: Often professors learn more about a candidate from an informal phone call

¹⁷Compare this to Malcolm X's high school English teacher, who suggested that he become a carpenter although he excelled academically (Malcolm X, 1964).

than they ever could through a formal application. Because America is still racially segregated, however, networks are separated by race (Korte & Milgram, 1970). And because most professors are white, most of their informal connections are with white colleagues, so word of job opportunities often does not cross over effectively into the minority networks. Many departments make special efforts to get the word out to such groups, such as advertizing in *The Black Scholar* or sending notices to predominantly black colleges, but the informal networks still have a powerful impact on academia and corporate life.

Perhaps the gravest barrier people who are segregated face is their social isolation. Residential segregation locks African Americans into ghettos, Hispanics into barrios, and Native Americans onto reservations and into inner-city neighborhoods. Their parents and neighbors do not know employers with whom they could "put in a good word." Thus, in conjunction with racial segregation in residence and occupation, networking works to help whites get in and keep others out. This holds true whether we are talking about summer jobs, university professorships, or positions in corporate America.

Ecological: Minority Neighborhoods Are More Likely to Suffer From Industrial Pollution and Inferior City Services

In almost every major city, residential neighborhoods adjoin heavy industry. Kozol (1991) described one such scene in 1989: "On the southern edge of East St. Louis, tiny shack-like houses stand along a lightless street. Immediately behind these houses are the giant buildings of Monsanto, Big River Zinc, Cerro Copper, the American Bottoms Sewage Plant, and Trade Waste Incineration" (p. 15). According to an inspector, the entire city of 55,000 people is contaminated. The industries did not set out to make such people sick; they merely located where zoning allowed them to locate. Some companies now look to Indian reservations to dump their waste. White suburbs use their greater legal and political clout to exclude heavy industry or limit it to areas that are far from residential neighborhoods.

Sometimes government itself is the culprit. In 1992, New York City made headlines because crews sandblasting the Williamsburg Bridge sprayed lead-based paint chips over a wide residential area in Brooklyn. Testing revealed that even before the bridge work lead levels had already been far higher than allowable limits. Although this episode was new, the problem was old: 20 years earlier, William Ryan (1971) began his bestseller, *Blaming the Victim*, with a description of criminal levels of lead poisoning that caused hundreds of thousands of inner-city children to grow up mentally retarded and physically ill.

Dinuba, California, a town of about 12,000, lies in the fertile San Joaquin Valley, southeast of San Francisco. It has more Mexican Americans than Anglos in its population. Mexican American neighborhoods look very different from Anglo neighborhoods, however, because municipal services are so unequal. From streetlights to storm water drainage, the city does a better job in Anglo areas. Table

2.1 shows just one variable, the condition of sidewalks. The overall pattern forces the conclusion that municipal services are not provided equally, without regard to race, in Dinuba, California. Residents in Hispanic neighborhoods have the right to feel cheated by this obviously unequal expenditure of tax dollars. All across America, non-white neighborhoods face similar inequalities in city services ranging from zoning to hospital location to sewage water backup (Banfield, 1961; *Hawkins v. Shaw*, 1972; Kozol, 1991; Loewen, 1992b).

TABLE 2.1
Condition of Sidewalks in Dinuba, California,
by Residential Composition of Neighborhood

Condition	Anglo	Mixed	Hispanic	Total
Excellent	88.7%	59.6%	36.8%	60.1%
Good	11.3%	30.9%	38.5%	27.6%
Holes, etc.		3.2%	8.5%	4.2%
Poor		6.4%	16.2%	8.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	97	94	117	308

Political: White Bloc Voting Coupled With At-Large Elections Keeps City Councils Anglo

Why do people who are discriminated against not take advantage of the political process and elect officials who will give their neighborhoods a better break? Bloc voting by whites often makes this difficult. In some communities and for some offices, whites have proven willing to vote for candidates of another color. Andrew Young captured 51% of the white vote when he won the election for Congress in his Atlanta-based district (*Busbee v. U.S.*, 1982). Douglas Wilder captured about 40% of white votes when he won the governorship of Virginia in 1989. An African American is mayor of predominantly white Seattle. In most cities, towns, and counties, however, whites bloc vote for European American candidates, even when African American or Hispanic candidates have equal or better qualifications for office (Davidson & Grofman, 1995; Loewen, 1990a, 1991). Overall in 1993, African Americans controlled 2% of the governorships, 1% of the U.S. Senate, about 8% of the House, and perhaps 1.8% of state and local positions, even though they comprised 12% of the population. Hispanic representation lagged even further behind the 8% of the population that Hispanics now constitute. Figure 2.10 shows percentages of elected officials who were black, from 1964 to 1990.

