

freedom and individual liberty in the New World “was made possible only by the revival of an institution of naked tyranny foresworn for centuries in the Old” (Lacy, 1972, p. 22).

The Contact Situation

The conditions under which groups first come into contact determine the immediate fate of the minority group and shape intergroup relations for years to come. We discussed the role of group competition in creating prejudice in Chapter 1. Here, we expand on some of these ideas by introducing two theories that will serve as analytical guides for understanding the contact situation.

The Noel Hypothesis. Sociologist Donald Noel (1968) identified three features of the contact situation that in combination lead to some form of inequality between groups. The Noel hypothesis states, “*If two or more groups come together in a contact situation characterized by ethnocentrism, competition, and a differential in power, then some form of racial or ethnic stratification will result*” (p. 163). If the contact situation has all three characteristics, some dominant–minority group structure will be created.

Noel’s first characteristic, **ethnocentrism**, is the tendency to judge other groups, societies, or lifestyles by the standards of one’s own culture. Ethnocentrism is probably a universal component of human society, and some degree of ethnocentrism is essential to the maintenance of social solidarity and cohesion. Without some minimal level of pride in and loyalty to one’s own society and cultural traditions, there would be no particular reason to observe the norms and laws, honor the sacred symbols, or cooperate with others in doing the daily work of society.

Regardless of its importance, ethnocentrism can have negative consequences. At its worst, it can lead to the view that other cultures and peoples are not just different but inferior. At the very least, ethnocentrism creates a social boundary line that members of the groups involved will recognize and observe. When ethnocentrism exists in any degree, people will tend to sort themselves out along group lines and identify characteristics that differentiate “us” from “them.”

Noel’s second factor, **competition**, is a struggle over a scarce commodity. As we saw in Chapter 1, competition between groups often leads to harsh negative feelings (prejudice) and hostile actions (discrimination). In competitive contact situations, the victorious group becomes the dominant group, and the losers become the minority group. The competition may center on land, labor, jobs, housing, educational opportunities, political office, or anything else that is mutually desired by both groups or that one group has and the other group wants.

Competition provides the eventual dominant group with the motivation to establish superiority. The dominant group serves its own interests by ending the competition and exploiting, controlling, eliminating, or otherwise dominating the minority group.

The third feature of the contact situation is a **differential in power** between the groups. Power, as you recall from Chapter 1, is the ability of a group to achieve its goals

even in the face of opposition from other groups. The amount of power commanded by a group is a function of three factors:

- First, the size of the group can make a difference, and all other things being equal, larger groups are more powerful.
- Second, the degree of organization, discipline, and quality of group leadership can make a difference in a group's ability to pursue its goals.
- The third component of power is resources: anything that can be used to help the group achieve its goals. Depending on the context, resources might include anything from land to information to money. The greater the number and variety of resources at the group's disposal, the greater that group's potential ability to dominate other groups.

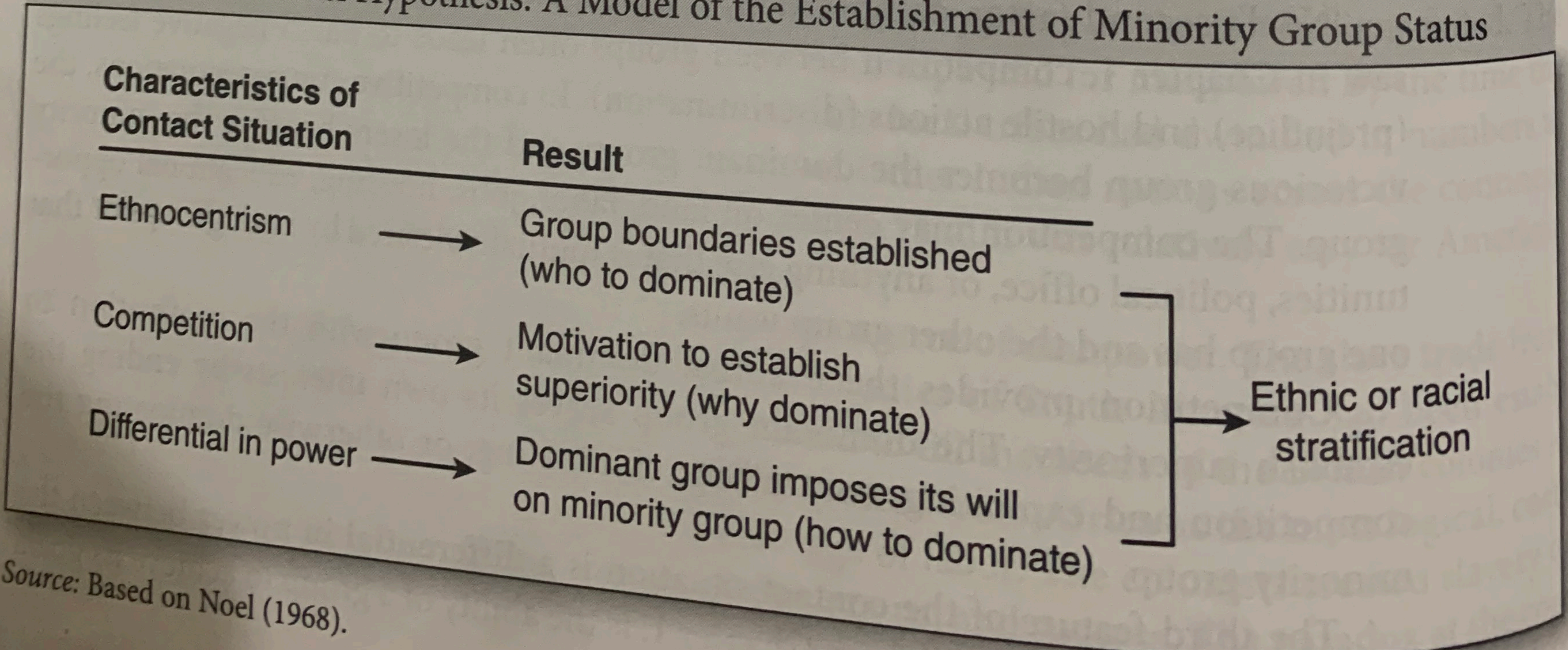
Thus, a larger, better-organized group with more resources at its disposal will generally be able to impose its will on smaller, less-well-organized groups with fewer resources. The Noel hypothesis is diagrammed in Table 3.1.

