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African Americans: From Segregation to Modern Institutional Discrimination and Modern Racism

> *My first victim was a woman—white, well dressed, probably in her early twenties. I came upon her late one evening on a deserted street in Hyde Park, a relatively affluent neighborhood in an otherwise mean, impoverished section of Chicago. . . . To her, the youngish black man—a broad six feet two inches with a beard and billowing hair, both hands shoved into the pockets of a bulky military jacket—seemed menacingly close. After a few more quick glimpses, she picked up her pace and was soon running in earnest. Within seconds she disappeared into a cross street.*
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> *. . . It was in the echo of that terrified woman's footfalls that I first began to know the unwieldy inheritance I'd come into—the ability to alter public space in ugly ways. It was clear that she thought herself the quarry of a mugger, a rapist, or worse. . . .*
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> *I moved to New York and . . . have remained an avid night walker. I often witness the "hunch posture," from women after dark. . . . They seem to set their faces on neutral and, with their purse straps strung across their chests bandolier-style, they forge ahead as though bracing themselves against being tackled. I understand, of course, that the danger they perceive is not a hallucination. Women are particularly vulnerable to street violence, and young black males are drastically overrepresented among the perpetrators of that*

> *violence. Yet these truths are no solace against the kind of alienation that comes of being ever the suspect, against being set apart, a fearsome entity with whom pedestrians avoid making eye contact.*
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> —Brent Staples (1986)

Virtually all African American men—including President Barack Obama—have experienced this "otherness," the presumption of guilt, threat, and danger, the "unwieldy inheritance" that echoes centuries of history, crime statistics, and the gory recitations of the evening news. Shopkeepers watch young black customers with special attention; police routinely stop, question, and frisk black (and other minority group) men; and white pedestrians may cross the street when they see black men approaching.

All of this might be considered as an annoyance, something people could learn to live with, if it weren't for the high potential for escalation and tragedy, as illustrated by the 2012 case of Trayvon Martin, a black young man shot and killed while walking home from the store. His assailant, George Zimmerman, stopped Martin because he "looked suspicious," and their confrontation quickly turned deadly. Zimmerman, a sometimes-member of a neighborhood watch group, was acquitted of homicide charges in July 2013.

These experiences demonstrate that, on many levels, African Americans continue to be seen as outsiders, apart from and alien to the American mainstream. Certainly, there has been progress toward racial justice and inclusion, but, as this chapter will demonstrate, the struggle is far from over.

A century ago, African Americans were primarily a southern, rural peasantry, victimized by de jure segregation, exploited by the sharecropping system of agriculture, and blocked from the better-paying industrial and manufacturing jobs in urban areas. Segregation had disenfranchised them and stripped them of the legal and civil rights they had briefly enjoyed during Reconstruction. As we saw in Chapter 4, the huge majority of African Americans had limited access to quality education, few political rights, few occupational choices, and few means of expressing their grievances to the larger society or the world.

Today, African Americans are highly urbanized, dispersed throughout the United States, and represented in every occupation. Perhaps the single most significant sign of racial progress is the election of Obama to the presidency of the United States, but African Americans are visible across the board at the highest levels of American society: from the Supreme Court to corporate boardrooms to the most prestigious universities. Some of the best-known, most successful, most respected (and wealthiest) people in the world have been African Americans: Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Michael Jordan, Toni Morrison, Michael Jackson, Maya Angelou, Muhammad Ali, Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell, and Will Smith, to name just a few. Furthermore, African Americans have led some of the most important and prestigious American corporations, including Merrill Lynch, American Express, and Time Warner.

Compared with 100 years ago, the situation of black Americans today is obviously much improved. The journey to racial equality and a truly color-blind society is, however, far from accomplished. As we shall see in this chapter, a large percentage of black Americans remain on the margins of society: excluded, segregated, and victimized by persisting inequalities in education, health care, housing, and jobs. Even the more fortunate segments of the black community remain in a tenuous situation: they have fewer resources to fall back on in hard times and weaker connections to the sources of power and privilege. The glittering success stories of the few obscure the continuing struggles of the many, and racism, prejudice, and discrimination continue to be significant problems.

To understand black–white relations in the present, we must deal with the watersheed events of the recent past: the end of de jure segregation, the triumph (and limitations) of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the urban riots and Black Power movement of the 1960s, and the continuing racial divisions within U.S. society since the 1970s. Behind these events, we can see the powerful pressures of industrialization and modernization, the shift from rigid to fluid competitive group relations, deindustrialization and modern institutional discrimination, changing distributions of power and forms of intergroup competition, the shift from traditional prejudice to modern racism, and new ideas about assimilation and pluralism. Black–white relations changed as a direct result of protest, resistance, and the concerted actions of thousands of individuals, both black and white.

The End of De Jure Segregation

As a colonized minority group, African Americans entered the 20th century facing extreme inequality, relative powerlessness, and sharp limitations on their freedom. Their most visible enemy was the system of de jure segregation in the South, the rigid competitive system of group relations that controlled the lives of most African Americans.

Why and how did de jure segregation come to an end? Recall from Chapter 4 that dominant–minority relationships change as the larger society and its subsistence technology change. As the United States industrialized and urbanized during the 20th century, a series of social, political, economic, and legal processes were set in motion that ultimately destroyed Jim Crow segregation.

The mechanization and modernization of agriculture in the South had a powerful effect on race relations. As farm work became less labor-intensive and machines replaced people, the need to maintain a large, powerless workforce declined (Geschwender, 1978, pp. 175–177). Thus, one of the primary motivations for maintaining Jim Crow segregation and the sharecropping system of farming lost force.

In addition, the modernization of Southern agriculture helped to spur the migration northward and to urban areas, as we discussed in Chapter 4. Outside the rural South, African Americans found it easier to register to vote and pursue other avenues for improving their situations. The weight of the growing African American vote was first felt in the 1930s and was large enough to make a difference in local, state, and even national elections by the 1940s. In 1948, for example, President Harry Truman recognized that he

could not be reelected without the support of African American voters. As a result, the Democratic Party adopted a civil rights plank in the party platform—the first time since Reconstruction that a national political party had taken a stand on race relations (Wilson, 1973, p. 123).

The weight of these changes accumulated slowly, and no single date or specific event marks the end of de jure segregation. The system ended as it had begun: gradually and in a series of discrete episodes and incidents. By the mid-20th century, resistance to racial change was weakening, and the power resources of African Americans were increasing. This enhanced freedom and strength fueled a variety of efforts that sped the demise of Jim Crow segregation. Although a complete historical autopsy is not necessary here, a general understanding of the reasons for the death of Jim Crow segregation is essential for an understanding of modern black–white relations.

Wartime Developments

One of the first successful applications of the growing stock of black power resources occurred in 1941, as the United States was mobilizing for war against Germany and Japan. Despite the crisis atmosphere, racial discrimination was common, even in the defense industry. A group of African Americans, led by labor leader A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, threatened to march on Washington to protest the discriminatory treatment.

To forestall the march, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 8802, banning discrimination in defense-related industries, and created a watchdog federal agency, the Fair Employment Practices Commission, to oversee compliance with the new antidiscriminatory policy (Franklin & Moss, 1994, pp. 436–437; Geschwender, 1978, pp. 199–200). President Roosevelt's actions were significant in two ways. First, a group of African Americans not only had their grievances heard at the highest level of society but also succeeded in getting what they wanted. Underlying the effectiveness of the planned march was the rising political and economic power of the African American community outside the South and the need to mobilize all segments of the population for a world war. Second, the federal government made an unprecedented commitment to fair employment rights for African Americans. This alliance between the federal government and African Americans was tentative, but it foreshadowed some of the dynamics of racial change in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Civil Rights Movement

The **civil rights movement** was a multifaceted campaign to end legalized segregation and ameliorate the massive inequalities faced by African Americans. The campaign lasted for decades and included lawsuits and courtroom battles as well as protest marches and demonstrations. We begin our examination with a look at the movement's successful challenge to the laws of racial segregation.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. Undoubtedly, the single most powerful blow to de jure segregation was delivered by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of*

Education of Topeka in 1954. The Supreme Court reversed the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 (see Chapter 4) and ruled that racially separate facilities are inherently unequal and therefore unconstitutional. Segregated school systems—and all other forms of legalized racial segregation—would have to end.

The landmark *Brown* decision was the culmination of decades of planning and effort by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and individuals such as Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP's chief counsel (who was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1967). The strategy of the NAACP was to attack Jim Crow by finding instances in which the civil rights of an African American had been violated and then bringing suit against the relevant governmental agency.

These lawsuits were intended to extend far beyond the specific case being argued. The goal was to persuade the courts to declare segregation unconstitutional not only in the specific instance being tried but in all similar cases. The *Brown* (1954) decision was the ultimate triumph of this strategy. The significance of the Supreme Court's decision was not that Linda Brown—the child in whose name the case was argued—would attend a different school or even that the school system of Topeka, Kansas, would be integrated. Instead, the significance was in the rejection of the principle of de jure segregation in the South and, by implication, throughout the nation. The *Brown* decision changed the law and dealt a crippling blow to Jim Crow segregation.

The blow was not fatal, however. Southern states responded to the *Brown* (1954) decision by stalling and mounting campaigns of massive resistance. Jim Crow laws remained on the books for years. White Southerners actively defended the system of racial privilege and attempted to forestall change through a variety of means, including violence and intimidation. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), largely dormant since the 1920s, reappeared, along with other racist and terrorist groups, such as the White Citizens' Councils. White politicians and other leaders competed with one another to express the most adamant statements of racist resistance (Wilson, 1973, p. 128). One locality, Prince Edward County in central Virginia, chose to close its public schools rather than integrate. The schools remained closed for 5 years. During that time, the white children attended private, segregated academies, and the county provided no schooling at all for African American children (Franklin, 1967, p. 644).

Nonviolent Direct Action Protest. The principle established by *Brown* (1954) was assimilationist: It ordered the educational institutions of the dominant group to be opened up freely and equally to all. Southern states and communities overwhelmingly rejected the principle of equal access and shared facilities. Centuries of racist tradition and privilege were at stake, and considerable effort would be required to overcome southern defiance and resistance. The central force in this struggle was a protest movement, the beginning of which is often traced to Montgomery, Alabama. There, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress and NAACP member, rode the city bus home from work, as she usually did. As the bus filled, she was ordered to surrender her seat to a white male passenger. When she refused, the police were called and Rosa Parks was jailed for violating a local segregation ordinance.

Although Mrs. Parks was hardly the first African American to be subjected to such indignities, her case stimulated a protest movement in the African American community, and a boycott of the city buses was organized. Participants in the boycott set up car pools, shared taxis, and walked (in some cases, for miles) to and from work. They stayed off the buses for more than a year, until victory was achieved and the city was ordered to desegregate its buses. The Montgomery boycott was led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., the new minister of a local Baptist church.

From these beginnings sprang the protest movement that eventually defeated de jure segregation. The central strategy of the movement involved **nonviolent direct action**, a method by which the system of de jure segregation was confronted head-on, not in the courtroom or in the state legislature, but in the streets. The movement's principles of nonviolence were adopted from the tenets of Christianity and from the teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau, and others. Dr. King expressed the philosophy in a number of books and speeches (King, 1958, 1963, 1968). Nonviolent protest was intended to confront the forces of evil rather than the people who happened to be doing evil, and it attempted to win the friendship and support of its enemies rather than to defeat or humiliate them. Above all, nonviolent protest required courage and discipline; it was not a method for cowards (King, 1958, pp. 83–84).

The movement used different tactics for different situations, including sit-ins at segregated restaurants, protest marches and demonstrations, prayer meetings, and voter registration drives. The police and terrorist groups such as the KKK often responded to these protests with brutal repression and violence, and protesters were routinely imprisoned, beaten, and attacked by police dogs. The violent resistance sometimes escalated to acts of murder, including the 1963 bombing of a black church in Birmingham, Alabama, that took the lives of four little girls, and the 1968 assassination of Dr. King. Resistance to racial change in the South was intense. It would take more than protests and marches to end de jure segregation, and the U.S. Congress finally provided the necessary tools (see D'Angelo, 2001; Halberstam, 1998; Killian, 1975; King, 1958, 1963, 1968; Lewis, 1999; Morris, 1984).

Landmark Legislation. The successes of the protest movement, combined with changing public opinion and the legal principles established by the Supreme Court, coalesced in the mid-1960s to stimulate the passage of two laws that together ended Jim Crow segregation. In 1964, at the urging of President Lyndon B. Johnson, the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, banning discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, or gender. The law applied to publicly owned facilities such as parks and municipal swimming pools, businesses and other facilities open to the public, and any programs that received federal aid.

Congress followed this up with the Voting Rights Act in 1965, also initiated by President Johnson, which required that the same standards be used to register all citizens in federal, state, and local elections. The act banned literacy tests, whites-only primaries, and other practices that had been used to prevent African Americans from registering to vote. This law gave the franchise back to black Southerners for the first time since Reconstruction and laid the groundwork for increasing black political

power. This landmark federal legislation, in combination with court decisions and the protest movement, finally succeeded in crushing Jim Crow.

The significance of these two laws for ending state-sponsored racial discrimination and furthering the commitment of the nation to equality and justice cannot be easily understated. The principles of the Civil Rights Act are now firmly implanted in American culture and law, and the hypocrisies of the past that granted equal rights only to whites seem like hopelessly outdated relics.

The Voting Rights Act was equally crucial in ending de jure segregation, but, unlike the Civil Rights Act, it was specifically designed as a remedy for discriminatory practices in certain states in the mid-1960s. The act had to be renewed periodically, and Congress did so, most recently in 2006 with a huge majority in the House and by a unanimous vote in the Senate.

However, in a 5-to-4 decision in 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled parts of the Voting Rights Act unconstitutional on the grounds that the specific discriminatory voting practices the act was designed to remedy no longer exist. For example, Chief Justice John Roberts noted that African Americans turned out to vote at higher rates than did whites in the 2012 presidential election in most of the states originally covered by the law in 1965 (Liptak, 2013). We will consider some of the implications of this decision later in the chapter when we discuss African American political power.

The Success and Limitations of the Civil Rights Movement. Why did the civil rights movement succeed? A comprehensive list of reasons would be lengthy, but we can cite some of the most important causes of its success, especially those consistent with the general points about dominant–minority relations that have been made in previous chapters.

1. *Changing subsistence technology.* The continuing industrialization and urbanization of the society as a whole—and the South in particular—weakened the Jim Crow, rigid competitive system of minority group control and segregation. We made this point in Chapter 4 when we discussed the impact of the changing subsistence technology and the end of paternalistic controls (see Table 4.2).

2. *An era of prosperity.* Following World War II, the United States enjoyed a period of prosperity that lasted into the 1960s. Consistent with the Noel hypothesis, this was important because it reduced the intensity of intergroup competition, at least outside the South. During prosperous times, resistance to change tends to weaken. If the economic "pie" is expanding, the "slices" claimed by minority groups can increase without threatening the size of anyone else's portions, and the prejudice generated during intergroup competition (à la Robber's Cave, Chapter 1) is held in check. Thus, these "good times" muted the sense of threat in the dominant group sparked by the demands for equality made by the civil rights movement.

3. *Increasing resources in the black community.* Some of the economic prosperity of the era found its way into African American communities and increased their pool of economic and political resources. Networks of independent, African American–controlled organizations and institutions, such as churches and colleges, were created or grew in

size and power. The increasingly elaborate infrastructure of the black community included protest organizations, such as the NAACP (see Chapter 4), and provided material resources, leadership, and "people power" to lead the fight against segregation and discrimination.

4. *Assimilationist goals.* The civil rights movement embraced the traditional American values of liberty, equality, freedom, and fair treatment. It demanded civil, legal, and political rights for African Americans, rights available to whites automatically. Thus, many whites did not feel threatened by the movement because they saw it as consistent with mainstream American values, especially in contrast to the intense, often violent resistance of southern whites.

5. *Coalitions.* The perceived legitimacy of the goals of the movement also opened up the possibility of alliances with other groups (e.g., white liberals, Jews, college students). The support of others was crucial because black Southerners had few resources of their own other than their numbers and courage. By mobilizing the resources of other, more powerful groups, black Southerners forged alliances and created sympathetic support that was brought to bear on their opposition.