Dinuba exemplifies this process. In 1990, the city was about 60% Mexican American. Voters, however, were only 35% Mexican American, because Anglos comprised a higher proportion of the adult population, had higher voter registration, and had higher turnout on election day. Anglos also voted overwhelmingly for Anglo candidates. Because Dinuba elected its city council at large rather than from

districts, often all five members were Anglo. If Dinuba elected its city council by district, as many cities do, Hispanics would probably elect two of five councilors. These officials might then be able to bargain politically to improve their neighborhoods.¹⁸

In 1993, in response to a suit filed by Mexican American plaintiffs, Dinuba finally gave up its at-large voting system, and more Hispanic candidates began to win elections. Nationally, African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans won lawsuits that led to winnable single member districts from Los Angeles to Boston, Florida to Illinois. As a result, the proportion of public officials elected from these groups rose. Minority candidates never won office in proportion to their share of the population, however, and in the mid-1990s a spate of lawsuits by European Americans challenged even these gains. These plaintiffs argued that districts constructed to put people of color in the majority disadvantaged the white minority. By this argument, most districts in the United States disadvantaged people of color, since they were in the minority. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court accepted the whites' argument, so many districts had to be redrawn to put whites in the majority again.

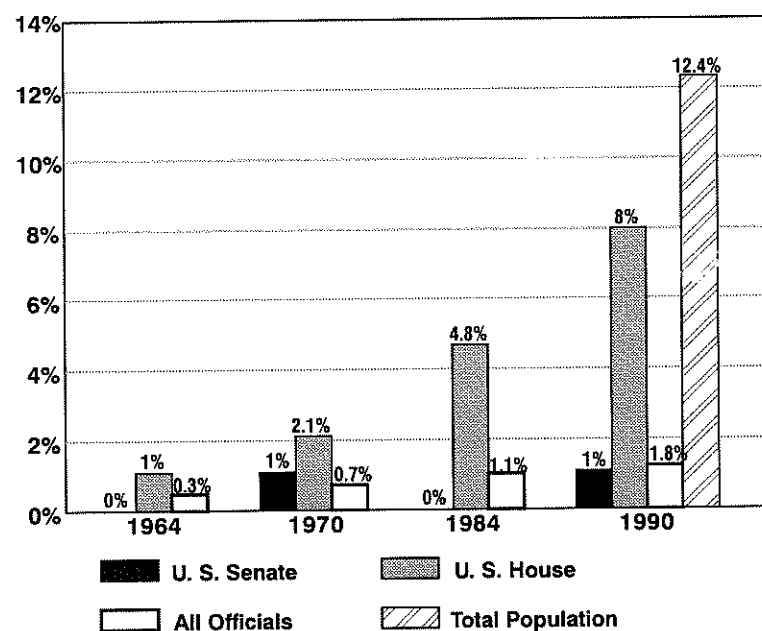


FIG. 2.10. Black elected officials (percent of category who are black). Data from *Statistical Abstract, Joint Center for Political Studies*.

¹⁸Mexican Americans held 17.9% of city council positions before 1993. However, the occasional Mexican American candidates who won knew that they owed their success to Anglo voters as much as to Hispanic voters, so they could not do much to improve conditions in the barrios. In 1993, in response to a suit filed by Hispanic plaintiffs, Dinuba finally changed its at-large voting system, and more Hispanic candidates began to win elections.

THE OVERALL PROCESS: UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY

These seven processes of institutional discrimination, other processes that could be described, the legacy of prior discrimination, and the direct individual racial discrimination that still goes on all combine to form what we can call "unequal opportunity." We can trace some of the interconnections if we follow two imaginary children, Dick and Jane, from birth to the age at which they might attend college. Jane lives in a mixed African American and Hispanic part of Brooklyn. Dick lives in suburban Darien, Connecticut.

Before they are even born, they are treated unequally. Dick's mother sees her obstetrician regularly and receives current medical advice ("Stop smoking, stay active, watch your weight gain ..."). Her general health, fitness, and nutrition are good. Jane's mother has no health insurance and gets no medical care. Her diet is loaded with sugars and starches, cheaper than the produce that costs 20% more in cities than in the suburbs (Caplovits, 1967). She meets an intern at the hospital emergency room and gives birth under anesthesia; Jane has to be spanked into consciousness. Dick's mother follows the instructions of her Lamaze group and has "natural" childbirth; Dick arrives fully conscious.