Note the respective functions of each of the three factors in shaping the contact situation and the emergence of inequality. If ethnocentrism is present, the groups will recognize their differences and maintain their boundaries. If competition is also present, the group that eventually dominates will attempt to maximize its share of scarce commodities by controlling or subordinating the group that eventually becomes the "minority" group. The differential in power allows the dominant group to succeed in establishing a superior position. Ethnocentrism tells the dominant group *whom* to dominate, competition tells the dominant group *why* it should establish a structure of dominance, and power is *how* the dominant group imposes its will on the minority group.

The Noel hypothesis can be applied to the creation of minority groups in a variety of situations. We will also use the model to analyze changes in dominant-minority structures over time.

The Blauner Hypothesis. Sociologist Robert Blauner also analyzed the contact situation in his book *Racial Oppression in America* (1972). Blauner identifies two different

Table 3.1 The Noel Hypothesis: A Model of the Establishment of Minority Group Status



Source: Based on Noel (1968).

initial relationships: colonization and immigration. His analysis is complex and nuanced but, for our purposes, we can summarize his thinking in terms of what we will call the **Blauner hypothesis**: *Minority groups created by colonization will experience more intense prejudice, racism, and discrimination than those created by immigration. Furthermore, the disadvantaged status of colonized groups will persist longer and be more difficult to overcome than the disadvantaged status faced by groups created by immigration* (Blauner, 1972, pp. 52–75).

Colonized minority groups, such as African Americans, are forced into minority status by the superior military and political power of the dominant group. At the time of contact with the dominant group, colonized groups are subjected to massive inequalities and attacks on their cultures. They are assigned to positions, such as slave status, from which any form of assimilation is extremely difficult and perhaps even forbidden by the dominant group. Frequently, members of the minority group are identified by highly visible racial or physical characteristics that maintain and reinforce the oppressive system. Thus, minority groups created by colonization experience harsher and more persistent rejection and oppression than do groups created by immigration.

Immigrant minority groups are at least in part voluntary participants in the host society. That is, although the decision to immigrate may be motivated by extreme pressures, such as famine or political persecution, immigrant groups have at least some control over their destinations and their positions in the host society. As a result, they do not occupy positions that are as markedly inferior as those of colonized groups. They retain enough internal organization and resources to pursue their own self-interests, and they commonly experience more rapid acceptance and easier movement to equality. The boundaries between groups are not so rigidly maintained, especially when the groups are racially similar. In discussing European immigrant groups, for example, Blauner (1972) states that entering into American society

involved a degree of choice and self-direction that was for the most part denied to people of color. Voluntary immigration made it more likely that . . . European . . . ethnic groups would identify with America and see the host culture as a positive opportunity. (p. 56)

Acculturation and, particularly, integration were significantly more possible for European immigrant groups than for the groups formed under conquest or colonization.

Blauner (1972) stresses that the initial differences between colonized and immigrant minority groups have consequences that persist long after the original contact. For example, based on measures of equality—or integration into the secondary sector, the second step in Gordon's model of assimilation (see Chapter 2)—such as average income, years of education, and unemployment rate, descendants of European immigrants are equal with national norms today (see Chapter 2 for specific data). In contrast, descendants of colonized and conquered groups (e.g., African Americans) are, on the average, below the national norms on virtually all measures of equality and integration (see Chapters 5–8 for specific data).

We should think of Blauner's two types of minority groups as opposite ends of a continuum, with intermediate positions between the extremes. One such intermediate position is held by enclave and middleman minorities (see Chapter 2). These groups often originate as immigrant groups who bring some resources and, thus, have more opportunities than do colonized minorities. However, they are usually racially distinct from Anglos, and certain kinds of opportunities are closed to them.

For instance, U.S. citizenship was expressly forbidden to immigrants from China until World War II. Federal laws restricted the entrance of Chinese immigrants, and state and local laws restricted their opportunities for education, jobs, and housing. For these and other reasons, the Asian immigrant experience cannot be equated with European immigrant patterns (Blauner, 1972, p. 55). Because they combine characteristics of both the colonized and the immigrant minority groups will occupy an intermediate status between the more assimilated white ethnic groups and the colonized racial minorities.

Blauner's typology has proven to be an extremely useful conceptual tool for the analysis of U.S. dominant-minority relations, and it is used extensively throughout this text. In fact, the case studies that compose Part 3 of this text are arranged in approximate order from groups created by colonization to those created by immigration. Of course, it is difficult to measure objectively or precisely such a thing as the extent of colonization, and the exact order of the groups is somewhat arbitrary.

The Creation of Slavery in the United States

The Noel hypothesis helps explain why colonists enslaved black Africans instead of white indentured servants or American Indians. First, all three groups were the objects of ethnocentric feelings on the part of the elite groups that dominated colonial society. Black Africans and American Indians were perceived as being different on religious as well as racial grounds. Many white indentured servants were Irish Catholics, criminals, or paupers. They not only occupied a lowly status in society, but also were perceived as different from the British Protestants who dominated colonial society.

Second, competition of some sort existed between the colonists and all three groups. The competition with American Indians was direct and focused on control of land. Competition with indentured servants, white and black, was more indirect; these groups were the labor force that the landowners needed to work on their plantations and to become successful in the New World.

Noel's third variable, differential in power, is the key variable that explains why Africans were enslaved instead of the other groups. During the first several decades of colonial history, the balance of power between the colonists and American Indians was relatively even. In fact, it often favored American Indians (Lurie, 1982, pp. 131-133). The colonists were outnumbered, and their muskets and cannons were only marginally more effective than bows and spears. The American Indian tribes were well-organized social units capable of sustaining resistance to and mounting reprisals against the

Table 4.3 Status of Women in Select Nations, 2013

Variables	Nation			
	Mali	Pakistan	Chile	Sweden
Percentage of labor force in agriculture	80	45.1	13.2	1.1
Mother's mean age at first birth	18.6	22.7	23.7	28.6
Maternal mortality rate (deaths of mothers per 100,000 live births)	540	260	25	4
Total fertility rate (average number of children per woman, lifetime)	6.25	2.96	1.85	1.67
Percentage literate				
Men	43	68	99	99
Women	25	40	99	99

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2013).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- From the statistics presented in Table 4.3, what can you infer about the lives of women in Mali? Would they live in the city or countryside? Would they attend school at all? What power would they have regarding decisions about family size? What kinds of activities would they pursue during the day? What dreams would they have for their daughters? For their sons? How would their lives compare with those of women in Sweden?
- How important is Malala's cause? What effect would higher levels of education have on women in less-developed nations? Why?