6. *Mass media.* Widespread and sympathetic coverage from the mass media, particularly television, was crucial to the success of the movement. The oft-repeated scenario of African Americans being brutally attacked while demonstrating for their rights outraged many Americans and reinforced the moral consensus that eventually rejected "traditional" racial prejudice along with Jim Crow segregation.

The southern civil rights movement ended de jure segregation but found it difficult to survive the demise of its primary enemy. The confrontational tactics that had been so effective against the Jim Crow system proved less useful when attention turned to the actual distribution of jobs, wealth, political power, and other valued goods and services. Outside the South, the allocation of opportunity and resources always had been the central concern of the African American community. Let's take a look at these concerns.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What forces led to the end of Jim Crow segregation? What was the role of broad social changes such as changing subsistence technology? How important were the contributions of individuals and organizations?
2. What Supreme Court decision and laws ended de jure segregation? How?
3. How do the concepts of competition and differential in power in the Noel hypothesis apply to the demise of the Jim Crow system of segregation?
4. List and explain the important reasons for the success of the civil rights movement.

Developments Outside the South

De Facto Segregation

Chapter 4 discussed some of the difficulties encountered by African Americans as they left the rural South. Discrimination by labor unions, employers, industrialists, and white ethnic groups was common. Racial discrimination outside the South was less overt but was still pervasive, especially in housing, education, and employment.

The pattern of racial separation and inequality outside the South is often called **de facto segregation**: segregation resulting from what seems to be, at first glance, the voluntary choices of dominant and minority group members. As opposed to the Jim Crow system in the South or apartheid in South Africa, under de facto segregation, no public laws mandate racial separation. Thus, people often assume that de facto segregation "just happened" as people and groups made decisions about where to live and work; or, that it resulted from some benign tendency of people to be "with their own kind."

On the contrary, de facto segregation was quite intentional and is best thought of as de jure segregation in disguise. Racial segregation outside the South was the direct result of intentionally racist decisions made by governmental and quasi-governmental agencies, such as real estate boards, school boards, and zoning boards (see Massey & Denton, 1993, pp. 74–114; also see Loewen, 2005). De facto segregation was created when local and state authorities actively colluded with private citizens behind the scenes, ignored racist practices within their jurisdiction, and "simply refrained from enforcing black social, economic, and political rights so that private discriminatory practices could do their work" (Massey, 2007 p. 57). For example, shortly after World War I, the real estate board in the city of Chicago adopted a policy that required its members, on penalty of "immediate expulsion," to enforce racial residential segregation (Cohen & Taylor, 2000, p. 33). The city itself passed no Jim Crow laws but the result was the same: Black Americans were consigned to a separate and unequal status.

African Americans outside the South faced more poverty, higher unemployment, and lower-quality housing and schools than did whites, but there was no clear equivalent of Jim Crow to attack or blame for these patterns of inequality. Thus, the triumphs of the civil rights movement had little impact on their lives. In the 1960s, the African American community outside the South expressed its frustration over the slow pace of change in two ways: urban unrest and a movement for change that rose to prominence as the civil rights movement faded.

Urban Unrest

In the mid-1960s, the frustration and anger of urban African American communities erupted into a series of violent uprisings. The riots began in the summer of 1965 in Watts, a black neighborhood in Los Angeles, California, and over the next four years, virtually every large black urban community experienced similar outbursts.

Racial violence was hardly a new phenomenon in America. Race riots had existed as early as the Civil War, and various periods had seen racial violence of considerable magnitude.

The riots of the 1960s were different, however. Most race riots in the past had been attacks by whites against blacks, often including the invasion and destruction of African American neighborhoods (e.g., see D'Orso, 1996; Ellsworth, 1982). The urban unrest of the 1960s, in contrast, consisted largely of attacks by blacks against the symbols of their oppression and frustration. The most obvious targets were white-owned businesses operating in black neighborhoods and the police, who were seen as an army of occupation and whose excessive use of force was often the immediate precipitator of riots (Conot, 1967; National Advisory Commission, 1968).

The Black Power Movement

The urban riots of the 1960s were an unmistakable sign that the problems of race relations had not been resolved with the end of Jim Crow segregation. Outside the South, the problems were different and called for different solutions. Even as the civil rights movement was celebrating its victory in the South, a new protest movement rose to prominence. The **Black Power movement** was a loose coalition of organizations and spokespersons that encompassed a variety of ideas and views, many of which differed sharply from those of the civil rights movement. Some of the central ideas included racial pride ("Black is beautiful" was a key slogan of the day), interest in African heritage, and Black Nationalism. In contrast to the assimilationist goals of the civil rights movement, Black Power groups worked to increase African American control over schools, police, welfare programs, and other public services operating in black neighborhoods.

Most adherents of the Black Power movement believed that white racism and institutional discrimination, forces buried deep in the core of American culture and society, were the primary causes of racial inequality in America. Thus, if African Americans were ever to be truly empowered, they would have to liberate themselves and do it on their own terms. Some Black Power advocates specifically rejected the goal of assimilation into white society, arguing that integration would require blacks to become part of the very system that had for centuries oppressed, denigrated, and devalued them and other peoples of color.

The Nation of Islam. The themes of Black Power voiced so loudly in the 1960s were decades, even centuries, old. Marcus Garvey had popularized many of these ideas in the 1920s, and they were espoused and further developed by the Nation of Islam, popularly known as the Black Muslims, in the 1960s.

The Black Muslims, one of the best-known organizations within the Black Power movement, were angry, impatient, and outspoken. They denounced the hypocrisy, greed, and racism of American society and advocated staunch resistance and racial separation. The Black Muslims did more than talk, however. Pursuing the goals of autonomy and self-determination, they worked hard to create a separate, independent African American economy within the United States. They opened businesses and stores in African American neighborhoods and tried to deal only with other Muslim-owned

firms. Their goal was to develop the African American community economically and to supply jobs and capital for expansion using solely their own resources (Essien-Udom, 1962; Lincoln, 1961; Malcolm X, 1964; Marable, 2011; Wolfenstein, 1993).

The Nation of Islam and other Black Power groups distinguished between racial separation and racial segregation. The former is a process of empowerment whereby a group becomes stronger as it becomes more autonomous and self-controlled. The latter is a system of inequality in which the African American community is powerless and is controlled by the dominant group. Thus, the Black Power groups were working to find ways in which African Americans could develop their own resources and deal with the dominant group from a more powerful position, a strategy similar to that followed by minority groups that form ethnic enclaves (see Chapter 2).

The best-known spokesperson for the Nation of Islam was Malcolm X, one of the most charismatic figures of the 1960s. Malcolm X forcefully articulated the themes of the Black Power movement. Born Malcolm Little, he converted to Islam and joined the Nation of Islam while serving a prison term. He became the chief spokesperson for the Black Muslims and a well-known but threatening figure to the white community. After a dispute with Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X founded his own organization, in which he continued to express and develop the ideas of Black Nationalism. In 1965, like so many other protest leaders of the era, Malcolm X was assassinated (Marable, 2011).

Black power leaders such as Malcolm X advocated autonomy, independence, and a pluralistic direction for the African American protest movement. They saw the African American community as a colonized, exploited population in need of liberation from the unyielding racial oppression of white America, not integration into the system that was the source of its oppression.

Protest, Power, and Pluralism

The Black Power Movement in Perspective

By the end of the 1960s, the riots had ended, and the most militant and dramatic manifestations of the Black Power movement had faded. In many cases, the passion of Black Power activists had been countered by the violence of the police and other agencies, and many of the most powerful spokespersons of the movement were dead; others were in jail or in exile. The nation's commitment to racial change wavered and weakened as other concerns, such as the Vietnam War, competed for attention. Richard M. Nixon was elected president in 1968 and made it clear that his administration would not ally itself with the black protest movements. Pressure from the federal government for racial equality was reduced. The boiling turmoil of the mid-1960s faded, but the idea of Black Power had become thoroughly entrenched in the African American community.

In some part, the pluralistic themes of Black Power were a reaction to the failure of assimilation and integration in the 1950s and 1960s. Laws had been passed; court decisions had been widely publicized; and promises and pledges had been made by presidents, members of Congress, ministers, and other leaders. For many African Americans, though, little had changed. The problems of their parents and grandparents continued

to constrain and limit their lives and, as far into the future as they could see, the lives of their children. The pluralistic Black Power ideology was a response to the failure to go beyond the repeal of Jim Crow laws and fully implement the promises of integration and equality.

Black Nationalism, however, was and remains more than simply a reaction to a failed dream. It was also a different way of defining what it means to be black in America. In the context of black–white relations in the 1960s, the Black Power movement served a variety of purposes. First, along with the civil rights movement, it helped carve out a new identity for African Americans. The cultural stereotypes of black Americans (see Chapter 1) stressed laziness, irresponsibility, and inferiority. This image needed to be refuted, rejected, and buried. The black protest movements supplied a view of African Americans that emphasized power, assertiveness, seriousness of purpose, intelligence, and courage.

Second, Black Power served as a new rallying cry for solidarity and unified action. Following the success of the civil rights movement, these new themes and ideas helped to focus attention on "unfinished business": the black–white inequalities that remained in U.S. society.

Finally, the ideology provided an analysis of the problems of American race relations in the 1960s. The civil rights movement, of course, had analyzed race relations in terms of integration, equality of opportunity, and an end to exclusion. After the demise of Jim Crow, that analysis became less relevant. A new language was needed to describe and analyze the continuation of racial inequality. Black Power argued that the continuing problems of U.S. race relations were structural and institutional, not individual or legal. Taking the next steps toward actualizing racial equality and justice would require a fundamental and far-reaching restructuring of the society. Ultimately, white Americans, as the beneficiaries of the system, would not support restructuring. The necessary energy and commitment had to come from African Americans pursuing their own self-interests.

The nationalistic and pluralistic demands of the Black Power movement evoked defensiveness and a sense of threat in white society. By questioning the value of assimilation and celebrating a separate African heritage equal in legitimacy with white European heritage, the Black Power movement questioned the legitimacy and worth of Anglo American values. In fact, many Black Power spokespersons condemned Anglo American values fiercely and openly and implicated them in the creation and maintenance of a centuries-long system of racial repression. Today, almost 50 years after the success of the civil rights movement, assertive and critical demands by the African American community continue to be perceived as threatening.

Gender and Black Protest

Both the civil rights movement and the Black Power movement tended to be dominated by men. African American women were often viewed as supporters of men rather than as equal partners in liberation. Although African American women were heavily involved in the struggle, they were often denied leadership roles or decision-making positions in favor of men. In fact, the women in one organization, the Student

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Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, wrote position papers to protest their relegation to lowly clerical positions and the frequent references to them as "girls" (Andersen, 1993, p. 284). The Nation of Islam emphasized girls' and women's subservience, imposing a strict code of behavior and dress for women and separating the people by gender in many temple and community activities. Thus, the battle against racism and the battle against sexism were separate struggles with separate and often contradictory agendas, as the black protest movements continued to subordinate women (Amott & Matthaei, 1991, p. 177).

When the protest movements began, however, African American women were already heavily involved in community and church work, and they often used their organizational skills and energy to further the cause of black liberation. Many people view African American women as the backbone of the movement, even if they were often relegated to less glamorous but vital organizational work (Evans, 1979).

Fannie Lou Hamer of Mississippi, an African American who became a prominent leader in the black liberation movement, illustrates the importance of the role played by women. Born in 1917 to sharecropper parents, Hamer's life was so circumscribed that until she attended her first rally at the beginning of the civil rights movement she was unaware that blacks could—even theoretically—register to vote. The day after the rally, she quickly volunteered to register:

> I guess if I'd had any sense I'd a-been a little scared, but what was the point of being scared? The only thing they could do to me was kill me and it seemed like they'd been trying to do that a little bit at a time ever since I could remember. (Evans, 1989, p. 271)

As a result of her activism, Hamer lost her job, was evicted from her house, and was jailed and beaten on a number of occasions. She devoted herself entirely to the civil rights movement and founded the Freedom Party, which successfully challenged the racially segregated Democratic Party and the all-white political structure of the State of Mississippi (Evans, 1979; Hamer, 1967).

Much of the energy that motivated black protest was forged in the depths of segregation and exclusion, a system of oppression that affected all African Americans. Not all segments of the community had the same experience; the realities faced by the black community, as always, were differentiated by class as well as gender.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

5. How did de facto segregation differ from de jure segregation? Were the differences merely cosmetic? Why or why not?
6. How and why did the Black Power movement differ from the civil rights movement?
7. Did the Black Power movement succeed? Explain.
8. What were some of the important gender dimensions of black protest movements?

6

American Indians: From Conquest to Tribal Survival in a Postindustrial Society

> *Lorinda announced that the [Blessing Way ceremony for Lynette's unborn child] was about to start . . . [so we] walked into the hoghan. A single light bulb lit the room dimly. Couches, futon mattresses, and large pillows were set against the walls for the night's sing. A coffee-maker, microwave, and crock-pot sat on a folding table against the northern wall for the midnight eating. This was the same Navajo adaptation I'd grown up seeing, the age-old ritual with modern technology.*
>
> *The hataałii sat against the western wall. . . . He wore thick silver bracelets and a silk bandana across his brow, the knot tied off at his right temple in traditional style. A basket of tádídíín (sacred corn pollen) sat at his left.*
>
> *[There were] gifts: . . . a stethoscope, that the baby would have good health and might be a healer; . . . a pair of running shoes, that the child would be a strong runner; dollar bills . . . to wish the child a wealthy life; cowboy boots and work gloves so that the child would be a hard worker. . . .*
>
> *The hataałii spoke in quiet Navajo as he passed the basket of tádídíín to Dennis, who sprinkled the yellow pollen at each corner of the hoghan, first East, South, West, then North. Then he passed the basket around the room in a clockwise order; when it came to me, I did what the others had done: I placed a pinch inside my lower lip, pressed a second pinch to my*

> *forehead, then spread the pollen in the air above in a small arch to resemble the rainbow that promises life and beauty.*
>
> *The hataalii began the sing. Brandon and the two burly men entered the chant with accenting rhythms as articulate as wind chimes, but with the resonance of distant thunder. . . .*
>
> *Lorinda leaned forward and rocked slowly, speaking her own prayer: I heard the word hózhó sung many times. There is no English equivalent, but mostly it means "beautiful harmony." Christians might call it grace.*
>
> —Jim Kristofic (2011, pp. 183–184)

At the end of first grade, Jim Kristofic found himself moving from western Pennsylvania to the Navajo reservation in Arizona, where his mother had taken a job as a nurse. At first rejected and bullied by the Navajo kids, he eventually developed a deep respect for and understanding of the "rez," the people, and the Navajo way of life. In this passage, he gives us a glimpse of a Navajo ceremony that has been practiced for centuries. Can ancient traditions such as this—and the tribes that practice them—survive?

We discussed the contact period for American Indians in Chapter 3. As you recall, this period began in the earliest colonial days and lasted nearly 300 years, ending only with the final battles of the Indian wars in the late 1800s. The Indian nations fought for their land and to preserve their cultures and ways of life. The tribes had enough power to win many battles, but they eventually lost all the wars. The superior resources of the burgeoning white society made the eventual defeat of American Indians inevitable, and by 1890 the last of the tribes had been conquered, their leaders had been killed or were in custody, and their people were living on U.S. government-controlled reservations.

By the start of the 20th century, American Indians were, in Blauner's (1972) terms, a conquered and colonized minority group. Like the slave plantations, the reservations were paternalistic systems that controlled American Indians with federally mandated regulations and government-appointed Indian agents. For most of the past 100 years, as Jim Crow segregation, Supreme Court decisions, industrialization, and urbanization shaped the status of other minority groups, American Indians subsisted on the fringes of development and change, marginalized, relatively powerless, and isolated. Their links to the larger society were weaker and, compared with African Americans, white ethnic groups, and other minorities, they were less affected by the forces of social and political evolution. While other minority groups maintained a regular presence in national headlines, American Indians have been generally ignored and unnoticed, except perhaps as mascots for sports teams, including the Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves, and Cleveland Indians.

The last decades of the 20th century witnessed some improvement in the status of American Indians in general, and some tribes, especially those with casinos and other gaming establishments, made notable progress toward parity with national standards. Also, the tribes are now more in control of their own affairs, and many have effectively

used their increased autonomy and independence to address problems in education, health, joblessness, and other areas. Despite this progress, however, large gaps remain between American Indians' norms and national norms in virtually every area of social and economic life. American Indians living on reservations are among the poorest groups in U.S. society.