The infants go home, but to very different homes. Jane's has lead in the atmosphere and the ground; her walls were painted long ago with lead-based paint. Dick enjoys his mother's company all day and his father's on weekends, although they soon place him in a nearby Waldorf school for a few hours of "enrichment play" each week. Jane's mother works 5 days a week, so she leaves Jane with a neighbor who watches children while also watching television. Jane's father is not a factor in her life, so she gets no verbal stimulation from him, and her mother is usually too tired for much verbal play when she comes home in the evening.

Dick and Jane enter first grade. Dick's school in Darien recently won a national award for excellence in math instruction. It has a computer for every child. Jane's school has just one computer, used for demonstrations in the library. Some of Jane's first-grade classmates need more attention than do Dick's. Nevertheless, Jane's first-grade class has almost twice as many students. Dick's school system enjoys a rich property tax base, owing to splendid residences and corporate headquarters. Jane's school is part of a city system that is still struggling out of a barely averted bankruptcy years ago.

As the children progress through school, Dick's teachers expect him to know the right answer. They perceive the upper middle-class signals he gives off by his dress, bearing, and "show-and-tell" stories (Todd, 1986). Jane's teachers praise her for being attentive, a "good student," but they do not really expect her to be excellent. She shows a real flair for English, always picking the longest book she can find to meet reading assignments, but her math teacher subtly expects her not to know the right answer. Each summer, Dick's parents enroll him in different activities, such as creative dramatics, computer camp, Outward Bound. Once Jane goes to Vermont for 2 weeks as a Fresh Air Child, but otherwise she plays with her friends on the block.

In his junior year of high school, Dick takes the PSAT and the SAT for the first time. His SAT scores are below average for Darien, totaling just under 1,000, so his father enrolls him in the Princeton Review coaching course, which costs about \$500 and promises average score gains of more than 100 points. "Of course" Dick is going to college, hopefully to his father's Ivy League alma mater, "if he can get his scores up."

In the fall of their senior years, Dick and Jane take the SAT "for real," Jane for the first time. Her main reason for taking it is that it is required of all students in certain high schools that have been placed on academic probation by the district board. Dick's scores total 1,120, about average for Darien, and his father suggests he apply to the University of Vermont in case he does not make it into the Ivy League. Jane scores 600 in English, the highest score from her high school in 2 years, but only 430 in math. Nonetheless, her English teacher suggests she apply to the University of Vermont, which recently sent a recruiter to a metropolitan college fair he attended.

Which student has more "aptitude?" If the university were to base its admission primarily on SAT scores, can we say that Dick and Jane have enjoyed equal opportunity? We know that poor prenatal nutrition inhibits intellectual performance (Loehlin, Lindzey, & Spuhler, 1975).¹⁹ We know that the absence of fathers hurts SAT scores (Deutsch & Brown, 1967). We know that enriched preschooling causes some of the difference in scores between whites and people from deprived racial groups (Deutsch & Brown, 1967). We know that absence of summer programs helps explain why test scores of African American, Hispanic, and Native American children drop back in the summer (Hayes & Grether, 1975). We know that many math teachers subtly challenge boys to work on their own more than they do girls (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). We know that coaching, especially Princeton Review coaching, increases SAT scores and is less available to children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hammer, 1989). In addition, Dick is familiar with the test, is better motivated to take it, is more aware of the test makers' vocabulary and subculture, and enjoys dozens of other advantages compared to Jane.

Thus, even though universities and the U.S. government officially treat people equally, opportunity remains decidedly unequal, particularly for caste minorities. Thus, "equal opportunity"—the elimination of all *formal* barriers based on race or sex—masks and maintains unequal opportunity.

HOW CAN THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY BE BROKEN?

Many institutional processes combine to make equal opportunity a myth, so that even if we stopped discrimination against others, everyone would not become equal automatically. We have not *been* discriminating, at least not intentionally. Institu-

¹⁹Let me hasten to add that the process is reversible: Good nutrition leads to >10 point increases in IQ.

tional processes have kept our universities, some suburbs, and corporate boardrooms white. To diversify we must change our institutional processes. It is as simple as that.