Modern Institutional Discrimination

In general, American minority groups continue to lag behind national averages in income, employment, and other measures of equality, despite the greater fluidity of group relations, the end of legal barriers such as Jim Crow laws, the dramatic declines in overt prejudice, and the introduction of numerous laws designed to ensure that all people are treated without regard to race, gender, or ethnicity. After all this change, shouldn't there be less minority group inequality and racial stratification?

As we will discuss in Chapter 5, many Americans attribute the persisting patterns of inequality to a lack of willpower or motivation to get ahead on the part of minority

group members. In the remaining chapters of this text, however, we argue that the major barriers facing minority groups in postindustrial, post-Jim Crow America are pervasive, subtle, but still powerful forms of discrimination that together can be called **modern institutional discrimination**.

As you read in Chapter 1, institutional discrimination is built into the everyday operation of the social structure of society. The routine procedures and policies of institutions and organizations are arranged so that minority group members are automatically put at a disadvantage. In the Jim Crow era in the South, for example, African Americans were deprived of the right to vote by overt institutional discrimination and could acquire little in the way of political power.

The forms of institutional discrimination that persist in the present are more subtle and difficult to document than the blatant, overt customs and laws of the Jim Crow system. In fact, they are sometimes unintentional or unconscious and are manifested more in the results for minority groups than in the intentions or prejudices of dominant group members. Modern institutional discrimination is not necessarily linked to prejudice, and the decision makers who implement it may sincerely think of themselves as behaving rationally and in the best interests of their organizations.

The Continuing Power of the Past

Many forces conspire to maintain racial stratification in the present. Some are the legacies of past discriminatory practices. Consider, for example, **past-in-present institutional discrimination**, which involves practices in the present that have discriminatory consequences because of some pattern of discrimination or exclusion in the past (Feagin & Feagin, 1986, p. 32).

One form of this discrimination is found in workforces organized around the principle of seniority. In these systems, which are quite common, workers who have been on the job longer have higher incomes, more privileges, and other benefits, such as longer vacations. The "old-timers" often have more job security and are designated in official, written policy as the last to be fired or laid off in the event of hard times. Workers and employers alike may think of the privileges of seniority as just rewards for long years of service, familiarity with the job, and so forth.

Personnel policies based on seniority may seem perfectly reasonable, neutral, and fair; however, they can have discriminatory results in the present because in the past members of minority groups and women were excluded from specific occupations by racist or sexist labor unions, discriminatory employers, or both. As a result, minority group workers and white women may have fewer years of experience than dominant group workers and men, and may be the first to go when layoffs are necessary. The adage "last hired, first fired" describes the situation of minority group and woman employees who are more vulnerable not because of some overtly racist or sexist policy in the present, but because of the routine operation of the seemingly neutral principle of seniority.

Racial differences in home ownership provide a second example of the myriad ways in which the past shapes the present and maintains the moving target of racial stratification. Today, about 72% of non-Hispanic whites own their own homes, and

these houses have a median value of \$179,000. In contrast, only 44% of non-Hispanic blacks are homeowners, and the median value of their homes is \$125,900 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Homeownership is an important source of family wealth because home equity can be used to establish credit, to finance businesses and other purchases and investments, and to fund education and other sources of human capital for the next generation. What is the origin of these huge differences in family wealth?

Part of answer lies in events that date back 80 years. As you know, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration responded to the Great Depression of the 1930s, in part, by instituting the New Deal: a variety of programs that provided assistance to distressed Americans. What is not as widely known is that these programs were racially discriminatory and provided few or no benefits to African Americans (Massey, 2007, p. 60; see also Katznelson, 2005; Lieberman, 1998).