In this chapter, we will bring the history of American Indians up to the present and explore both recent progress and persisting problems. Some of the questions we address include: What accounts for the lowly position of this group for much of the past century? How can we explain the improvements in the most recent decades? Now, early in the 21st century, what problems remain, and how does the situation of American Indians compare with that of other colonized and conquered minority groups? What are the most promising strategies for closing the remaining gaps between American Indians and the larger society?

Size of the Group

How many Native Americans are there? This question has several different answers, partly because of the way census information is collected and partly because of the social and subjective nature of race and group membership. The most current answers come from the 2010 U.S. census.

The task of determining the size of the group is also complicated by the way the census collects information on race. As you recall, beginning with the 2000 census, people were allowed to claim membership in more than one racial category. If we define American Indians as consisting of people who identify themselves as *only* American Indian, we will get one estimate of the size of the group. If we use a broader definition and include people who claim mixed racial ancestry (listed under "Alone or in Combination" in Table 6.1), our estimate of group size will be much larger.

At any rate, Table 6.1 shows that there were more than 5 million people who claimed at least some American Indian or Alaska Native ancestry but only about half that number if we confine the group to people who select one race only. By either count, the group is a tiny minority (about 1%) of the total population of the United States. Table 6.1 presents information for American Indians and Alaska Natives separately, for the ten largest tribal groupings of American Indians, and for the four largest tribal groupings of Alaska Natives.

The American Indian population has grown rapidly over the past several decades, but this fact needs to be seen in the full context of history. As we mentioned in Chapter 3, in 1492 there were anywhere from several million to 10 million or more American Indians living in what is now the continental ("Lower 48") United States (Mann, 2011, pp. 105–109). Losses suffered during the contact period reduced the population to fewer than 250,000 by 1900, a loss of at least 75%, possibly much larger.

Recent population growth has been quite rapid, especially in recent decades (see Figure 6.1). This more recent growth is largely the result of changing definitions of race in the larger society and people's much greater willingness to claim Indian ancestry, a pattern that again underscores the basically social nature of race.

Table 6.1 American Indians and Alaska Natives, 2010

	Alone	*Alone or in combination (2 or more groups)*
ALL AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES	2,932,248	5,220,579
AMERICAN INDIANS	2,042,825	3,831,740
ALASKA NATIVES	113,902	162,504
Ten Largest Tribal Groupings for American Indians		
Cherokee	284,247	819,858
Navajo	286,731	332,129
Choctaw	103,910	195,764
Chippewa	112,757	170,742
Sioux	112,176	170,110
Apache	63,193	118,810
Blackfeet	27,279	105,304
Pueblo	72,270	91,242
Creek	48,352	88,332
Iroquois	40,570	40,432
Largest Tribal Groupings for Alaska Natives		
Yupik	27,329	30,868
Inupiat	20,941	25,687
Tlingit-Haida	8,547	13,486
Alaskan Athabascan	12,318	16,665

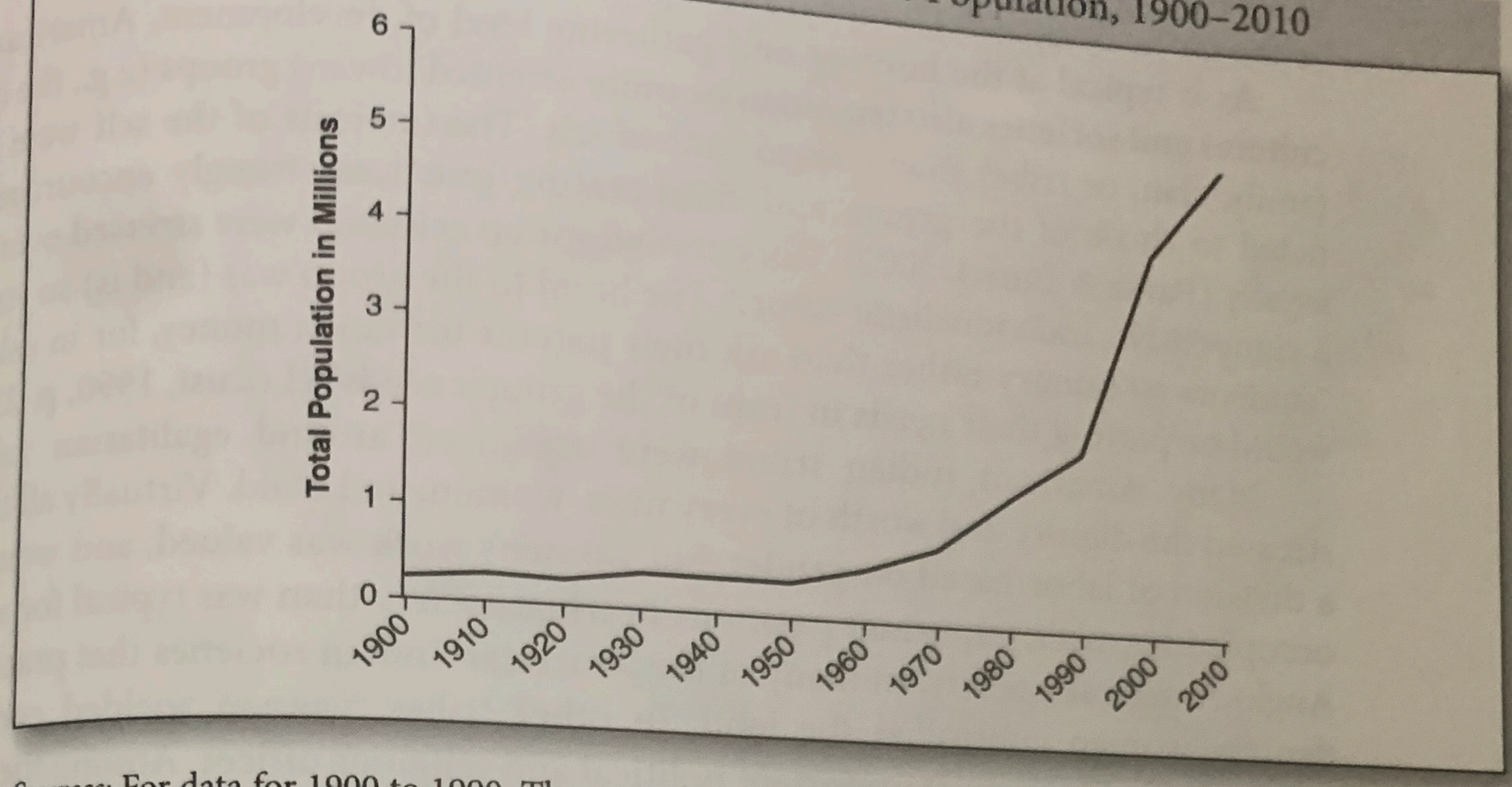
Source: Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel (2012).

American Indian Cultures

The dynamics of American Indian and Anglo American relationships have been shaped by the vast differences in culture, values, and norms between the two groups. These differences have hampered communication in the past and continue to do so in the present. A comprehensive analysis of American Indian cultures is well beyond the scope of this text, but the past experiences and present goals of the group can be appreciated only with some understanding of their views of the world.

We must note here, as we did in Chapter 3, that there were (and are) hundreds of different tribes in what is now the United States, each with its own language and heritage, and that a complete analysis of American Indian culture would have to take this diversity into account. However, some patterns and cultural characteristics are widely shared across the tribes, and we will concentrate on these similarities.

Figure 6.1 American Indian and Alaska Native Population, 1900–2010



Sources: For data for 1900 to 1990, Thornton (2001, p. 142); 2000 and 2010, U.S. Census Bureau (2007, p. 14; 2010) and Norris et al. (2012).

Before exploring the content of their culture, we should note that most Native American tribes that existed in what is now the United States relied on hunting and gathering to satisfy their basic needs, although some cultivated gardens as well. This is important because, as noted by Gerhard Lenski (see Chapter 1), societies are profoundly shaped by their subsistence technology.

Hunting-and-gathering societies often survive on the thin edge of hunger and want. They endure because they stress cultural values such as sharing and cooperation, and maintain strong bonds of cohesion and solidarity. As you will see, American Indian societies are no exception to this fundamental survival strategy.

The relatively lower level of development of American Indians is reflected in what is perhaps their most obvious difference with Western cultures: their ideas about the relationship between human beings and the natural world. In the traditional view of many American Indian cultures, the universe is a unity. Humans are simply a part of a larger reality, no different from or more important than other animals, plants, trees, and the earth itself. The goal of many American Indian tribes was to live in harmony with the natural world, not "improve" it, or use it for their own selfish purposes, views that differ sharply from Western concepts of development, commercial farming, and bending the natural world to the service of humans. The gap between the two worldviews is evident in the reaction of one American Indian to the idea that his people should become farmers: "You ask me to plow the ground. . . . Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? You ask me to cut grass and make hay . . . but how dare I cut my mother's hair?" (Brown, 1970, p. 273).

The concept of private property, or the ownership of things, was not prominent in American Indian cultures and was, from the Anglo American perspective, most notably absent in conceptions of land ownership. The land simply existed, and the notion of owning, selling, or buying it was foreign to American Indians. In the words

of Tecumseh, a chief of the Shawnee, a man could no more sell the land than the "sea or the air he breathed" (Josephy, 1968, p. 283).

As is typical at the hunting-and-gathering level of development, American Indian cultures and societies also tended to be more oriented toward groups (e.g., the extended family, clan, or tribe) than toward individuals. The interests of the self were subordinated to those of the group, and child-rearing practices strongly encouraged group loyalty (Parke & Buriel, 2002). Cooperative, group activities were stressed over those of a competitive, individualistic nature. The bond to the group was (and is) so strong that "students go hungry rather than ask their parents for lunch money, for in asking they would be putting their needs in front of the group's needs" (Locust, 1990, p. 231).

Many American Indian tribes were organized around egalitarian values that stressed the dignity and worth of every man, woman, and child. Virtually all tribes had a division of labor based on gender, but women's work was valued, and women often occupied far more important positions in tribal society than was typical for women in Anglo American society. In many of the American Indian societies that practiced gardening, women controlled the land. In other tribes, women wielded considerable power and held the most important political and religious offices. Among the Iroquois, for example, a council of older women appointed the chief of the tribe and made decisions about when to wage war (Amott & Matthaei, 1991, pp. 34–35).

These differences in values, compounded by the power differentials that emerged, often placed American Indians at a disadvantage when dealing with the dominant group. The American Indians' conception of land ownership and their lack of experience with deeds, titles, contracts, and other Western legal concepts often made it difficult for them to defend their resources from Anglo Americans. At other times, cultural differences led to disruptions of traditional practices, further weakening American Indian societies. For example, Christian missionaries and government representatives tried to reverse the traditional American Indian division of labor, in which women were responsible for the gardening. In the Western view, only men did farm work. Also, the military and political representatives of the dominant society usually ignored women tribal leaders and imposed Western notions of patriarchy and men leadership on the tribes (Amott & Matthaei, 1991, p. 39).

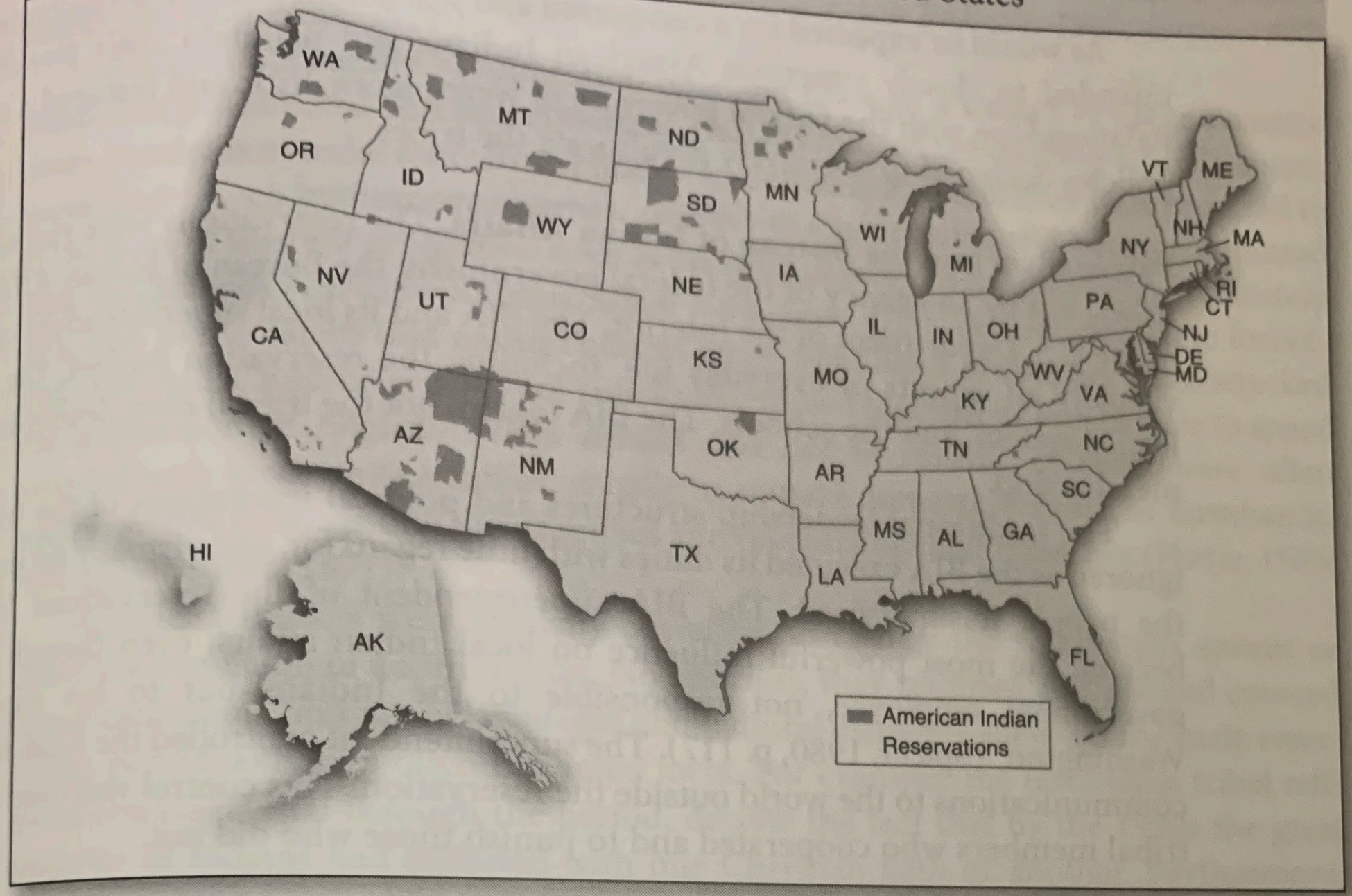
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why are there different estimates for the size of the American Indian and Alaska Native population? How do these differences support the idea that race is a social construction?
2. What are the key characteristics of Native American cultures? How do these vary from Anglo culture? How did these differences shape Anglo–Indian relations?

Relations With the Federal Government After the 1890s

By the end of the Indian Wars in 1890, Americans Indians had few resources with which to defend their self-interests. In addition to being confined to reservations, most

Figure 6.2 American Indian Reservations in the United States



Source: National Park Service (2014).

American Indian groups were scattered throughout the western two thirds of the United States and split by cultural and linguistic differences. Politically, the power of the group was further limited by the facts that the huge majority of American Indians were not U.S. citizens and that most tribes lacked a cultural basis for understanding representative democracy as practiced in the larger society.

Economically, American Indians were among the most impoverished groups in society. Reservation lands were generally of poor quality, traditional food sources such as buffalo and other game had been destroyed, and traditional hunting grounds and gardening plots had been lost to white farmers and ranchers. The tribes had few means of satisfying even their most basic needs. Many became totally dependent on the federal government for food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities.

Prospects for improvement seemed slim. Most reservations were in remote areas, far from sites of industrialization and modernization (see Figure 6.2), and American Indians had few of the skills (knowledge of English, familiarity with Western work habits and routines) that would have enabled them to compete for a place in the increasingly urban and industrial American society of the early 20th century. Off the reservations, racial prejudice and strong intolerance limited them. On the reservations, they were subjected to policies designed either to maintain their powerlessness and poverty or to force them to Americanize. Either way, the future of American Indians was in serious jeopardy, and their destructive relations with white society continued in peace as they had in war.