Where might these cycles of inequality be broken? In theory, we might begin at any point. For example, we might seriously try residential desegregation, so that minority children did not have to grow up in ghetto housing projects. In 1977, the Chicago Housing Authority was found guilty of deliberately segregating African Americans by locating public housing in areas already overwhelmingly black. As a remedy, the court required the authority to locate families in white neighborhoods in Chicago and its suburbs. Rosenbaum studied the outcomes for families placed in white neighborhoods. He found that being exposed to new surroundings had transforming effects on these families: 95% of their children graduated from high school and 54% went on to college. (Both of these rates were higher than those for European Americans nationally.) He concluded that residential segregation was itself the problem, promoting hopelessness and keeping poor black families from connecting with the larger society in ways that might help them obtain jobs or see the point of schooling. Unfortunately, only about 4,000 families have been thus desegregated in Chicago. Other cities and suburbs—absent a court order—have not been willing to accept such levels of class and racial desegregation.²⁰

In theory, we might organize our public schools so that, from kindergarten on, they compensated for the inferior childhoods that ghettos supply. We could put some of our best teachers in interracial primary schools and make sure they had libraries and learning labs at least as good as those in white neighborhoods. As we have seen, however, ghetto schools not only do not make up for bad earlier conditions, they perpetuate the inequality. Parents of African American and Latino students have sued, claiming that the inequalities their children faced, as a result of unequal school financing, constituted a fundamental denial of equal opportunity. In 1973 in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), however, the Supreme Court denied their claim, holding that education "is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution, [n]or do we find any basis for saying it is implicitly so protected." In a few jurisdictions, state law provides a possible remedy. In 1981, parents in the New Jersey municipalities of East Orange, Camden, Irvington, and Jersey City filed a *Rodriguez*-type suit under the New Jersey state constitution. In 1990, they finally won. However, Justice Thurgood Marshall, dissenting in *Rodriguez*, pointed out that several white suburban school districts filed *amicus* briefs justifying the inequalities that the plaintiffs were attacking, which implies that districts like these will not give up their unequal finance privileges without a struggle (*Abbott v. Burke*, 1990; Kozol, 1991).

In theory, we might change our admissions policies in colleges and universities to extend more opportunity to caste minority students when they graduate from high school. Admissions policies could take into account the unequal conditions that have affected many caste minority children in their first 18 years of life. This

²⁰See "A House Divided," which appeared on CNN's "The Nation's Agenda," September, 1992.

alternative is often called *affirmative action*. Affirmative action goes beyond treating all races "alike," which on the surface might seem fairer, but which results, as we have seen, in using inequalities in the first 18 years of life as the reason to extend less opportunity to racially disadvantaged people when they graduate from high school. Affirmative action compensates for the fact that society is patterned by race and gender in order to make opportunity within it more equal. Thus, affirmative action works as an antidote to institutional discrimination in our society.

Affirmative action is not new. Most institutions of higher learning already practice it in some form. State schools act affirmatively on behalf of their residents, admitting in-state students with lower grades and test scores. Many colleges act affirmatively on behalf of donors' families, children of alumni, and other special constituencies. Still others do so for students with special skills—athletes or musicians. Universities do all this because they believe that they have a duty to define themselves by defining their student bodies.

Such affirmative action is rarely controversial—until it concerns race. Nonetheless, many universities have passed resolutions calling for affirmative action to bring more minority students and faculty onto campus. Often, however, they have not made the institutional changes necessary to make these resolutions reality. The result of 20 years (1970–1990) of "equal opportunity/affirmative action" at the University of Vermont has been that an overwhelmingly white campus stayed overwhelmingly white. To be sure, almost half of its students come from the state of Vermont, where in 1990 among 562,758 residents, African Americans numbered only 1,951; Hispanics 3,661; and Native Americans (mostly Abenakis) 1,609. But the other half come mostly from the metropolitan areas of the east—Washington, Philadelphia, New York/New Jersey, and Boston. Almost one of every three high school graduates in these metropolitan areas is a caste minority.