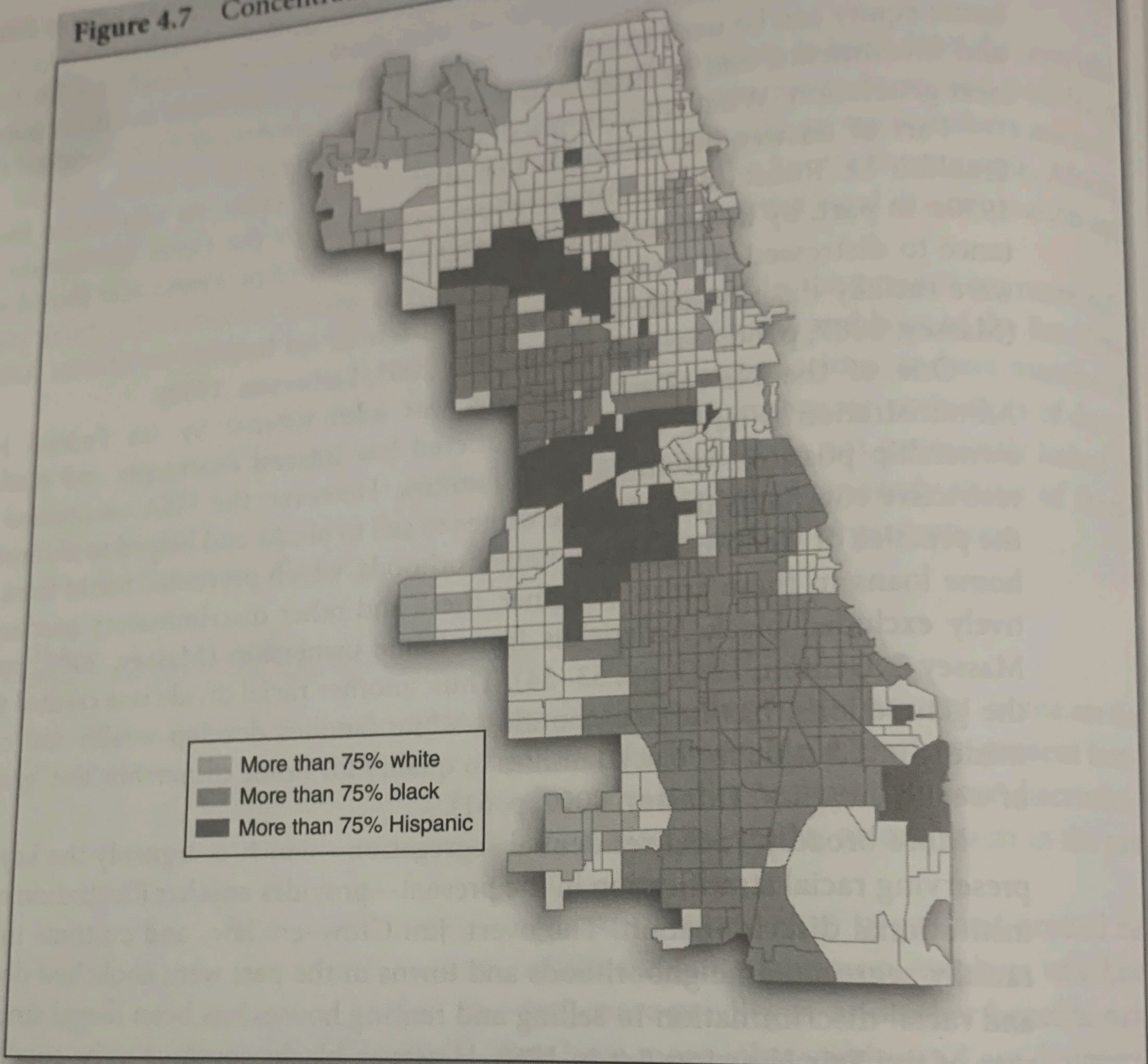
One of the New Deal programs was administered by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA): the agency offered low-interest mortgages and made home ownership possible for millions of families. However, the FHA sanctioned racially restrictive covenants that forbade whites to sell to blacks and helped to institutionalize the practice of "redlining" black neighborhoods, which prevented banks from making home loans in these areas. Together, these and other discriminatory practices effectively excluded black Americans from home ownership (Massey, 2007, pp. 60–61; Massey & Denton, 1993, pp. 53–54). Thus, another racial divide was created that, over the generations, has helped countless white families develop wealth and credit but made it impossible for black families to qualify for home ownership, the "great engine of wealth creation" (Massey, 2007, p. 61).

More broadly, racial residential segregation—which is arguably the key factor in preserving racial stratification in the present—provides another illustration of modern institutional discrimination. The overt, Jim Crow-era laws and customs that created racially segregated neighborhoods and towns in the past were abolished decades ago, and racial discrimination in selling and renting houses has been illegal since the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. However, blacks continue to be concentrated in all- or mostly-black neighborhoods (see, e.g., Figure 4.7), many of which are also characterized by inadequate services and high levels of poverty and crime. How is racial residential segregation maintained in an era of fair housing laws?

Some of the practices that preserve racial residential segregation have been documented by audit studies. In this technique, black and white (and sometimes Latino and Asian) individuals with carefully matched background credentials (education, employment and credit histories, and finances) and sent to test the market for racial fairness. Characteristically, the black customer is steered away from white neighborhoods, required to furnish larger down payments or deposits, charged higher interest rates, or otherwise discouraged from a successful sale or rental. Sometimes, the black customer may be told that a unit is already sold or rented, or otherwise given false or misleading information (see Pager & Shepherd, 2008, for a review).

The result is that blacks are discouraged from breaking the housing color line, but not directly, blatantly, or in ways that clearly violate the fair housing laws. The gatekeepers (e.g., real estate agents, landlords, mortgage bankers) base their behavior not on race

Figure 4.7 Concentration of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics in Chicago, 2008



Source: Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University.

per se but on characteristics associated with race—accent, dialect, home address, and so forth—to make decisions about what levels of service and responsiveness to provide to customers. Sociologist Douglas Massey (2000, p. 4) has even demonstrated racially biased treatment based on the use of “Black English” in telephone contacts. Audit studies have also documented racial discrimination in the job market (e.g., see Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Other forms of modern institutional discrimination include the use of racially and culturally biased standardized tests in school systems, the pattern of drug arrests that sends disproportionate numbers of black teenage boys and young men to jail and prison (see Chapter 5 for more on this trend), and decisions by businesspeople to move their operations away from center-city neighborhoods. Part of what makes modern institutional discrimination so

challenging to document is that race, ethnicity, or gender may not be a conscious or overt part of these decision-making processes. Still, the results are that blacks and other minorities—in the present as in the past—are filtered away from opportunities and resources, and racial stratification is maintained, even in the new age of a supposedly color-blind society.

Modern institutional discrimination routinely places black Americans in less desirable statuses in education, residence and home ownership, jobs, the criminal justice system—indeed, across the entire expanse of the socioeconomic system. The result is racial stratification maintained not by monolithic Jim Crow segregation or slavery, but by a subtle and indirect system that is the “new configuration of inequality” (Katz & Stern, 2008, p. 100). We will apply the concept of modern institutional discrimination throughout the case study chapters in Part 3 of this text.

Affirmative Action

Modern institutional discrimination is difficult to identify, measure, and eliminate, and some of the most heated disputes in recent group relations have concerned public policy and law in this area. Among the most controversial issues is **affirmative action**, a group of programs that attempt to reduce the effects of past discrimination or increase diversity in the workplace or in schools. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Supreme Court found that programs designed to favor minority employees as a strategy for overcoming past discrimination were constitutional (e.g., *Firefighters Local Union No. 1784 v. Stotts*, 1984; *Sheet Metal Workers v. EEOC*, 1986; *United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO-CLC v. Weber*, 1979).

Virtually all these early decisions concerned blatant policies of discrimination, which are becoming increasingly rare as we move farther away from the days of Jim Crow. Even so, the decisions were based on narrow margins (votes of five to four) and featured acrimonious and bitter debates. More recently, the Supreme Court narrowed the grounds on which such past grievances could be redressed (e.g., *Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Peña*, 1995).