Reservation Life

As would be expected for a conquered and still hostile group, the reservations were intended to closely supervise American Indians and maintain their powerlessness. Relationships with the federal government were paternalistic and featured a variety of policies designed to coercively acculturate the tribes.

Paternalism and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The reservations were run not by the tribes, but by an agency of the federal government: the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The BIA and its local superintendent controlled virtually all aspects of everyday life, including the reservation budget, the criminal justice system, and the schools. The BIA (again, not the tribes) even determined tribal membership.

The traditional leadership structures and political institutions of the tribes were ignored as the BIA executed its duties with little regard for, and virtually no input from, the people it supervised. The BIA superintendent of the reservations "ordinarily became the most powerful influence on local Indian affairs, even though he was a government employee, not responsible to the Indians but to his superiors in Washington" (Spicer, 1980, p. 117). The superintendent controlled the food supply and communications to the world outside the reservation. This control was used to reward tribal members who cooperated and to punish those who did not.

Coercive Acculturation: The Dawes Act and Boarding Schools. Consistent with the Blauner hypothesis, American Indians on the reservations were subjected to coercive acculturation or forced Americanization. Their culture was attacked, their languages and religions were forbidden, and their institutions circumvented and undermined. The centerpiece of U.S. Indian policy was the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, a deeply flawed attempt to impose white definitions of land ownership and to transform American Indians into independent farmers by dividing their land among the families of each tribe. The intention of the act was to give each Indian family the means to survive like their white neighbors.

Although the law might seem benevolent in intent (certainly thousands of immigrant families would have been thrilled to own land), it was flawed by a gross lack of understanding of American Indian cultures and needs, and in many ways it was a direct attack on those cultures. Most American Indian tribes did not have a strong agrarian tradition, and little or nothing was done to prepare them for their transition to peasant yeomanry. More important, American Indians had little or no concept of land as private property, and it was relatively easy for settlers, land speculators, and others to separate Indian families from the land allocated to them by this legislation. By allotting land to families and individuals, the legislation sought to destroy the broader kinship, clan, and tribal social structures and replace them with Western systems that featured individualism and the profit motive (Cornell, 1988, p. 80).

About 140 million acres were allocated to the tribes in 1887. By the 1930s, nearly 90 million of those acres—almost 65%—had been lost. Most of the remaining land was desert or otherwise nonproductive (Wax, 1971, p. 55). From the standpoint of the

Indian nations, the Dawes Allotment Act was a disaster and a further erosion of their already paltry store of resources. (For more details, see Josephy, 1968; Lurie, 1982; McNickle, 1973; Wax, 1971.)

Additionally, coercive acculturation operated through a variety of other avenues. Whenever possible, the BIA sent American Indian children to boarding schools, sometimes hundreds of miles away from parents and other kin, where they were required to speak English, go by European names, convert to Christianity, and become educated in the ways of Western civilization such as dressing in western style clothing. Consistent with the Blauner (1972) hypothesis, tribal languages, dress, and religion were forbidden, and to the extent that native cultures were mentioned at all, they were attacked and ridiculed. Children of different tribes were mixed together as roommates to speed the acquisition of English. When school was not in session, children were often boarded with local white families, usually as unpaid domestic helpers or farmhands, and prevented from visiting their families and revitalizing their tribal ties (Hoxie, 1984; Spicer, 1980; Wax, 1971).

American Indians were virtually powerless to change the reservation system or avoid the campaign of acculturation. Nonetheless, they resented and resisted coerced Americanization, and many languages and cultural elements survived the early reservation period, although often in altered form. For example, the traditional tribal religions remained vital through the period, despite the fact that by the 1930s the great majority of Indians had affiliated with one Christian faith or another. Furthermore, many new religions were founded, some combining Christian and traditional elements (Spicer, 1980, p. 118).

The Indian Reorganization Act

By the 1930s, the failure of the reservation system and the policy of forced assimilation had become obvious to all who cared to observe. The quality of life for American Indians had not improved, and there was little economic development and fewer job opportunities on the reservations. Health care was woefully inadequate, and education levels lagged far behind national standards.

The plight of American Indians eventually found a sympathetic ear in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was elected president in 1932, and John Collier, the man he appointed to run the BIA. Collier was knowledgeable about American Indian issues and concerns, and was instrumental in securing the passage of the **Indian Reorganization Act (IRA)** in 1934.

This landmark legislation contained a number of significant provisions for American Indians and broke sharply with the federal policies of the past. In particular, the IRA rescinded the Dawes Act of 1887 and the policy of individualizing tribal lands. It also provided means by which the tribes could expand their landholdings. Many of the mechanisms of coercive Americanization in the school system and elsewhere were dismantled. Financial aid in various forms and expertise were made available for the economic development of the reservations. In perhaps the most significant departure from earlier policy, the IRA proposed an increase in American Indian self-governance and a reduction of the paternalistic role of the BIA and other federal agencies.

Although sympathetic to American Indians, the IRA had its limits and shortcomings. Many of its intentions were never realized, and the empowerment of the tribes was not unqualified. The move to self-governance generally took place on the dominant group's terms and in conformity with the values and practices of white society. For example, the proposed increase in the decision-making power of the tribes was contingent on their adoption of Anglo American political forms, including secret ballots, majority rule, and written constitutions. These were alien concepts to those tribes that selected leaders by procedures other than popular election (e.g., leaders might be chosen by councils of elders) or that made decisions by open discussion and consensus building (i.e., decisions required the agreement of everyone with a voice in the process, not a simple majority). The incorporation of these Western forms illustrates the basically assimilationist intent of the IRA.

The IRA had variable effects on American Indian women. In tribes that were dominated by men, the IRA gave women new rights to participate in elections, run for office, and hold leadership roles. In other cases, new political structures replaced traditional forms, some of which, as in the Iroquois culture, had accorded women considerable power. Although the political effects were variable, the programs funded by the IRA provided opportunities for women on many reservations to receive education and training for the first time. Many of these opportunities were oriented toward domestic tasks and other roles traditionally done by Western women, but some prepared American Indian women for jobs outside the family and off the reservation, such as clerical work and nursing (Evans, 1989, pp. 208–209).

In summary, the IRA of 1934 was a significant improvement over prior federal Indian policy, but was bolder and more sympathetic to American Indians in intent than in execution. On the one hand, not all tribes were capable of taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the legislation, and some ended up being further victimized. For example, in the Hopi tribe, located in the Southwest, the Act allowed a Westernized group of American Indians to be elected to leadership roles, with the result that dominant group firms were allowed to have access to the mineral resources, farmland, and water rights controlled by the tribe. The resultant development generated wealth for the white firms and their Hopi allies, but most of the tribe continued to languish in poverty (Churchill, 1985, pp. 112–113). On the other hand, some tribes prospered (at least comparatively speaking) under the IRA. One impoverished, landless group of Cherokee in Oklahoma acquired land, equipment, and expert advice through the IRA, and between 1937 and 1949 they developed a prosperous, largely debt-free farming community (Debo, 1970, pp. 294–300). Many tribes remained suspicious of the IRA, and by 1948 fewer than 100 tribes had voted to accept its provisions.

The Termination Policy

The IRA's stress on the legitimacy of tribal identity seemed "un-American" to many. There was constant pressure on the federal government to return to an individualistic policy that encouraged (or required) Americanization. Some viewed the tribal structures and communal property–holding patterns as relics of an earlier era

and as impediments to modernization and development. Not so incidentally, some elements of dominant society still coveted the remaining Indian lands and resources, which could be more easily exploited if property ownership were individualized.

In 1953, the assimilationist forces won a victory when Congress passed a resolution calling for an end to the reservation system and to the special relationships between the tribes and the federal government. The proposed policy, called **termination**, was intended to get the federal government "out of the Indian business." It rejected the IRA and proposed a return to the system of private land ownership imposed on the tribes by the Dawes Act. Horrified at the notion of termination, the tribes opposed the policy strongly and vociferously. Under this policy, all special relationships—including treaty obligations—between the federal government and the tribes would end. Tribes would no longer exist as legally recognized entities, and tribal lands and other resources would be placed in private hands (Josephy, 1968, pp. 353–355).

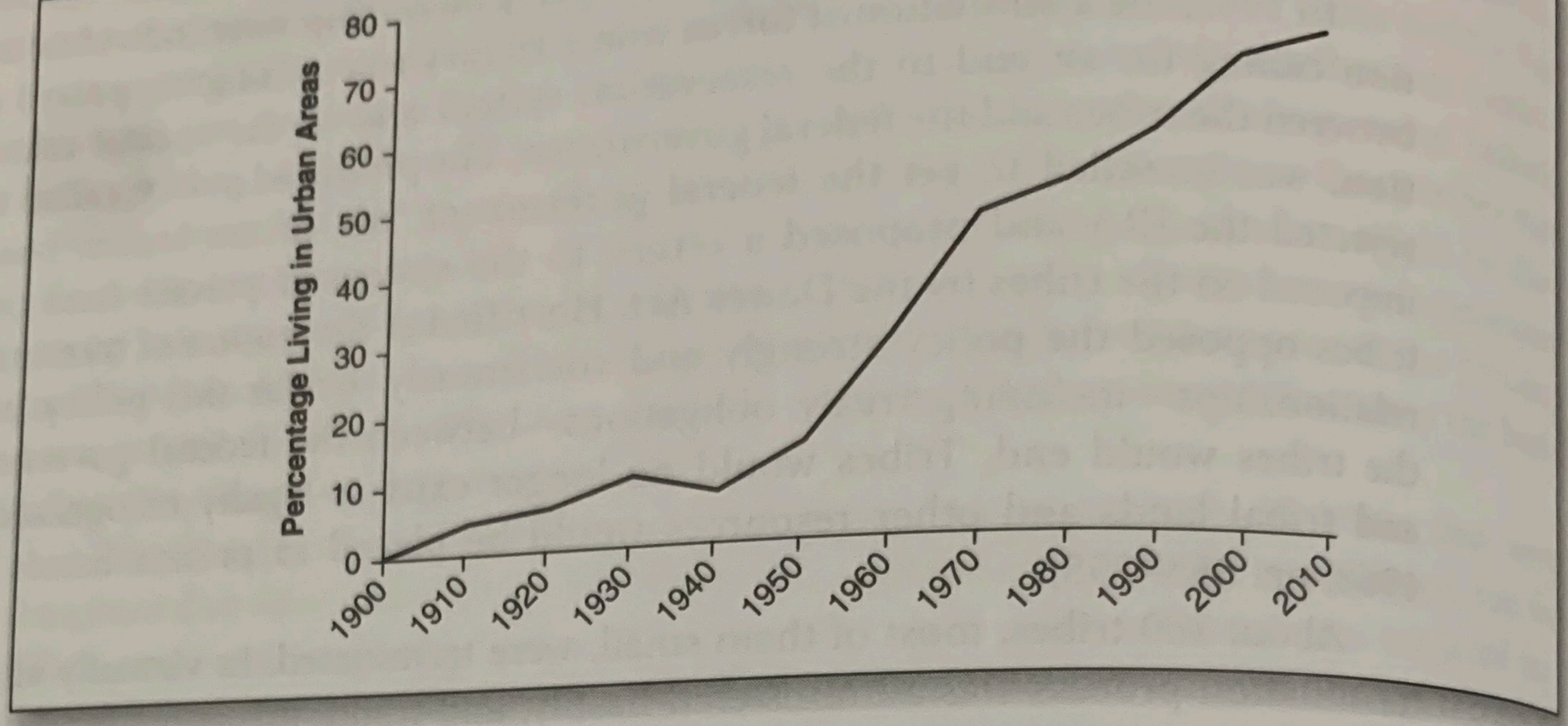
About 100 tribes, most of them small, were terminated. In virtually all cases, the termination process was administered hastily, and fraud, misuse of funds, and other injustices were common. The Menominee of Wisconsin and the Klamath on the West Coast were the two largest tribes to be terminated. Both suffered devastating economic losses and precipitous declines in quality of life. Neither tribe had the business or tax base needed to finance the services (e.g., health care and schooling) formerly provided by the federal government, and both were forced to sell land, timber, and other scarce resources to maintain minimal standards of living. Many poor American Indian families were forced to turn to local and state agencies, which placed a severe strain on welfare budgets. The experience of the Menominee was so disastrous that at the concerted request of the tribe, reservation status was restored in 1973; for the Klamath it was restored in 1986 (Raymer, 1974; Snipp, 1996, p. 394).

Relocation and Urbanization

At about the same time the termination policy came into being, various programs were established to encourage American Indians to move to urban areas. The movement to the city had already begun in the 1940s, spurred by the availability of factory jobs during World War II. In the 1950s, the movement was further encouraged with programs of assistance and by the declining government support for economic development on the reservation, the most dramatic example of which was the policy of termination (Green, 1999, p. 265). Centers for American Indians were established in many cities, and various services (e.g., job training, housing assistance, English instruction) were offered to assist in the adjustment to urban life.

The urbanization of the American Indian population is displayed in Figure 6.3. Note the rapid increase in the movement to the city that began in the 1950s. Over 70% of all American Indians are now urbanized, and since 1950 Indians have urbanized faster than the general population. Nevertheless, American Indians are still the least urbanized minority group. The population as a whole is about 80% urbanized; in contrast, African Americans (see Figure 4.2) are about 90% urbanized.

Figure 6.3 Urbanization of American Indians, 1900–2010



Sources: For data for 1900 through 1990, Thornton (2001, p. 142); 2000 and 2010, U.S. Census Bureau (2012d, Table PCT2).

Like African Americans, American Indians arrived in the cities after the mainstream economy had begun to deemphasize blue-collar or manufacturing jobs. Because of their relatively low average levels of educational attainment and their racial and cultural differences, American Indians in the city tended to encounter the same problems experienced by African Americans and other minority groups of color: high rates of unemployment, inadequate housing, and all the other travails of the urban underclass.

American Indian women also migrated to the city in considerable numbers. The discrimination, unemployment, and poverty of the urban environment often made it difficult for the men of the group to fulfill the role of breadwinner, thus the burden of supporting the family tended to fall on the women. The difficulties inherent in combining child rearing and a job outside the home were compounded by isolation from the support networks provided by extended family and clan back on the reservations. Nevertheless, one study found that American Indian women in the city continued to practice their traditional cultures and maintain the tribal identity of their children (Joe & Miller, 1994, p. 186).

American Indians living in the city are, on average, better off than those living on reservations, where unemployment can reach 80% or even 90%. The improvement is relative, however. Although many individual Indians prosper in the urban environment, income figures for urban Indians as a whole are comparable to those for African Americans and well below those for whites. American Indian unemployment rates run much higher than the national average. For example, in the first half of 2010 unemployment for all American Indians was about 15%, comparable to the figure for African Americans (see Figure 5.3) and 67% higher than that for whites (Austin, 2010).

Thus, a move to the city often means trading rural poverty for the urban variety, with little net improvement in life chances.

American Indians will probably remain more rural than other minority groups for years to come. Despite the poverty and lack of opportunities for schooling and jobs, the reservation offers some advantages in services and lifestyle. On the reservation, there may be opportunities for political participation and leadership roles that are not available in the cities, where American Indians are a tiny minority. Reservations also offer kinfolk, friends, religious services, and tribal celebrations (Snipp, 1989, p. 84). Lower levels of education, work experience, and financial resources combine with the prejudice, discrimination, and racism of the larger society to lower the chances of success in the city, and will probably sustain a continuing return to the reservations.

Although the economic benefits of urbanization have been slim for the group as whole, other advantages have accrued from life in the city. It was much easier to establish networks of friendship and affiliation across tribal lines in the cities, and urban Indians have been one of the sources of strength and personnel for a movement of protest that began early in the 20th century. Virtually all the organizational vehicles of American Indian protest have had urban roots.

Self-Determination

The termination policy aroused so much opposition from American Indians and was such an obvious disaster that the pressure to push tribes to termination faded in the late 1950s, although the act itself was not repealed until 1975. Since the 1960s, federal Indian policy has generally returned to the tradition set by the IRA. Termination and forced assimilation continue to be officially rejected, and, within limits, the tribes have been granted more freedom to find their own way, at their own pace, of relating to the larger society.

Several federal programs and laws have benefited the tribes during the past few decades, including the antipoverty and "Great Society" campaigns launched in the 1960s. In 1970, President Richard Nixon affirmed the government's commitment to fulfilling treaty obligations and the right of the tribes to self-governance. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act was passed in 1975. This legislation increased aid to reservation schools and American Indian students and increased tribal control over the administration of the reservations, from police forces to schools to road maintenance.