Affirmative action began at the University of Vermont in 1970. In the 1969–1970 school year, the university had endured a year of controversy centered on "Kakewalk," a ritual deriving from blackface minstrel shows in the 19th century. The turmoil culminated in students abolishing Kakewalk. In the aftermath, considerable antiracist idealism remained, especially in the student body, admissions office, and school of education, prompting the university to increase the number of black professors from 2 to 10 and the number of black students from 6 to 75. After 1975, however, the university gradually stopped acting affirmatively. Admissions recruiters stopped seeking Hispanics or African Americans, visiting high schools in the suburban fringes instead. Thus, the numbers dwindled: By 1988, the student body included only 28 African Americans. Nationally, commitment to affirmative action dwindled during the Reagan–Bush years, and so did the number of African American undergraduate and graduate students (Gates, 1988).²¹

In the late 1990s, the Supreme Court seemed to be moving toward a ruling that to act affirmatively on behalf of racial minorities is illegal. Since the United States

²¹ A diminishing pool of high school graduates was not the problem, for the proportion of African Americans graduating from high school rose from 79% in 1972 to 86% in 1991.

has not remedied the seven processes of institutional discrimination described earlier in this chapter, such a termination of affirmative action would exclude the three caste minorities—African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans—from many colleges and graduate programs almost completely. The effect of this exclusion on American society would be to move the United States backward, toward the days of segregation, as if integration had never really happened.

INTEGRATION REQUIRES INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Indeed, at many institutions, integration never really got off the ground. One of the problems at the University of Vermont and at many other schools across the nation has been the retention of minority students. At overwhelmingly white universities, students from other racial groups may feel uncomfortable because they have so few students of their group with whom to socialize. If some drop out, that only makes the problem worse for those who stay. Conversely, white parents often feel quite comfortable with the schools their children attend. Many colleges and universities in America are located in relatively small towns, such as Eugene, Oregon; Storrs, Connecticut; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Burlington, Vermont. Their children will be safe at college, these parents reason, because they are isolated from big-city problems. Thus, the "safe" image of these institutions draws more white applicants. And exactly that same image deters caste minorities, because a homogeneous environment that is safe and comfortable for a European American may be uncomfortable, even dangerous, for them. This is a vicious cycle operating within institutions of higher education—in addition to the societal processes that adversely affect children discriminated against by the time they are 18—to keep white colleges white.

Beyond this, because many predominantly European-American universities have so few students of non-European descent, some faculty members feel that they need not make any special effort to incorporate perspectives other than that of the dominant culture into their courses. (Those who make this argument fail to understand that diverse perspectives are important for *white* students.) Then the converse argument is also made: Why bring more "minority" students here, when we have so little to offer them? Again, a vicious cycle, this time of rhetoric.

Courses on Milton or periods of European history have proven popular with white students. But courses on Native American writers or periods of African history might also draw white enrollment. A course treating the particular health problems faced by Americans other than those of European descent might attract premedical students who foresee locating in multiracial metropolitan areas. Overwhelmingly white faculties have often not developed such courses. When universities hire new professors, they usually take the curriculum as "given" and hire people who can teach it. Professors whose background and interests are not Eurocentric may appear less qualified. Thus, a Eurocentric curriculum inadver-

tently helps maintain a Eurocentric faculty, which helps maintain a Eurocentric curriculum—another vicious cycle.

For a school to move beyond token desegregation to real integration requires institutional changes—developments that will benefit all students and our nation as a whole. It is difficult for education to be truly effective when it occurs in a segregated setting. Education does not just take place from faculty to students, but among students as well. If all students in a given place are alike—in age, race, and social class—their ideas and experiences tend toward homogeneity as well, thus impoverishing their dialogues with one another. Students at more diverse institutions get broader views of the world and can see issues from new perspectives. Therefore, as we achieve more diversity in our student bodies, in some respects teaching will become easier. At least in literature and the social sciences, the presence of students from a variety of backgrounds can help make us better understand how society works. Students in all disciplines will graduate into a multicultural world in which Wyoming ranchers hire cowhands from Latin America, and computer manufacturers in Vermont consult via modem with programmers in India. As our country grows increasingly diverse, educational policies that encourage us to be more accepting of others are surely in our national interest.

This chapter began with statistics showing how diverse our nation is and how diverse it is becoming. Most other nations are more uniform in their racial and ethnic makeup. Transportation and communication link us ever more tightly, however. From the Netherlands to Australia, nations that were once overwhelmingly white now have increasing numbers of immigrants who are racially and ethnically distinctive. The United States is merely the portent of things to come. Early in this century, DuBois said, "The problem of the twentieth century will be the problem of the color line" (p. 209), and he has been proven correct. Unless we change our institutions to counteract the patterns of institutional discrimination that still pervade our society, the color line will surely continue to generate riots, wars, and quiet desperation in the next century as well. If the United States can develop a multicultural society that works, however, other nations might copy our race relations policies as they now imitate our music and blue jeans. That would be a legacy to the world of which we could be justly proud.

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