A Case of Discrimination? A recent case involving affirmative action programs in the workplace is *Ricci v. DeStefano*, 2009, involving firefighters in New Haven, Connecticut. In 2003, the city administered a test for promotion in the city’s fire department. More than 100 people took the test but no African American scored high enough to qualify for promotion. The city decided to throw out the test results on the grounds that its dramatically unequal racial results strongly suggested that it was biased against African Americans.

This decision is consistent with the legal concept of *disparate impact*. That is, if a practice has unequal results, federal policy and court precedents tend to assume that the practice is racially biased. The city feared that using these possibly “tainted” test scores might result in lawsuits by black and other minority firefighters. Instead, a lawsuit was filed by several white and Hispanic firefighters who *had* qualified for promotion, claiming that invalidating the test results amounted to reverse racial

discrimination. In 2009, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the white and Hispanic plaintiffs in a five to four ruling.

This case illustrates some of the difficult issues that accompany attempts to address modern institutional discrimination. The issue in *Ricci v. Stefano* is not overt, Jim Crow discrimination, but rather a test that might be discriminatory in its results, although not in its intent. New Haven was attempting to avoid racial discrimination. How far do employers need to go to ensure racial fairness? Should policies and procedures be judged by the outcomes or their intents? What does "fairness" and "equal treatment" mean in a society in which minority groups have only recently won formal equality and still have lower access to quality schooling and jobs in the mainstream economy? Did the city of New Haven go too far in its attempt to avoid discrimination? (Five of the Supreme Court Justices thought so.) Can there be a truly fair, race-neutral policy for employment and promotion in the present when opportunities and resources in the past were so long allocated on the basis of race? If the problem is color-coded, can the solution be color-neutral?

Higher Education and Affirmative Action. Colleges and universities have been another prominent battleground for affirmative action programs. Since the 1960s, many institutions of higher education have implemented programs to increase the number of minority students on campus at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, sometimes admitting minority students who had lower grade point averages (GPAs) or test scores than dominant group students who were turned away. In general, advocates of these programs have justified them in terms of redressing the discriminatory practices of the past or increasing diversity on campus and making the student body a more accurate representation of the surrounding society. To say the least, these programs have been highly controversial and the targets of frequent lawsuits, some of which have found their way to the highest courts in the land.

Recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have limited the application of affirmative action to colleges and universities. In two lawsuits involving the University of Michigan in 2003 (*Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*), the Supreme Court held that the university's law school *could* use race as one criterion in deciding admissions but that undergraduate admissions *could not* award an automatic advantage to minority applicants. In other words, universities could take account of an applicant's race but only in a limited way, as one factor among many.

In more recent cases involving affirmative action in higher education, the Supreme Court further narrowed the ability of universities to consider race in admissions decisions. One case, decided in June 2013, was *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*. The University of Texas (UT) had been using a unique admissions system according to which the top 10% of the student body in each high school in Texas were automatically admitted. Because of the residential segregation in towns and cities across the state, the student body at many high schools is disproportionately black, white, or Hispanic, and the 10% rule guarantees substantial diversity in the UT student body. Some 80% of the students are selected by this method. The remaining 20% are selected using a variety

of criteria, including race and ethnicity. It is common for selective institutions such as UT to use many criteria—not just test scores—to diversify their student body.

The case was brought by Amy Fisher, a white student who was not admitted to UT. She argued that some of the admitted minority students had lower GPAs and test scores than she did. The university argued that the educational benefit of a diverse student body justifies its partial and limited use of race as one admission criterion among many.

The Supreme Court sent the case back to the federal appeals court with instructions to apply a strict standard: Race could be used as an admission criterion only if there were no workable race-neutral alternatives that would result in a diverse student body. The decision was not a death blow to affirmative action, but it appeared to continue the trend of limiting the circumstances under which affirmative action policies could be applied.

In a second recent decision (*Schuette v. BAMN*), decided in April 2014, the Supreme Court upheld an amendment to the state constitution of Michigan that banned the use of race as a factor in admissions and hiring decisions in all state agencies. This decision effectively ended affirmative action, in any form, in Michigan and in several other states with similar laws. Combined with the 2013 *Fisher* decision, it seems that the role of affirmative action in higher education has been severely curtailed.

The Future of Affirmative Action. What lies ahead for affirmative action? On the one hand, there is a clear trend in court decisions to narrow the scope and applicability of these programs. Also, there is very little public support for affirmative action, especially for programs that are perceived as providing specific numerical quotas for minority groups in jobs or university admissions. For example, in 2012, a representative sample of Americans was asked in a survey if they supported “preferential hiring and promotion of blacks.” Only 15% of white respondents expressed support. Somewhat surprisingly, less than half (43%) of black respondents supported preferential hiring (National Opinion Research Council, 1972–2012).

On the other hand, although white (and many minority group) Americans object to fixed quotas, people support programs that expand the opportunities available to minority groups, including enhanced job training, education, and recruitment in minority communities (Wilson, 2009, p. 139). Programs of this sort are more consistent with traditional ideologies and value systems that stress individual initiative, personal responsibility, and equality of opportunity.

Many businesses and universities are committed to the broad principles of affirmative action and see the need to address past injustices and the usefulness and desirability of creating diversity in workplaces and colleges. Thus, they are likely to sustain their programs to the extent allowed by court decisions and legislation into the future. By and large, it seems that affirmative action programs, especially those that stress equality of opportunity, will continue in some limited form into the foreseeable future.

4

Industrialization and Dominant- Minority Relations: From Slavery to Segregation and the Coming of Postindustrial Society

A war sets up in our emotions: one part of our feelings tells us it is good to be in the city, that we have a chance at life here, that we need but turn a corner to become a stranger, that we need no longer bow and dodge at the sight of the Lords of the Land. Another part of our feelings tells us that, in terms of worry and strain, the cost of living in the kitchenettes is too high, that the city heaps too much responsibility on us and gives too little security in return...

The kitchenette, with its filth and foul air, with its one toilet for thirty or more tenants, kills our black babies so fast that in many cities twice as many of them die as white babies...

The kitchenette scatters death so widely among us that our death rate exceeds our birth rate, and if it were not for the trains and autos bringing us daily into the city from the plantations, we black folk who dwell in northern cities would die out entirely over the course of a few years...