The Self-Determination Act primarily benefited the larger tribes and those that had well-established administrative and governing structures. Smaller and less well-organized tribes have continued to rely heavily on the federal government (Snipp, 1996, p. 394). Nonetheless, in many cases this new phase of federal policy has allowed American Indian tribes to plot their own courses free of paternalistic regulation, and, just as important, it has given them the tools and resources to address their problems and improve their situations. Decision making was returned to local authorities, who were "held more accountable to local needs, conditions, and cultures than outsiders" (Taylor & Kalt, 2005, p. xi).

In the view of many, self-determination is a key reason for the recent improvements in the status of American Indians, and we will look at some of these developments after examining the American Indian protest movement.

Protest and Resistance

Early Efforts

As BIA-administered reservations and coercive Americanization came to dominate tribal life in the early 20th century, new forms of Indian activism appeared. The modern protest movement was tiny at first and, with few exceptions, achieved a measure of success only in recent decades. In fact, the American Indian protest movement in the past was not so much unsuccessful as simply ignored. The movement has focused on several complementary goals: protecting American Indian resources and treaty rights, striking a balance between assimilation and pluralism, and finding a relationship with the dominant group that would permit a broader array of life chances without sacrificing tribal identity and heritage.

Formally organized American Indian protest organizations have existed since the 1910s, but the modern phase of the protest movement began during World War II. Many American Indians served in the military or moved to the city to take jobs in aid of the war effort and were thereby exposed to the world beyond the reservation. Also, political activism on reservations, which had been stimulated by the IRA, continued through the war years, as the recognition of growing problems that were shared across tribal lines.

These trends helped stimulate the founding of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1944. This organization was pan-tribal (i.e., included members from many different tribes); its first convention was attended by representatives of 50 different tribes and reservations (Cornell, 1988, p. 119). The leadership consisted largely of American Indians educated and experienced in the white world. However, the NCAI's program stressed the importance of preserving the old ways and tribal institutions as well as protecting Indian welfare. An early victory for the NCAI and its allies came in 1946 when an Indian Claims Commission was created by the federal government. This body was authorized to hear claims brought by the tribes with regard to treaty violations. The commission has settled hundreds of claims, resulting in awards of millions of dollars to the tribes, and it continues its work today (Weeks, 1988, pp. 261–262).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the protest movement was further stimulated by the threat of termination and by the increasing number of American Indians living in the cities who developed friendships across tribal lines. Awareness of common problems, rising levels of education, and the examples set by the successful protests of other minority groups also increased readiness for collective action.

Red Power

By the 1960s and 1970s, American Indian protest groups were finding ways to express their grievances and problems to the nation. The Red Power movement, like the Black Power movement (see Chapter 5), encompassed a coalition of groups, many

considerably more assertive than the NCAI, and a varied collection of ideas, most of which stressed self-determination and pride in race and cultural heritage. Red Power protests included a "fish-in" in Washington State in 1965, an episode that also illustrates the nature of American Indian demands. The State of Washington had tried to limit the fishing rights of several different tribes on the grounds that the supply of fish was diminishing and needed to be protected. The tribes depended on fishing for subsistence and survival, and they argued that their right to fish had been guaranteed by treaties signed in the 1850s, and it was the pollution and commercial fishing of the dominant society that had depleted the supply of fish. They organized a "fish-in" in violation of the state's policy and were met by a contingent of police officers and other law officials. Violent confrontations and mass arrests ensued. Three years later, after a lengthy and expensive court battle, the tribes were vindicated, and the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed their treaty rights to fish the rivers of Washington State (Nabakov, 1999, pp. 362–363).

Another widely publicized episode took place in 1969, when American Indians from various tribes occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, the site of a closed federal prison. The protesters were acting on a law that granted American Indians the right to reclaim abandoned federal land. The occupation of Alcatraz was organized in part by the American Indian Movement (AIM), founded in 1968. More militant and radical than the previously established protest groups, AIM aggressively confronted the BIA, the police, and other forces that were seen as repressive. With the backing of AIM and other groups, Alcatraz was occupied for nearly 4 years and generated a great deal of publicity for the Red Power movement and the plight of American Indians.

In 1972, AIM helped organize a march on Washington, DC, called the "Trail of Broken Treaties." Marchers came from many tribes and represented both urban and reservation Indians. The intent of the marchers was to dramatize the problems of the tribes. The leaders demanded the abolition of the BIA, the return of illegally taken land, and increased self-governance for the tribes, among other things. When they reached Washington, some of the marchers forcibly occupied the BIA offices. Property was damaged (by which side is disputed), and records and papers were destroyed. The marchers eventually surrendered, and none of their demands was met. The following year, AIM occupied the village of Wounded Knee in South Dakota to protest the violation of treaty rights. Wounded Knee was the site of the last armed confrontation between Indians and whites, in 1890, and was selected by AIM for its deep symbolic significance. The occupation lasted more than two months and involved several armed confrontations with federal authorities. Again, the protest ended without the federal government meeting any of the demands made by the Indian leadership (Olson & Wilson, 1984, pp. 172–175). Since then, lawsuits and court cases have predominated over dramatic, direct confrontations.

Ironically, the struggle for Red Power encouraged assimilation as well as pluralism. The movement linked members of different tribes and forced Indians of diverse heritages to find common ground, often in the form of a generic American Indian culture. Inevitably, the protests were conducted in English, and the grievances were expressed in ways that were understandable to white society, thus increasing the

pressure to acculturate even while arguing for the survival of the tribes. Furthermore, successful protest required that American Indians be fluent in English, trained in the law and other professions, skilled in dealing with bureaucracies, and knowledgeable about the formulation and execution of public policy. American Indians who became proficient in these areas thereby took on the characteristics of their adversaries (Hraba, 1979, p. 235).

As the pan-tribal protest movement forged ties between members of diverse tribes, the successes of the movement and changing federal policy and public opinion encouraged a rebirth of commitment to tribalism and "Indianness." American Indians were simultaneously stimulated to assimilate (by stressing their common characteristics and creating organizational forms that united the tribes) and to retain a pluralistic relationship with the larger society (by working for self-determination and enhanced tribal power and authority). Thus, part of the significance of the Red Power movement was that it encouraged both pan-tribal unity and a continuation of tribal diversity (Olson & Wilson, 1984, p. 206). Today, American Indians continue to seek a way of existing in the larger society that merges assimilation with pluralism.

Table 6.2 summarizes this discussion of federal policy and Indian protest. The four major policy phases since the end of overt hostilities in 1890 are listed on the left. The thrust of the government's economic and political policies are listed in the next two columns, followed by a brief characterization of tribal response. The last column shows the changing bases for federal policy, sometimes aimed at weakening tribal structures and individualizing American Indians, and sometimes (including most recently) aimed at working with and preserving tribal structures.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

3. What are the major phases in Indian–white relations since the 1890s? What laws and federal policies shaped these changes? How did Indians respond?
4. Compare and contrast the Red Power movement with the Black Power movement discussed in Chapter 5.
5. How were the similarities and differences shaped by the groups' situations?

Table 6.2 Federal Indian Policy and Indian Response

Period	*Economic Impact*	*Political Impact*	*Indian Response*	*Government Approach*
Reservation late 1800s–1930s	Land loss (Dawes Act) and welfare dependency	Government control of reservation and coerced acculturation	Some resistance; growth of religious movements	Individualistic; creation of self-sufficient farmers

Period	*Economic Impact*	*Political Impact*	*Indian Response*	*Government Approach*
Reorganization (IRA) 1930s and 1940s	Stabilized land base and supported some development of reservation	Establish federally sponsored tribal governments	Increased political participation in many tribes; some pan-tribal activity	Incorporated tribes as groups; creation of self-sufficient "Americanized" communities
Termination and relocation late 1940s–early 1960s	Withdrawal of government support for reservations; promotion of urbanization	New assault on tribes, new forms of coercive acculturation	Increased pan-tribalism; widespread and intense opposition to termination	Individualistic; dissolved tribal ties and promoted incorporation into the modern, urban labor market
Self-determination 1960s to present	Developed reservation economies; increased integration of Indian labor force	Support for tribal governments	Greatly increased political activity	Incorporated tribes as self-sufficient communities with access to federal programs of support and welfare

Source: Based on Cornell, Kalt, Krepps, and Taylor (1998, p. 5).

FOCUS ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?

By 1900, American Indians had lost at least 75% of their population base and numbered fewer than 250,000 people. There is no question that American Indians suffered untold horrors during the contact period (and inflicted horrors of their own), but should this be classified as genocide? Was there a deliberate attempt to destroy American Indians and their culture, or was the population loss simply a sad, unavoidable result of a clash of civilizations?

We should begin by defining what *genocide* means. According to a resolution adopted by the United Nations in 1948, genocide consists of acts "committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group" (United Nations, 1948). It includes actions other than outright killing, such as inflicting serious bodily or mental harm or creating conditions of life designed to cause the destruction of the group.

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The core concepts you've been reading about in this text apply to the discussion of genocide, since genocide almost always involves a dominant–minority group situation, in which the dominant group regards the minority group with contempt, racism, and extreme prejudice. Also, power, one of the concepts in the Noel hypothesis, is a key element in genocide. The dominant group must have sufficient power resources to attempt the mass extermination of the minority group.

Before addressing American Indians, let's briefly consider some well-known historical examples of genocide to provide some comparison and context. Unfortunately, there are many instances from which to draw.

The most infamous example of genocide was the effort of German Nazis to exterminate Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and other "inferior" groups before and during World War II. Millions of people, including 6 million Jews, were systematically slaughtered in Nazi death camps. This massive, highly bureaucratized, and rationally organized genocide was motivated and "justified" by deep racism and anti-Semitism. Nazi ideology demonized Jews and pictured them as a separate, lower, contemptible race that had to be destroyed for the good of all "proper" Germans and for the health of the Third Reich.

A more recent episode of genocide occurred in the tiny African nation of Rwanda in the early 1990s. The two main Rwandan ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis, had a long history of mutual enmity that had been exacerbated by their German and Belgian colonial rulers' policy of "divide and conquer." The colonizers had given the Hutus a privileged status, and their greater power continued after Rwanda became independent in 1962. The sporadic clashes between the tribal groups blossomed into full-blown genocide in 1994, occasioned by a Tutsi-led rebellion and the death of the Hutu president of Rwanda in a plane crash that was thought to have been the result of sabotage and Tutsi treachery.

The slaughter that ensued resulted in the deaths of perhaps 800,000 Tutsis, perhaps many more. No one was spared—not even pregnant women, children, and old people—and much of the killing was done by neighbors and acquaintances with bare hands or machetes. The killing was encouraged by Hutu-controlled radio, which characterized the Tutsi as "cockroaches" and worse (see Gourevitch, 1999). Insults such as these express the prejudice and contempt of the dominant group, but they also abet the slaughter by minimizing the humanity of the victimized group and maximizing their perceived lower status and "otherness."

How does the history of American Indians compare? First, note that international law specifies that acts of genocide must be intentional (United Nations, 1948). The Nazis clearly and openly intended to carry out their "final solution" and exterminate the Jewish people, and the Hutus that led the Rwandan genocide meant to annihilate their Tutsi neighbors. What was the intent of whites with regard to Indians? To be classified as genocide, there must be an intention to exterminate the group as a whole (as opposed to killing enemy combatants in battle).

It is not difficult to find statements that show that some whites clearly wanted to eliminate American Indians. For example, in 1864, troops under the command of Colonel John Chivington attacked a Cheyenne village near Sand Creek, Colorado, and killed several hundred Indians, most of them women, children, and old men. The incident is sometimes called the Massacre at Sand Creek, but what makes it a candidate for genocide is Chivington's motivation as revealed in his statement: "My intention is to kill all Indians I come across," including babies and infants, because "nits make lice" (Churchill, 1985, p. 229).

However, it is also easy to find white expressions of sympathy for the plight of the Indians and outrage over incidents such as Sand Creek (Lewy, 2004). As many have noted, sympathy for American Indians in the 19th century tended to be most intense in the areas farthest removed from actual battle. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suspect its sincerity (although, as in the case of the Dawes Act, sympathy unaccompanied by understanding of Indian culture could have harmful consequences). While it is abundantly clear that some– perhaps most–whites wanted to exterminate all Indians, that sentiment was not universal or unanimous.

Also, we must take account of the reasons for the population loss. Recall that much of the population decline was caused by the diseases imported by European colonists, not by deliberate attacks. While there were a few instances of "biological warfare" in which Indians were deliberately infected with smallpox, for the most part the diseases simply took their toll unguided by intention or deliberate plan (Lewy, 2004).

Some people argue that the intent to exterminate was implicit in the coercive, one-sided assimilation that was the centerpiece of policies such as the Dawes Act and institutions such as Indian boarding schools. If these policies had succeeded, the American Indian way of life would have been completely destroyed, even though individual descendants of the tribes might have survived. Also, the deliberate attempts to destroy the Indian food base (e.g., by slaughtering buffalo herds on the Great Plains) and to move Indian tribes from their homelands, and the poor support for reservations could be seen as attempts to create living conditions so desperate and impoverished that they would result in massive loss of life and the disappearance of the group. The intention to exterminate does not have to be overtly stated to be effective or to have that result.

We want to be careful in applying a term like *genocide* and not dilute its power by overuse. We also want to be clear about what actually happened to Indians and not minimize the horror or loss. Was this genocide? Certainly, it looks like genocide, and various authors, scholars, and activists have made that case (see, for example, Churchill, 1997; Stannard, 1992). Others acknowledge the enormous suffering but argue that the case for genocide is weakened by the fact that most of the population loss was caused by the impersonal spread of disease, not by direct violence or physical assaults (Lewy, 2004).

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Did American Indians nearly disappear as a group? Yes. Was there intent to exterminate this group? Yes, at least among many members of the dominant group. Did the U.S. government create conditions for the conquered tribes that were so desperate that they resulted–directly or indirectly–in widespread loss of life? Yes, in many instances and for many years. The story of American Indians doesn't feature state-sponsored slaughter like the Nazi Holocaust or the bloody person-to-person violence of Hutus killing Tutsis. Perhaps this was not an instance of genocide by the literal letter of the law. The results for this conquered and colonized group, however, are the same.

Contemporary American Indian–White Relations

Conflicts between American Indians and the larger society are far from over. Although the days of deadly battle are (with occasional exceptions) long gone, the issues that remain are serious, difficult to resolve, and, in their way, just as much matters of life and death. American Indians face enormous challenges in their struggle to improve their status, but, largely as a result of their greater freedom from stifling federal control since the 1970s, they also have some resources, some opportunities, and a leadership that is both talented and resourceful (Bordewich, 1996, p. 11).

Natural Resources

Ironically, land allotted to American Indian tribes in the 19th century sometimes turned out to be rich in resources that became valuable in the 20th century. These resources include oil, natural gas, coal, and uranium, basic sources of energy in the larger society. In addition (and despite the devastation wreaked by the Dawes Act of 1887), some tribes hold title to water rights, fishing rights, woodlands that could sustain a timber industry, and wilderness areas that could be developed for camping, hunting, and other forms of recreation. These resources are likely to become more valuable as the earth's natural resources and undeveloped areas are further depleted in the future.

The challenge faced by American Indians is to retain control of these resources and to develop them for their own benefit. Threats to the remaining tribal lands and assets are common. Mining and energy companies continue to cast envious eyes on American Indian land, and other tribal assets are coveted by real estate developers, fishers (recreational as well as commercial), backpackers and campers, and cities facing water shortages (Harjo, 1996).

Some tribes have succeeded in developing their resources for their own benefit, in part because of their increased autonomy and independence since the passage of the 1975 Indian Self-Determination Act. For example, the White Mountain Apaches of Arizona own a variety of enterprises, including a major ski resort and a casino (see

Cornell & Kalt, 1998, pp. 3–4). On many other reservations, however, even rich stores of resources lie dormant, awaiting the right combination of tribal leadership, expertise, and development capital.

On a broader level, tribes are banding together to share expertise and negotiate more effectively with the larger society. For example, 25 tribes founded the Council of Energy Resource Tribes in 1975 to coordinate and control the development of the mineral resources on reservation lands. Since its founding, the council has successfully negotiated a number of agreements with dominant group firms, increasing the flow of income to the tribes and raising their quality of life (Cornell, 1988; Snipp, 1989). The council now encompasses more than 50 tribes and several Canadian First Nations (Council of Energy Resource Tribes, n.d.).

COMPARATIVE FOCUS: Australian Aborigines and American Indians

Many indigenous societies around the globe—not just American Indians—have been conquered and colonized by European societies, and similar dynamics have been at play in these episodes, even though each has its own unique history. To illustrate, we will compare the impact of European domination on Australian Aborigines and on the indigenous peoples of North America.

Australia came under European domination in the late 1700s, nearly two centuries after the beginning of Anglo–American Indian relations. In spite of the time difference, however, the two contact situations shared many features. In both cases, the colonial power was Great Britain, first contact occurred in the preindustrial era, both indigenous groups were thinly spread across vast areas, and both were greatly inferior to the British in their technological development.

The Aboriginal peoples had lived in Australia for 50,000 years by the time the British arrived. They were organized into small, nomadic hunting-and-gathering bands and lacked the population base, social organization, and resources that would have permitted sustained resistance to the invasion of their land. There was plenty of violence in the contact situation, but unlike the situation in North America, there were no sustained military campaigns pitting large armies against each other.

The initial thrust of colonization was motivated by Great Britain's need for a place to send convicts; so the European population grew slowly at first and consisted mostly of prisoners. The early economic enterprises were subsistence farming and sheepherding, not large-scale operations that required forced labor.

Early relations between the English and the Aborigines centered on competition for land. The invaders pushed the Aborigines aside or killed them if they resisted. As in the Americas, European diseases took their toll, and the indigenous population

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declined rapidly. Because they were not desired as laborers, they were pushed away from the areas of white settlement into the fringes of development, where they and their grievances could be ignored. Like the Indians in North America, they were seen as "savages": a culture that would wither away and soon disappear.

The contemporary situation of Australian Aborigines has many parallels to that of American Indians. The group is largely rural and continues to live on land that is less desirable. After the initial—and dramatic—declines, their numbers have been increasing of late, partly because of higher birthrates and partly because of changing perceptions, growing sympathy for their plight, and increased willingness of people to claim their Aboriginal heritage. The population fell to a low of fewer than 100,000 at the start of the 20th century but is now put at 517,000, or about 2.5% of the total population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Just as in North America, there are huge differences between the indigenous population's norms and national norms. Life expectancy for Aborigines is as much as 12 years lower than that of the general population. They have less access to health care, and Aboriginal communities are much more afflicted with alcoholism, suicide, and malnutrition than the general population. Unemployment rates are triple that of the general population, Aboriginal housing is typically overcrowded and in poor repair, and only about 22% had completed Grade 12 in 2008 (up from 18% in 2002) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

The issues animating Aboriginal affairs should have a familiar ring to anyone acquainted with the challenges faced by American Indians. They include concerns for the preservation of Aboriginal culture, language, and identity; self-determination and autonomy; the return of lands illegally taken by the Anglo invaders; and an end to discrimination and unequal treatment.

The Aboriginal peoples of Australia, like American Indians, face many—often overwhelming—challenges to securing a better future for themselves and their children. Their history and their present situation clearly validate both the Blauner and Noel hypotheses: They are a colonized minority group, victims of European domination, with all the consequences that status implies.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

6. Compare and contrast the contact situations of American Indians and Australian Aborigines. In what ways were both colonized minorities?
7. Compare and contrast the contemporary situations of the groups. Why do these differences exist?

Attracting Industry to the Reservation

Many efforts to develop the reservations have focused on creating jobs by attracting industry through such incentives as low taxes, low rents, and a low-wage pool of labor—not unlike the package of benefits offered to employers by less-developed nations in Asia, South America, and Africa. With some notable exceptions, these efforts have not been particularly successful (for a review, see Cornell, 2006; Vinje, 1996). Reservations are often so geographically isolated that transportation costs become prohibitive. The jobs that have materialized are typically low wage and have few benefits; usually, non-Indians fill the more lucrative managerial positions. Thus, the opportunities for building economic power or improving the standard of living from these jobs are sharply limited. These new jobs may transform "the welfare poor into the working poor" (Snipp, 1996, p. 398), but their potential for raising economic vitality is low.

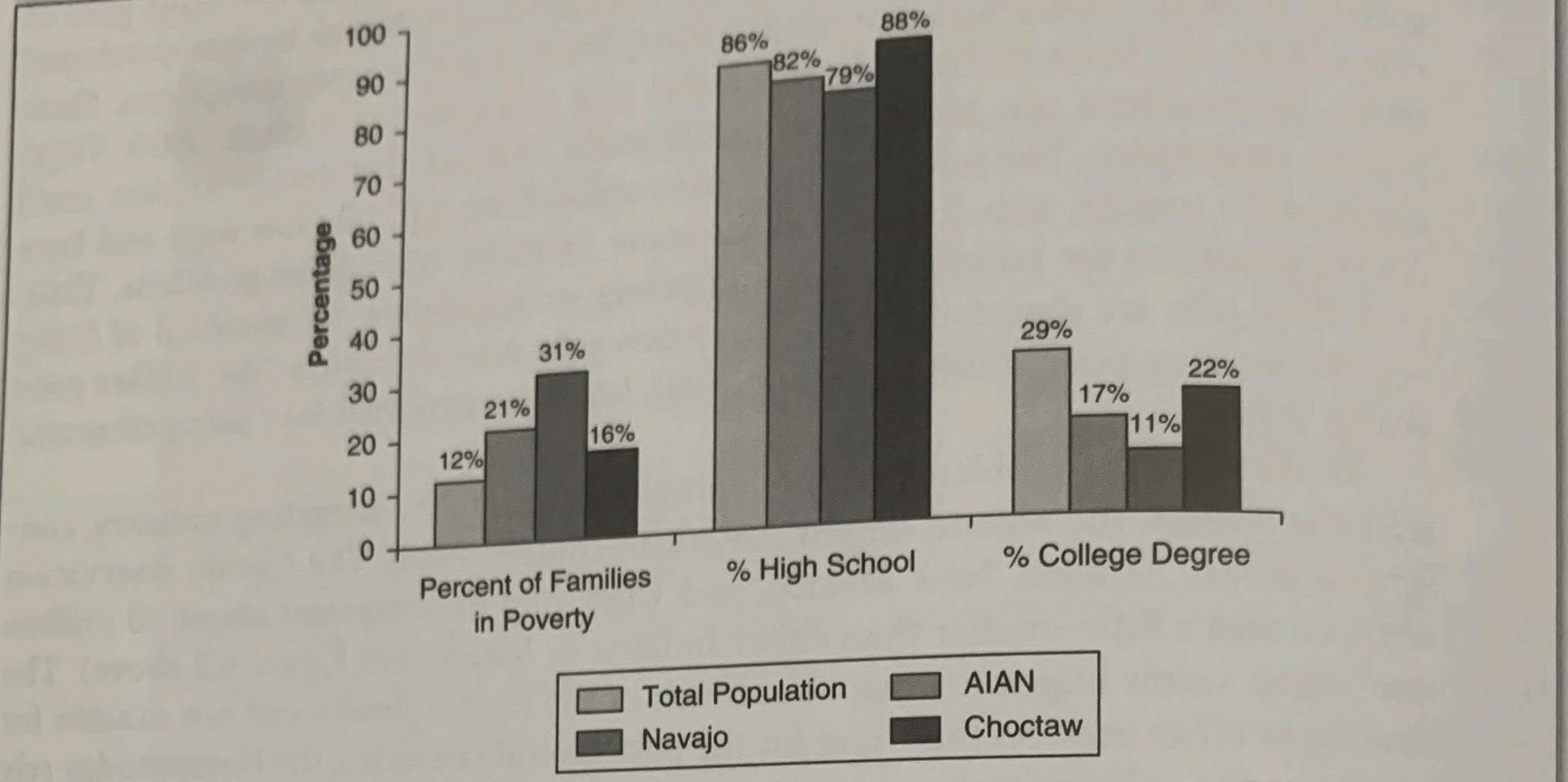
To illustrate the problems of developing reservations by attracting industry, consider the Navajo, the second-largest American Indian group. The Navajo reservation spreads across Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, and encompasses about 20 million acres, an area a little smaller than either Indiana or Maine (see Figure 6.2 above). The reservation seems huge on a map, but much of the land is desert and not suitable for farming or other uses. As they have for the past several centuries, the Navajo today rely heavily on the cultivation of corn and sheepherding for sustenance.

Most wage-earning jobs on the reservation are with the agencies of the federal government (e.g., the BIA) or with the tribal government. Tourism is a large industry, but the jobs are typically low wage and seasonal. There are reserves of coal, uranium, and oil on the reservation, but these resources have not generated many jobs. In some cases, the Navajo have resisted the damage to the environment that would be caused by mines and oil wells because of their traditional values and respect for the land. When exploitation of these resources has been permitted, the companies involved often use highly automated technologies that generate few jobs (Oswalt & Neely, 1996, pp. 317–351).

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 contrast Navajo income, poverty, and education with those of the total U.S. population. The poverty rate for the Navajo is almost three times greater than the national norm, and they are below national standards in terms of education, especially in terms of college education. Educational achievement is even lower for members of the tribe living on the reservation, where only about 64% have finished high school (versus 73% of all Navajo) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Also, median household income for the Navajo is less than 60% of household income for non-Hispanic whites, and their per capita income is only 43% of the national norm.

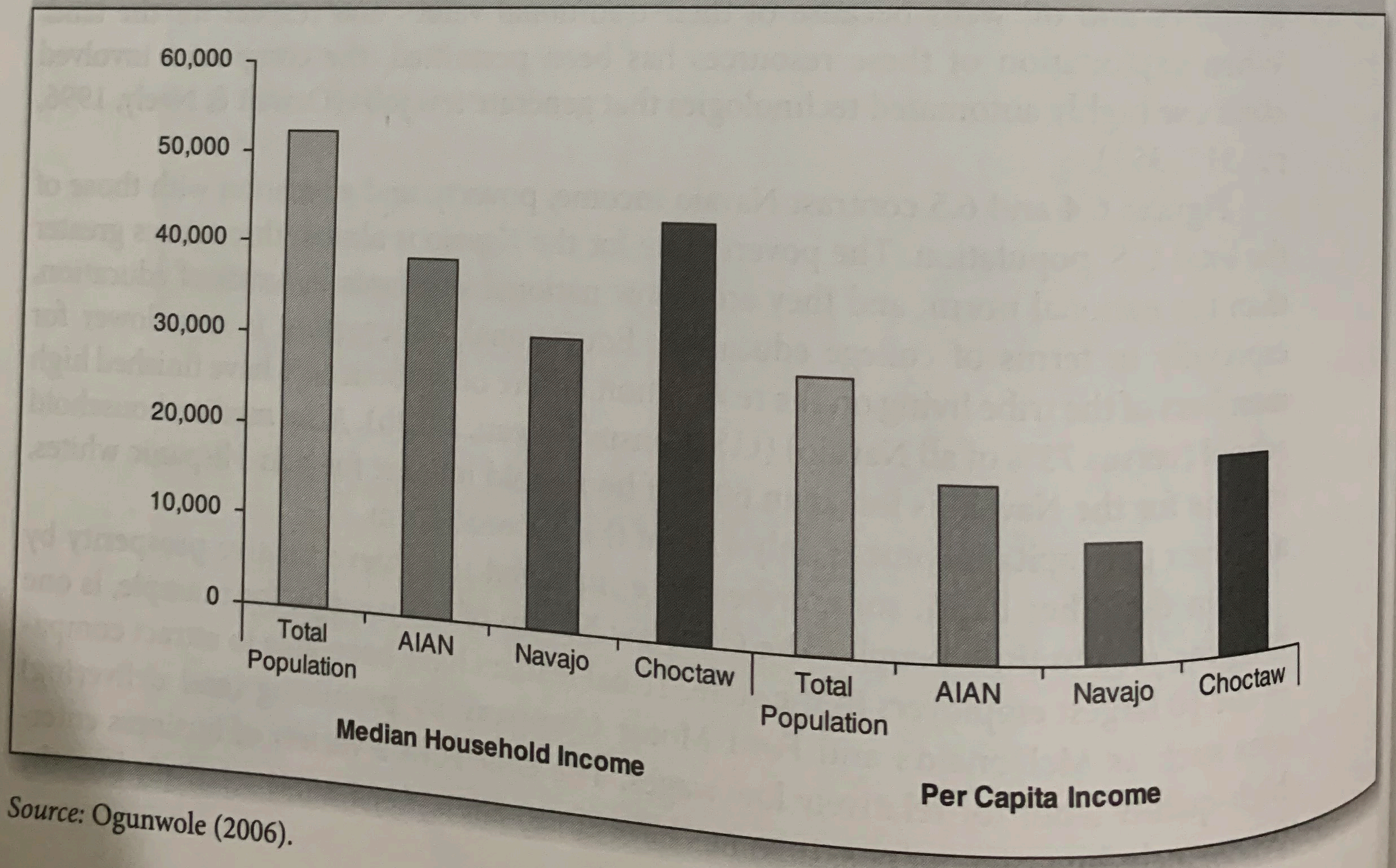
On the other hand, some tribes have managed to achieve relative prosperity by bringing jobs to their people. The Choctaw Nation of Mississippi, for example, is one of the 10 largest employers in the state. Tribal leaders have been able to attract companies such as McDonald's and Ford Motor Company by promising (and delivering) high-quality labor for relatively low wages. The tribe runs a variety of business enterprises, including two casinos. Incomes have risen; unemployment is relatively low; the

Figure 6.4 Poverty Rates and Educational Attainment for the Total Population, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN), Navajo, and Choctaw, 2013



Source: Ogunwole (2006).

Figure 6.5 Median Household Income and Per Capita Income for the Total Population, All American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN), Navajo, and Choctaw, 2013



Source: Ogunwole (2006).

tribe has built schools, hospitals, and a television station; and it administers numerous other services for its members (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, 2011).

The poverty rate for the Choctaw is about half that for the Navajo (although still higher than the national norm), and their educational levels are higher than the national standard for high school education and much closer to the national standard for college education than are those of the Navajo or American Indians in general. Median household income for the Choctaw is about 80% of the national norm and more than $12,000 greater than the median income for the Navajo.

The Choctaw are not the most affluent tribe, and the Navajo are far from being the most destitute. They illustrate the mixture of partial successes and failures that typify efforts to bring prosperity to the reservations; together, these two cases suggest that attracting industry and jobs to the reservations is a possible—but difficult and uncertain—strategy for economic development.

It is worth repeating that self-determination, the ability of tribes to control development on the reservation, seems to be one of the important keys to success. Tribes such as the Choctaw are, in a sense, developing ethnic enclaves (see Chapter 2) in which they can capitalize on local networks of interpersonal relationships. As with other groups that have followed this strategy, success in the enclave depends on solidarity and group cohesion, not Americanization and integration (see Cornell, 2006).

Broken Treaties

For many tribes, the treaties signed with the federal government in the 19th century offer another potential resource. These treaties were often violated by white settlers, the military, state and local governments, the BIA, and other elements and agencies of the dominant group, and many tribes are pursuing this trail of broken treaties and seeking compensation for the wrongs of the past. For example, in 1972 the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes filed a lawsuit demanding the return of 12.5 million acres of land—an area more than half the state of Maine—and $25 billion in damages. The tribes argued that this land had been illegally taken from them more than 150 years earlier. After eight years of litigation, the tribes settled for a $25 million trust fund and 300,000 acres of land. Although far less than their original demand, the award gave the tribes control over resources that could be used for economic development, job creation, upgrading educational programs, and developing other programs that would enhance human and financial capital (Worsnop, 1992, p. 391).

Virtually every tribe has similar grievances, and if pursued successfully, the long-dead treaty relationship between the Indian nations and the government could be a significant fount of economic and political resources. Of course, lawsuits require considerable (and expensive) legal expertise and years of effort before they bear fruit. Because there are no guarantees of success, this avenue has some sharp limitations and risks.