The kitchenette throws desperate and unhappy people into an unbearable closeness of association, thereby increasing latent friction, giving birth to never-ending quarrels of recrimination, accusation, and vindictiveness, producing warped personalities.

The kitchenette injects pressure and tension into our individual personalities, making many of us give up the struggle, walk off and leave wives, husbands, and even children behind to shift for themselves . . .

The kitchenette reaches out with fingers of golden bribes to the officials of the city, persuading them to allow old firetraps to remain standing and occupied long after they should have been torn down.

The kitchenette is the funnel through which our pulverized lives flow to ruin and death on the city pavement, at a profit.

—Richard Wright¹

Richard Wright (1908–1960), one of the most powerful writers of the 20th century, lived through and wrote about many of the social changes discussed in this chapter. He grew up in the South during the height of the Jim Crow system, and his passionate hatred for segregation and bigotry is expressed in his major works, *Native Son* (1940) and the autobiographical *Black Boy* (1945). In 1941, Wright helped to produce *Twelve Million Black Voices*, a folk history of African Americans. A combination of photos and brief essays, the work is a powerful commentary on three centuries of oppression.

The selection above is adapted from “Death on the City Pavement,” which expresses Wright’s view of the African-American migration out of the South that began in the early 1900s as a reaction to Jim Crow segregation. Wright himself moved from the South to the North, a bittersweet journey that often traded harsh, rural repression for overcrowded, anonymous ghettos. Housing discrimination, both overt and covert, confined African American migrants to the least desirable, most overcrowded areas of the city—in many cases, the neighborhoods that had first housed immigrants from Europe. Unscrupulous landlords subdivided buildings into the tiniest possible apartments (“kitchenettes”), and as impoverished newcomers who could afford no better, African American migrants were forced to cope with overpriced, substandard housing as best they could.

One theme stated at the beginning of Chapter 3 was that a society’s subsistence technology shapes dominant–minority group relations, specifically, that dominant–minority relations in the formative years of the United States were profoundly shaped by agrarian technology and the desire to control land and labor. The agrarian era ended in the 1800s, and the United States has experienced two major transformations in subsistence technology since that time, each of which has transformed dominant–minority relations and required the creation of new structures and processes to maintain racial stratification and white privilege. In this chapter, we’ll explore a corollary of this theme: *dominant–minority group relations change as the subsistence technology changes.*

The first transformation, the Industrial Revolution, began in the early 19th century when machine-based technologies began to develop, especially in the North. In the agrarian era, work was labor-intensive, done by hand or with the aid of draft animals. During industrialization, work became capital-intensive (see Chapter 2), and machines replaced people and animals.

The new industrial technology rapidly increased the productivity and efficiency of the U.S. economy and quickly began to change all other aspects of society, including the nature of work, politics, communication, transportation, family life, birth rates and death rates, the system of education, and, of course, dominant-minority relations. The groups that had become minorities during the agrarian era (African Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans) faced new possibilities and new dangers, but industrialization also created new minority groups, new forms of exploitation and oppression and, for some, new opportunities to rise in the social structure and succeed in America. In this chapter, we will explore this transformation and illustrate its effects on the status of African Americans, focusing primarily on the construction of Jim Crow segregation in the South. The impact of industrialization on other minority groups will be considered in the case studies presented in Part 3.

The second transformation in subsistence technology brings us to more recent times. In the mid-20th century, the United States (and other advanced industrial societies) entered the postindustrial era, also called **deindustrialization**. This shift in subsistence technology was marked by (1) a decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy and a decrease in the supply of secure, well-paid, blue-collar, manual-labor jobs, and (2) an expansion in the service and information-based sectors of the economy and an increase in the relative proportion of white-collar and “high-tech” jobs.

Like the 19th century Industrial Revolution, these changes have profound implications for every aspect of modern society, not just for dominant-minority relations. Indeed, every characteristic of American society—work, family, politics, popular culture—is being transformed as the subsistence technology continues to evolve. In the latter part of this chapter, we examine this most recent transformation in general terms and point out some of its implications for minority groups. We will examine some new concepts—especially modern institutional discrimination—to help us understand group relations in this new era. And, we will establish some important groundwork for the case studies in Part 3, in which we will consider in detail the implication of postindustrial society for America’s minority groups.

Table 4.1 summarizes the characteristics of the three major subsistence technologies considered in this text. As U.S. society has moved through these stages, group relations and the nature of racial stratification have continuously changed.

Industrialization and the Shift From Paternalistic to Rigid Competitive Group Relations

As we noted in Chapter 2, the Industrial Revolution began in England in the mid-1700s and spread to the rest of Europe, to the United States, and eventually to the rest of the world. The key innovations associated with this change in subsistence technology were

Table 4.1 Three Subsistence Technologies and the United States

<i>Technology</i>	<i>Key Trends and Characteristics</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Agrarian	Labor-intensive agriculture. Control of land and labor are central.	1607 to early 1800s
Industrial	Capital-intensive manufacturing. Machines replace animal and human labor.	Early 1800s to mid-1900s
Postindustrial	Shift away from manufacturing to a service economy. The “information society.”	Mid-1900s to the present

the application of machine power to production and the harnessing of inanimate sources of energy, such as steam and coal, to fuel the machines. As machines replaced humans and animals, work became many times more productive, the economy grew, and the volume and variety of goods produced increased dramatically.

In an industrial economy, the close, paternalistic control of minority groups found in agrarian societies becomes irrelevant. Paternalistic relationships such as slavery are found in societies with labor-intensive technologies and are designed to organize and control a large, involuntary, geographically immobile labor force. An industrial economy, in contrast, requires a workforce that is geographically and socially mobile, skilled, and literate. Furthermore, with industrialization comes urbanization, and close, paternalistic controls are difficult to maintain in a city.

Thus, as industrialization progresses, agrarian paternalism tends to give way to **rigid competitive group** relations (see Table 4.2). Under this system, minority group members are freer to compete with dominant group members, especially those in the lower-class segments, for jobs and other valued commodities. As competition increases, the threatened members of the dominant group become more hostile, and attacks on the minority groups tend to increase.

Whereas paternalistic systems were designed to directly dominate and control the minority group (and its labor), rigid competitive systems are more defensive in nature. The threatened segments of the dominant group seek to minimize or eliminate minority group encroachment on jobs, housing, or other valuable goods or services (van den Berghe, 1967; Wilson, 1973).