Gaming and Other Development Possibilities

Another resource for American Indians is the gambling industry, the development of which was made possible by federal legislation passed in 1988. There are currently more

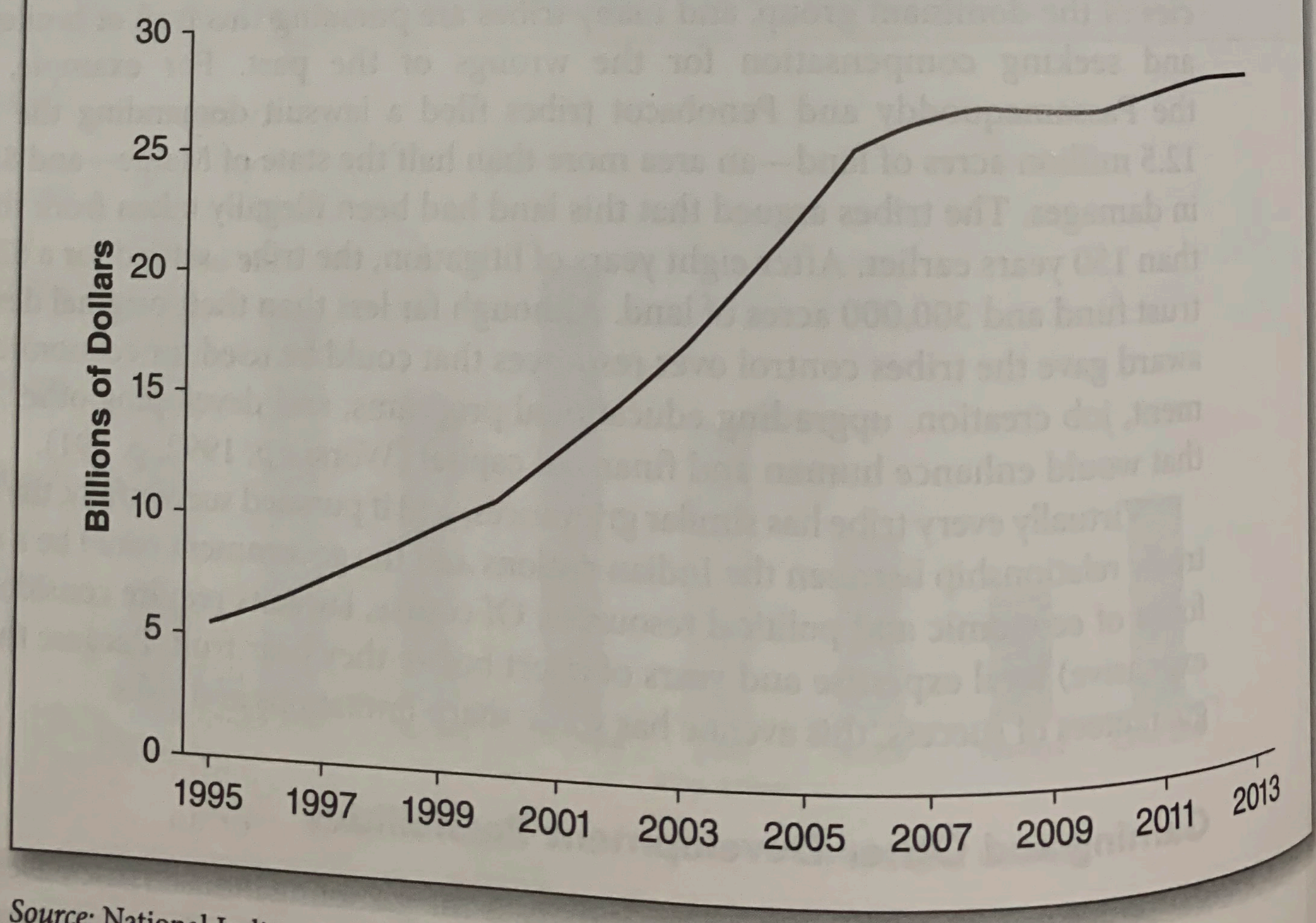
than 400 tribally owned gaming establishments (National Indian Gaming Commission, 2014), and the industry has grown many times over, from almost $5 million in revenues in 1995 to almost $28 billion in 2012 (National Indian Gaming Commission, 2014). Figure 6.6 charts the growth of revenues from gaming on American Indian reservations from 1995 to 2013.

Most operations are relatively small in scale. The 21 largest Indian casinos—about 5% of all Indian casinos—generate almost 40% of the total income from gaming, and the 74 smallest operations—about 17% of all Indian casinos—account for less than 1% of the income (National Indian Gaming Commission, 2011).

The single most profitable Indian gambling operation is the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut, operated by the Pequot tribe. This casino is one of the largest in the world and generates more revenue than all the casinos of Atlantic City. The profits from the casino are used to benefit tribal members in a variety of ways, including the repurchase of tribal lands, housing assistance, medical benefits, educational scholarships, and public services, such as a tribal police force (Bordewich, 1996, p. 110). Other tribes have used gambling profits to purchase restaurants and marinas and to finance the development of outlet malls, manufacturing plants, and a wide variety of other businesses and enterprises (Spilde, 2001).

The power of gaming to benefit the tribes is suggested by the information displayed in Table 6.3, which shows that on a number of indicators, both gaming and nongaming reservations enjoyed significant improvements in their quality of life in the

Figure 6.6 Gaming Revenues From American Indian Casinos, 1995–2013



Source: National Indian Gaming Commission.

Table 6.3 Various Indicators of Improvement on Gaming vs. Nongaming Reservations and Total United States, 1990–2000

Indicator	*Nongaming*	*Gaming*	*Total United States*
Per capita income	+21%	+36%	+11%
Family poverty	−7%	−12%	−1%
Unemployment	−2%	−5%	−1%
High school graduates	−1%	+2%	−1%
College graduates	+2%	+3%	+4%

Source: Adapted from "Changes on Reservations Other Than Navajo," p. xi in *American Indians on Reservations: A Databook of Socioeconomic Change between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses* by Jonathan A. Taylor and Joseph P. Kalt. Copyright © 2005 The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

last decade of the 20th century, but the gaming reservations improved more rapidly. For example, all reservations increased their per capita income faster than the nation as a whole (+11%), but gaming reservations improved faster (+36%) than nongaming reservations (+21%).

Various tribes have sought other ways to capitalize on their freedom from state regulation and taxes. Some have established small but profitable businesses selling cigarettes tax free. Also, because they are not subject to state and federal environmental regulations, some reservations are exploring the possibility of housing nuclear waste and other refuse of industrialization—a somewhat ironic and not altogether attractive use of the remaining Indian lands.

Clearly, the combination of increased autonomy, treaty rights, natural resources, and gambling means that American Indians today have an opportunity to dramatically raise their standards of living and creatively take control of their own destinies. Some tribes have enjoyed enormous benefits, but for others, these assets remain a potential that is waiting to be actualized. Without denying the success stories or the improvements in recent years, the lives of many American Indians continue to be limited by poverty and powerlessness, prejudice, and discrimination. We document these patterns in the next section.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Anti-Indian prejudice has been a part of American society since first contact. Historically, negative feelings such as hatred and contempt have been widespread and strong, particularly during the heat of war, and various stereotypes of Indians have been common. One stereotype, especially strong during periods of conflict, depicts Indians as bloodthirsty, ferocious, cruel savages capable of any atrocity. The other image of American Indians is that of "the noble Red Man" who lives in complete harmony with nature and symbolizes goodwill and pristine simplicity (Bordewich, 1996,

p. 34). Although the first stereotype tended to fade away as hostilities drew to a close, the latter image retains a good deal of strength in modern views of Indians found in popular culture and among environmentalist and "new age" spiritual organizations.

A variety of studies have documented continued stereotyping of American Indians in the popular press, textbooks, the media, cartoons, and various other places (see Aleiss, 2005; Bird, 1999; Meek, 2006; Rouse & Hanson, 1991). In the tradition of "the noble Red Man," American Indians are often portrayed as bucks and squaws, complete with headdresses, bows, tepees, and other such generic Indian artifacts. These simplified portrayals obliterate the diversity of American Indian culture and lifestyles.

American Indians are often referred to in the past tense, as if their present situation were of no importance or, worse, as if they no longer existed. Many history books continue to begin the study of American history in Europe or with the "discovery" of America, omitting the millennia of civilization prior to the arrival of European explorers and colonizers. Contemporary portrayals of American Indians, such as in the movie *Dances with Wolves* (Costner, 1990), are more sympathetic but still treat the tribes as part of a bucolic past forever lost, not as peoples with real problems in the present.

The persistence of stereotypes and the extent to which they have become enmeshed in modern culture is illustrated by continuing controversies surrounding nicknames for athletic teams (e.g., the Washington Redskins, the Cleveland Indians, and the Atlanta Braves) and the use of American Indian mascots, tomahawk "chops," and other practices offensive to many American Indians. Protests have been held at athletic events to increase awareness of these derogatory depictions, but as was the case so often in the past, the protests have been attacked, ridiculed, or simply ignored.

Relatively few studies of anti-Indian prejudice exist within the social science literature. Therefore, it is difficult to fully understand the changes that may have occurred over the past several decades. We do not know whether there has been a shift to more symbolic or "modern" forms of anti-Indian racism, as there has been for anti-black prejudice, or whether the stereotypes of American Indians have declined in strength or changed in content.

One of the few records of national anti-Indian prejudice over time is that of social distance scale results (see Table 1.2). When the scales were first administered in 1926, American Indians were ranked in the middle third of all groups (18th out of 28), at about the same level as southern and eastern Europeans and slightly above Mexicans, another colonized group. The ranking of American Indians remained stable until 1977, when there was a noticeable rise in their position relative to other groups. In the most recent polls, the rankings of American Indians have remained stable, at about the same level as Jews and Poles but below African Americans. These shifts may reflect a decline in levels of prejudice, a change from more overt forms to more subtle modern racism, or both. Remember, however, that the samples for the social distance research were college students, for the most part, and the results do not necessarily reflect trends in the general population (see also Hanson & Rouse, 1987; Smith & Dempsey, 1983).

Additionally, research is unclear about the severity or extent of discrimination against American Indians. Certainly, the group's lower average levels of education limit their opportunities for upward mobility, choice of occupations, and range of income. This is a form of institutional discrimination in the sense that the opportunities to

develop human capital are much less available to American Indians than to much of the rest of the population.

In terms of individual discrimination or more overt forms of exclusion, there is simply too little evidence to sustain clear conclusions (Snipp, 1992, p. 363). The situation of American Indian women is also under-researched, but Snipp reports that, like their counterparts in other minority groups and the dominant group, they "are systematically paid less than their men counterparts in similar circumstances" (p. 363).

The very limited evidence available from social distance scales suggests that overt anti-Indian prejudice has declined, perhaps in parallel with anti-black prejudice. A great deal of stereotyping remains, however, and demeaning, condescending, or negative portrayals of American Indians are common throughout the dominant culture. Institutional discrimination is a major barrier for American Indians, who have not had access to opportunities for education and employment.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

8. This section examined a number of issues in contemporary Indian–white relations. In your opinion, which of these is most important? Why?
9. Thinking about the concepts developed in this text, what is the single most important force shaping the situation of American Indians over the past century? Why?
10. Compare and contrast anti-black prejudice with anti-Indian prejudice. How and why are the two forms of prejudice different?

Assimilation and Pluralism

In this section, we continue to assess the situation of American Indians today using the same conceptual framework used in Chapter 5. Once again, please regard this material as an overview and as starting points for further research.

Compared with other groups, information about American Indians is scant. Nonetheless, a relatively clear picture emerges. The portrait stresses a mixed picture: improvements for some combined with continued colonization, marginalization, and impoverishment for others. Like African Americans, Native Americans can be found at every status and income level in the United States, but Indians living on reservations continue as one of the most impoverished, marginalized groups in society. American Indians as a group face ongoing discrimination and exclusion, and continue the search for a meaningful course between assimilation and pluralism.

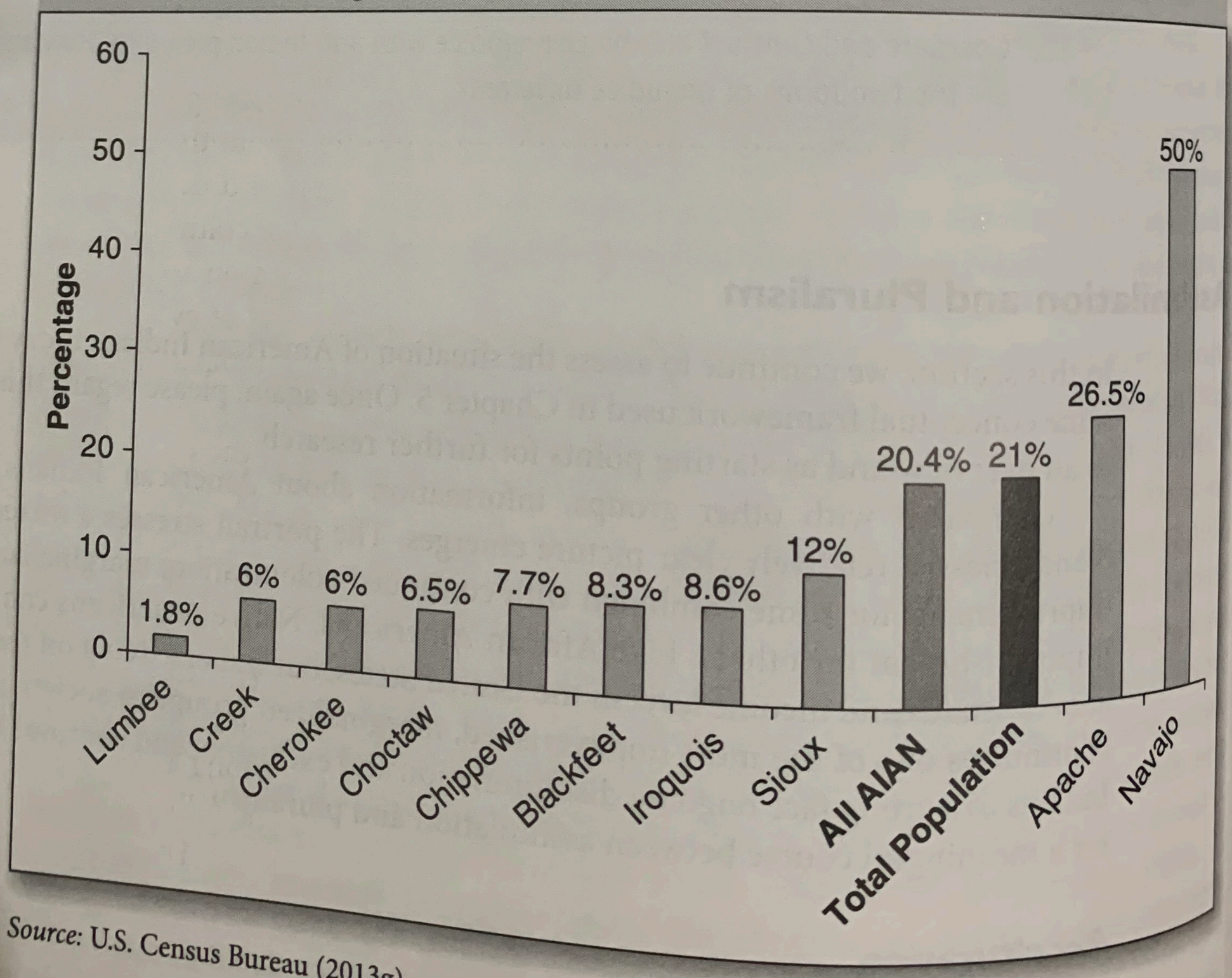
Acculturation

Despite more than a century of coercive Americanization, many tribes have been able to preserve at least a portion of their traditional cultures. For example, many tribal

languages continue to be spoken on a daily basis. Approximately 20% of American Indians and Alaska Natives speak a language other than English at home, about the same percentage as the total population. Figure 6.7 suggests the extent of language preservation. For 7 of the 10 largest tribes, less than 10% of their members speak the tribal language at home. Some tribes, however, continue to speak their native language, including about 25% of Apache and half of Navajo.

While some American Indian languages have survived, even the most widely spoken of these languages is endangered. One study (Krauss, 1996) estimates that only about 11% of the surviving 200 languages are being taught by parents to their children in the traditional way and that most languages are spoken on a daily basis only by the older generation. Few, if any, people are left who speak only a tribal language. One authority (A. Treuer, 2012, p. 80) reports that only 20 tribal languages in the United States and Canada are spoken by children in significant numbers. If this pattern persists, American Indian languages will disappear as the generations change. A number of tribes have instituted programs to try to renew and preserve their language, along with other elements of their culture, but the success of these efforts is uncertain (Schmid, 2001, p. 25; see also D. Treuer, 2012, pp. 300–305).