Paternalistic systems such as slavery required members of the minority group to be active, if involuntary, participants. In contrast, in rigid competitive systems, the dominant group seeks to handicap the minority group’s ability to compete effectively or, in some cases, eliminate competition from the minority group altogether.

We have already considered an example of a dominant group attempt to protect itself from a threat. As you recall, the National Origins Act was passed in the 1920s to stop the flow of cheaper labor from Europe and protect jobs and wages (see Chapter 2). In this chapter, we consider dominant group attempts to keep African Americans powerless and impoverished—to maintain black–white racial stratification—as society shifted from an agricultural to an industrial base.

The Impact of Industrialization on the Racial Stratification of African Americans: From Slavery to Segregation

Industrial technology began to transform American society in the early 1800s, but its effects were not felt equally in all regions. The northern states industrialized first, while the plantation system and agricultural production continued to dominate the South. This economic diversity was one of the underlying causes of the regional conflict that led to the Civil War. Because of its more productive technology, the North had more resources and defeated the Confederacy in a bloody war of attrition. Slavery was abolished, and black-white relations in the South entered a new era when the Civil War ended in April 1865.

The southern system of race relations that ultimately emerged after the Civil War was designed in part to continue the control of African American labor that was institutionalized under slavery. It was intended, also, to eliminate any political or economic threat from the African American community.

This rigid competitive system grew to be highly elaborate and inflexible, partly because of the high racial visibility and long history of inferior status and powerlessness of African Americans in the South, and partly because of the particular needs of southern agriculture. In this section, we look at black-white relations from the end of the Civil War through the ascendance of segregation in the South and the mass migration of African Americans to the cities of the industrializing North.

Reconstruction

The period of **Reconstruction**, from 1865 to the 1880s, was a brief respite in the long history of oppression and exploitation of African Americans. The Union Army and other agencies of the federal government, such as the Freedman's Bureau, were used to enforce racial freedom in the defeated Confederacy. Black Southerners took advantage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1870, which states that the right to vote cannot be denied on the grounds of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." They registered to vote in large numbers and turned out on Election Day, and some were elected to high political office. Schools for the former slaves were opened, and African Americans purchased land and houses and founded businesses.

The era of freedom was short, however, and Reconstruction began to end when the federal government demobilized its armies of occupation and turned its attention to other matters. By the 1880s, the federal government had withdrawn from the South, Reconstruction was over, and black Southerners began to fall rapidly into a new system of exploitation and inequality.

Reconstruction was too brief to change two of the most important legacies of slavery. First, the centuries of bondage left black Southerners impoverished, largely illiterate and uneducated, and with few power resources. When new threats of racial oppression appeared, African Americans found it difficult to defend their group interests. These developments are consistent with the Blauner hypothesis: colonized minority groups face greater difficulties in improving their disadvantaged status because they confront greater inequalities and have fewer resources at their disposal.

Second, slavery left a strong tradition of racism in the white community. Anti-black prejudice and racism originated as rationalizations for slavery but had taken on lives of their own over the generations. After two centuries of slavery, the heritage of prejudice and racism was thoroughly ingrained in Southern culture. White Southerners were predisposed by this cultural legacy to see racial inequality and exploitation of African Americans as normal and desirable. They were able to construct a social system based on the assumption of racial inferiority after Reconstruction ended and the federal government withdrew.

De Jure Segregation

The system of race relations that replaced slavery in the South was **de jure segregation**, sometimes referred to as the **Jim Crow system**. Under segregation, the minority group is physically and socially separated from the dominant group and consigned to an inferior position in virtually every area of social life. The term *de jure* ("by law") means that the system is sanctioned and reinforced by the legal code; the inferior status of African Americans was actually mandated or required by state and local laws. For example, Southern cities during this era had laws requiring African Americans to ride at the back of the bus. If an African American refused to comply with this seating arrangement, he or she could be arrested.

De jure segregation came to encompass all aspects of southern social life. Neighborhoods, jobs, stores, restaurants, and parks were segregated. When new social forms, such as movie theaters, sports stadiums, and interstate buses appeared in the South, they, too, were quickly segregated.

The logic of segregation created a vicious cycle. The more African Americans were excluded from the mainstream of society, the greater their objective poverty and powerlessness became. The more inferior their status and the greater their powerlessness, the easier it was to mandate more inequality. High levels of inequality reinforced racial prejudice and made it easy to use racism to justify further separation. The system kept turning on itself, finding new social niches to segregate and reinforcing the inequality that was its starting point. For example, at the height of the Jim Crow era, the system had evolved to the point that some courtrooms maintained separate Bibles for African American witnesses to swear on. Also, in Birmingham, Alabama, it was against the law for blacks and whites to play checkers or dominoes together (Woodward, 1974, p. 118).

What were the causes of this massive separation of the races? Once again, the concepts of the Noel hypothesis prove useful. Because strong anti-black prejudice was already in existence when segregation began, we do not need to account for ethnocentrism. The post-Reconstruction competition between the racial groups was reminiscent of the origins of slavery, in that black Southerners had something that white Southerners wanted: labor. In addition, a free black electorate threatened the political and economic dominance of the elite segments of the white community. Finally, after the withdrawal of federal troops and the end of Reconstruction, white Southerners had sufficient power resources to end the competition on their own terms and construct repressive systems of control for black Southerners.

The Origins of De Jure Segregation. Although the South lost the Civil War, its basic class structure and agrarian economy remained intact. The plantation elite remained the dominant class, and they were able to use their power to build a system of racial stratification to replace slavery.

Control of Black Labor. The plantation elite retained ownership of huge tracts of land, and cotton remained the primary cash crop in the South. As was the case before the Civil War, the landowners needed a workforce to farm the land. Because of the depredations and economic disruptions of the war, the old plantation elite were short on cash and liquid capital and could not always hire workers for wages. In fact, almost as soon as the war ended, southern legislatures attempted to force African Americans back into involuntary servitude by passing a series of laws known as the "Black Codes." Only the beginning of Reconstruction and the active intervention of the federal government halted the implementation of this legislation (Geschwender, 1978, p. 158; Wilson, 1973, p. 99).

The plantation elite solved their manpower problem this time by developing a system of **sharecropping**, or tenant farming. The sharecroppers worked the land, which was actually owned by the planters, in return for payment in shares of the profit when the crop was taken to market. The landowner would supply a place to live and food and clothing on credit. After the harvest, tenant and landowner would split the profits (sometimes very unequally), and tenants' debts would be deducted from their share. The accounts were kept by the landowner, who could cheat and take advantage of the tenants with great impunity. With few or no political and civil rights, black sharecroppers found it difficult to keep unscrupulous white landowners honest. Landowners could inflate the indebtedness of sharecroppers and claim that they were still owed money even after profits had been split. Under this system, sharecroppers had few opportunities to improve their situations and could be bound to the land until their "debts" were paid off (Geschwender, 1978, p. 163).

By 1910, more than half of all employed African Americans worked in agriculture, and more than half of the remainder (25% of the total) worked in domestic occupations, such as maid or janitor (Geschwender, 1978, p. 169). The labor shortage in Southern agriculture was solved, and the African American community once again found itself in a subservient status. At the same time, the white Southern working class was protected from direct job competition with African Americans. As the South began to industrialize, white workers were able to exclude black workers and reserve the better-paying jobs using a combination of whites-only labor unions and strong anti-black laws and customs. White workers took advantage of the new jobs created by industrialization, while black Southerners remained a rural peasantry, excluded from participation in the modernizing job structure.

In some sectors of the changing southern economy, the status of African Americans actually fell lower than it had been during slavery. For example, in 1865, 83% of the artisans, or skilled craftsmen, in the South were African Americans; by 1900, this percentage had fallen to 5% (Geschwender, 1978, p. 170). The Jim Crow

system confined African Americans to the agrarian and domestic sectors of the labor force, denied them the opportunity for a decent education, and excluded them from politics. The system was reinforced by still more laws and customs that drastically limited the options and life opportunities available to black Southerners.

Political and Civil Rights Under Jim Crow. A final force behind the creation of de jure segregation was political. As the 19th century drew to a close, a wave of agrarian radicalism known as populism spread across the country. This anti-elitist movement was a reaction to changes in agriculture caused by industrialization. The movement attempted to unite poor whites and blacks in the rural South against the traditional elite classes.

The economic elite were frightened by the possibility of a loss of power and split the incipient coalition between whites and blacks by fanning the flames of racial hatred. The strategy of “divide and conquer” proved to be effective (as it often has both before and since this time), and the white elite classes in states throughout the South eliminated the possibility of future threats by depriving African Americans of the right to vote (Woodward, 1974).

The disenfranchisement of the black community was accomplished by measures such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and property requirements. The literacy tests were officially justified as promoting a better-informed electorate but were shamelessly rigged to favor white voters. The requirement that voters pay a tax or prove ownership of a certain amount of property could also disenfranchise poor whites, but again, the implementation of these policies was racially biased.

The policies were extremely effective, and by the early 20th century, the political power of the southern black community was virtually nonexistent. For example, as late as 1896 in Louisiana there had been more than 100,000 registered African American voters, and they were a majority in 26 parishes (counties). In 1898, the state adopted a new constitution containing stiff educational and property requirements for voting unless the voter’s father or grandfather had been eligible to vote as of January 1, 1867. At that time, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which guaranteed suffrage for black men, had not yet been passed.

Such “grandfather clauses” made it easy for white men to register while disenfranchising blacks. By 1900, only about 5,000 African Americans were registered to vote in Louisiana, and African American voters were not a majority in any parish. A similar decline occurred in Alabama, where an electorate of more than 180,000 African American men was reduced to 3,000 by provision of a new state constitution. This story repeated itself throughout the South, and African American political powerlessness was a reality by 1905 (Franklin & Moss, 1994, p. 261).

This system of legally mandated racial privilege was approved by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that it was constitutional for states to require separate facilities (schools, parks, etc.) for African Americans as long as the separate facilities were fully equal. The southern states paid close attention to “separate” but ignored “equal.”

Reinforcing the System. Under de jure segregation, as under slavery, the subordination of the African American community was reinforced and supplemented by an elaborate system of racial etiquette. Everyday interactions between blacks and whites proceeded according to highly stylized and rigidly followed codes of conduct intended to underscore the inferior status of the African American community. Whites were addressed as "mister" or "ma'am," whereas African Americans were called by their first names or, perhaps, by an honorific title such as "aunt," "uncle," or "professor." Blacks were expected to assume a humble and deferential manner, remove their hats, cast their eyes downward, and enact the role of the subordinate in all interactions with whites. If an African American had reason to call on anyone in the white community, he or she was expected to go to the back door.

These expectations and "good manners" for black Southerners were systematically enforced. Anyone who ignored them ran the risk of reprisal, physical attacks, and even death by lynching. During the decades in which the Jim Crow system was being imposed, there were thousands of lynchings in the South. From 1884 until the end of the century, lynchings averaged almost one every other day (Franklin & Moss, 1994, p. 312). The bulk of this violent terrorism was racial and intended to reinforce the system of racial advantage more than to punish real or imagined transgressors. Also, various secret organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, engaged in terrorist attacks against the African American community and anyone else who failed to conform to the dictates of the white supremacist system.

COMPARATIVE FOCUS:

Jim Crow Segregation and South African Apartheid

Systems of legalized, state-sponsored racial segregation like Jim Crow can be found in many nations, but perhaps the most infamous system was apartheid, as practiced in South Africa. Here, we will note some of the many similarities apartheid shared with Jim Crow segregation.

First, and most important, both apartheid and American de jure segregation were deliberately constructed by the dominant group (whites) to control and exploit the minority group (blacks) and to keep them powerless. In both systems, segregation was comprehensive and encompassed virtually every area of life, including neighborhoods, schools, movie theaters, parks, public buildings, buses, and water fountains.

In both systems, whites benefited from a cheap, powerless labor supply in agriculture and in business. Domestically, even white families of modest means could afford servants, gardeners, and nannies.

Blacks in both systems were politically disenfranchised and closely controlled by police and other agencies of the state. Their low status was reinforced by violence and force, sometimes administered by the police, sometimes by extralegal vigilante and terrorist groups.