Figure 6.7 Percentage of Total Population, All American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN), and 10 Largest Tribes That Speak a Language Other Than English at Home, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2013g).

Traditional culture is retained in other forms besides language. Religions and value systems, political and economic structures, and recreational patterns have all survived the military conquest and the depredations of reservation life, but each pattern has been altered by contact with the dominant group. Cornell (1987), for example, argues that the strong orientation to the group rather than the individual is being significantly affected by the "American dream" of personal material success.

The tendency to filter the impact of the larger society through continuing vital American Indian culture is also illustrated by the Native American Church. The Native American Church is an important American Indian religion, with more than 100 congregations across the nation.

This religion combines elements from both cultures, and church services freely mix Christian imagery and the Bible with attempts to seek personal visions by using peyote, a hallucinogenic drug. The latter practice is consistent with the spiritual and religious traditions of many tribes but clashes sharply with the laws and norms of the larger society. The difference in traditions has generated many skirmishes with the courts, and as recently as 2004 the right of the Native American Church to use peyote was upheld by the Supreme Court of Utah ("Utah Supreme Court Rules," 2004).

American Indians have been more successful than African Americans in preserving their traditional cultures, a pattern that is partly explained by the differences in the relationship between each minority group and the dominant group. African Americans were exploited for labor, whereas the competition with American Indians involved land. African cultures could not easily survive because the social structures that transmitted the cultures and gave them meaning were destroyed by slavery and sacrificed to the exigencies of the plantation economy.

In contrast, American Indians confronted the dominant group as tribal units, intact and whole. The tribes maintained integrity throughout the wars and throughout the reservation period. Tribal culture was attacked and denigrated during the reservation era, but the basic social unit that sustained the culture survived, albeit in altered form. The fact that American Indians were placed on separate reservations, isolated from one another and the "contaminating" effects of everyday contact with the larger society, also supported the preservation of traditional languages and culture (Cornell, 1990).

The vitality of Indian cultures may have increased in the current atmosphere of greater tolerance and support for pluralism in the larger society, combined with increased autonomy and lower government regulation on the reservations. However, a number of social forces are working against pluralism and the continuing survival of tribal cultures. Pan-tribalism may threaten the integrity of individual tribal cultures as it represents American Indian grievances and concerns to the larger society. Opportunities for jobs, education, and higher incomes draw American Indians to more developed urban areas and will continue to do so as long as the reservations are underdeveloped. Many aspects of the tribal cultures can be fully expressed and practiced only with other tribal members on the reservations. Thus, many American Indians must make a choice between "Indian-ness" on the reservation and "success" in the city. The younger, more educated American Indians will be most likely to confront

this choice, and the future vitality of traditional American Indian cultures and languages will hinge on which option they choose.

Secondary Structural Assimilation

This section assesses the degree of integration of American Indians into the various institutions of public life, following the general outlines of the parallel section in Chapter 5.

Residential Patterns. Since the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (see Chapter 3), American Indians have been concentrated in the western two thirds of the nation, as illustrated in Figure 6.8, although some pockets of population still can be found in the East. The states with the largest concentrations of American Indians—California, Oklahoma, and Arizona—together include about 30% of all American Indians. As Figure 6.8 illustrates, most U.S. counties have few American Indian residents. The population is concentrated in eastern Oklahoma, the upper Midwest, and the Southwest (Norris et al., 2012, p. 8).

Since American Indians are such a small, rural group, it is difficult to assess the overall level of residential segregation. An earlier study using 2000 census data found that they were less segregated than African Americans and that the levels of residential segregation had declined since 1980 (Iceland, Weinberg, & Steinmetz, 2002, p. 23). More detailed data from the 2000 census for the 10 metropolitan areas with the highest numbers of Native American residents show that residential segregation was "extremely high" (dissimilarity index at or above 60) in four of the cities (New York, Phoenix, Albuquerque, and Chicago) but lower than the levels of black–white segregation. Also, a couple of the cities (Oklahoma City and Tulsa) had low scores, or a dissimilarity index at or below 30 (Social Science Data Analysis Network, n.d.).

What can we conclude? It seems that residential segregation for American Indians is lower than it is for African Americans. However, it is difficult to come to firm conclusions because of the small size of the group and the fact that 30% of American Indians live on rural reservations, where the levels of isolation and racial segregation are quite high.

School Integration and Educational Attainment. As a result of the combined efforts of missionaries and federal agencies, American Indians have had a long but not necessarily productive acquaintance with Western education. Until the past few decades, schools for American Indians were primarily focused on "Westernizing" children, not so much on educating them.

For many tribes, the percentage of high school graduates has increased in the recent past, but American Indians' graduation rates as a whole are still somewhat below national rates and the rates of non-Hispanic whites, as shown in Figure 6.9. The differences in schooling are especially important because the lower levels of educational attainment limit mobility and job opportunities in the postindustrial job market.

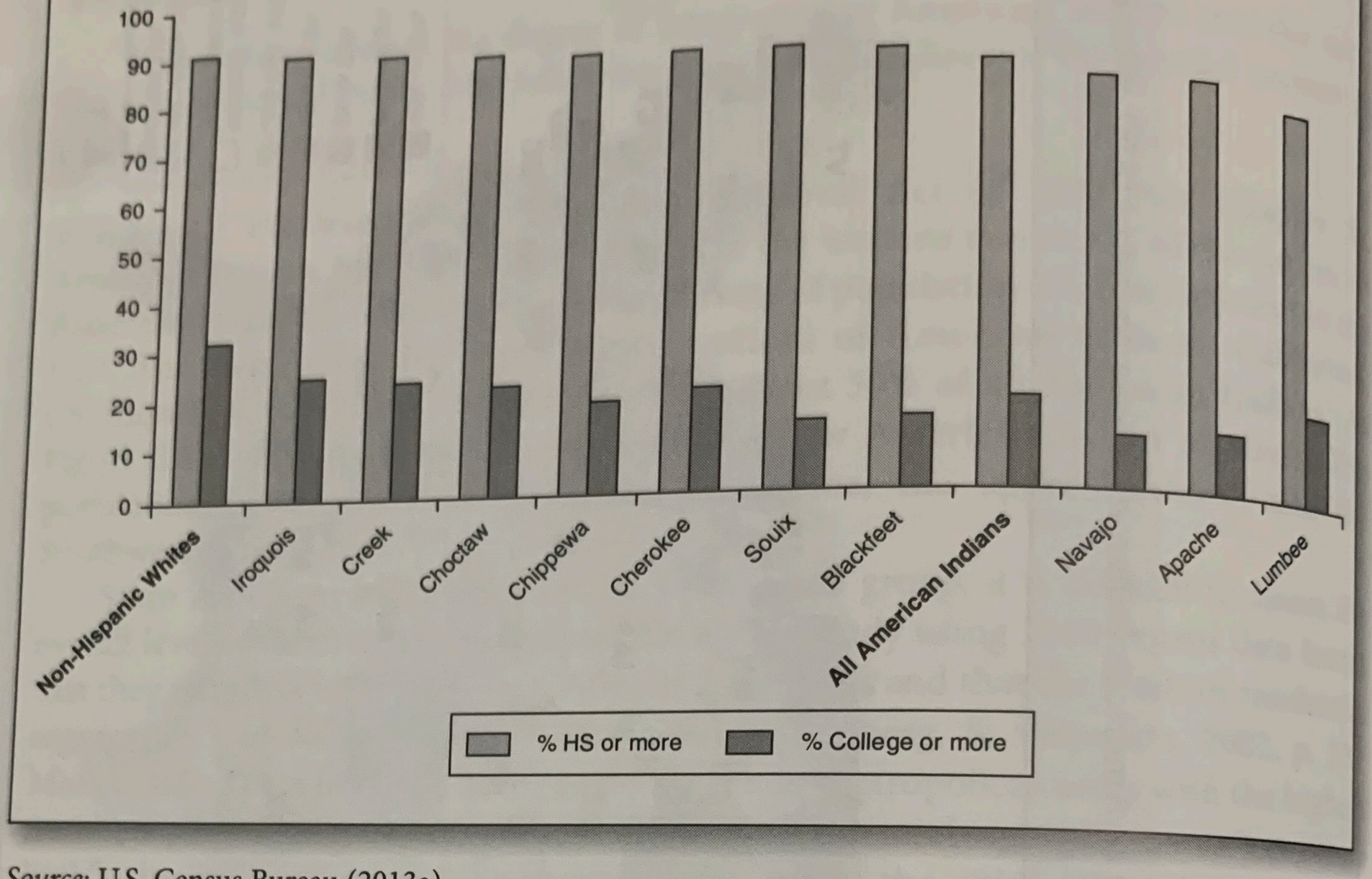
One positive development for the education of American Indians is the rapid increase in tribally controlled colleges. There are now 37 tribal colleges: All offer 2-year

Figure 6.8 Percentage of County Population Self-Identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), Alone or in Combination, 2010



Sources: Primary source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File, Table P1. Secondary source: Norris, Vines, and Hoeffel, 2012.

Figure 6.9 Educational Attainment for Non-Hispanic Whites, All American Indians (AIAN), and 10 Largest Tribes, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2013a).

degrees, six offer 4-year degrees, and two offer master's degrees. These institutions are located on or near reservations; some have been constructed with funds generated in the gaming industry. They are designed to be more sensitive to the educational and cultural needs of the group, and tribal college graduates who transfer to 4-year colleges are more likely to graduate than are other American Indian students (Pego, 1998; see also His Horse Is Thunder, Anderson, & Miller, 2013).

An earlier study found that American Indian school children were less segregated than African American school children in the 2005–2006 school year, but that the levels of racial isolation might be increasing (Fry, 2007). Again, it is difficult to assess trends because of the small size of the group and their concentration in rural areas.

Political Power. The ability of American Indians to exert power as a voting bloc or to otherwise directly affect the political structure is very limited by group size; they are a tiny percentage of the electorate. Furthermore, their political power is limited by their lower average levels of education, language differences, lack of economic resources, and small differences within and between tribes and reservations. The number of American Indians holding elected office is minuscule, far less than 1% (Pollard & O'Hare, 1999). In 1992, however, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, of Colorado, a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, was elected to the U.S. Senate and served until 2005.

Jobs and Income. Some of the most severe challenges facing American Indians relate to work and income. The problems are especially evident on the reservations, where jobs traditionally have been scarce and affluence rare. As mentioned previously, the overall unemployment rate for all American Indians is about double the rate for whites. For Indians living on or near reservations, however, the rate is much higher, sometimes rising to 70% to 80% on the smaller, more-isolated reservations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Nationally, American Indians are underrepresented in the higher-status, more lucrative professions and overrepresented in unskilled labor and service jobs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Like African Americans, American Indians who hold white-collar jobs are more likely than whites to work in lower-income occupations, such as typist or retail salesperson (Ogunwole, 2006, p. 10).

The data in Figure 6.10 show median household income in 2012 for non-Hispanic whites, all American Indians and Alaska Natives, and the 10 largest tribes. Median household income for American Indians and Alaska Natives is about 66% of that of non-Hispanic whites. There is a good deal of variability among the 10 largest tribes, but again, none approach the incomes of non-Hispanic whites.

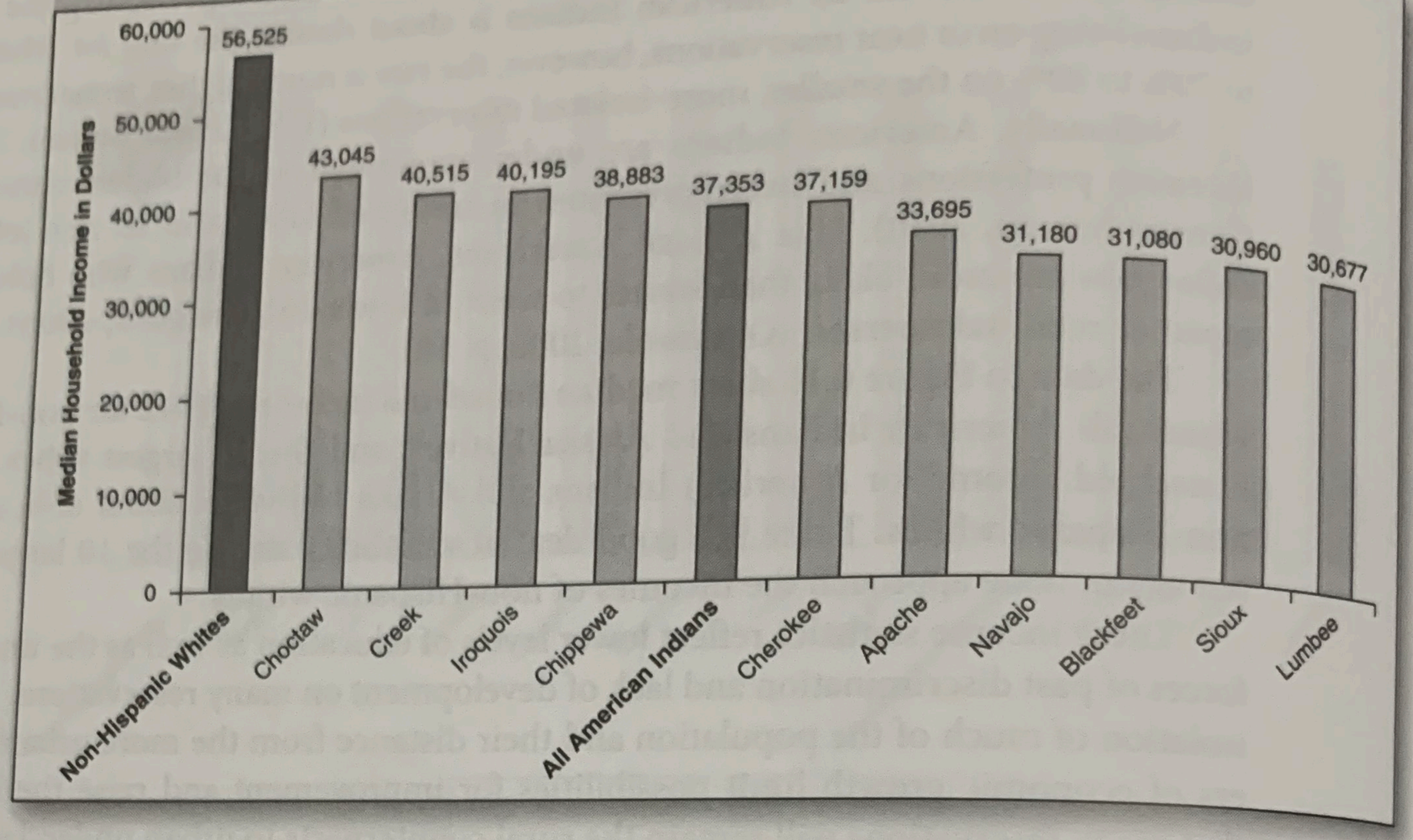
These income statistics reflect lower levels of education as well as the interlocking forces of past discrimination and lack of development on many reservations. The rural isolation of much of the population and their distance from the more urbanized centers of economic growth limit possibilities for improvement and raise the likelihood that many reservations will remain the rural counterparts to urban underclass ghettos.

Figure 6.11 supplements the information in Figure 6.10 by displaying the distribution of income for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) compared with that of non-Hispanic whites. This type of graph was introduced in the chapter on African Americans and its format is similar to the format of Figure 5.14. In both graphs, the pattern of income inequality is immediately obvious. Starting at the bottom, we see that American Indians and Alaska Natives are overrepresented in the lowest income groups, as were African Americans. For example, about 12% of American Indians and Alaska Natives have incomes less than $10,000—this is double the percentage for whites (6%) in this range.

Moving up the figure through the lower- and middle-income brackets, we see that American Indian and Alaska Native households continue to be overrepresented. There is a notable clustering of both groups in the $50,000 to $100,000 categories, but it is whites who are overrepresented at these higher-income levels: almost a third of white households compared with only 26% of AIAN households are in these categories. The income differences between the groups are especially obvious at the top of the figure. More than 22% of white households versus 12% of American Indian and Alaska Native households are in the top three income categories. Figure 6.11 also shows the median household income for both groups in 2010, and the difference of more than $16,000 further illustrates the lower socioeconomic level of American Indians.

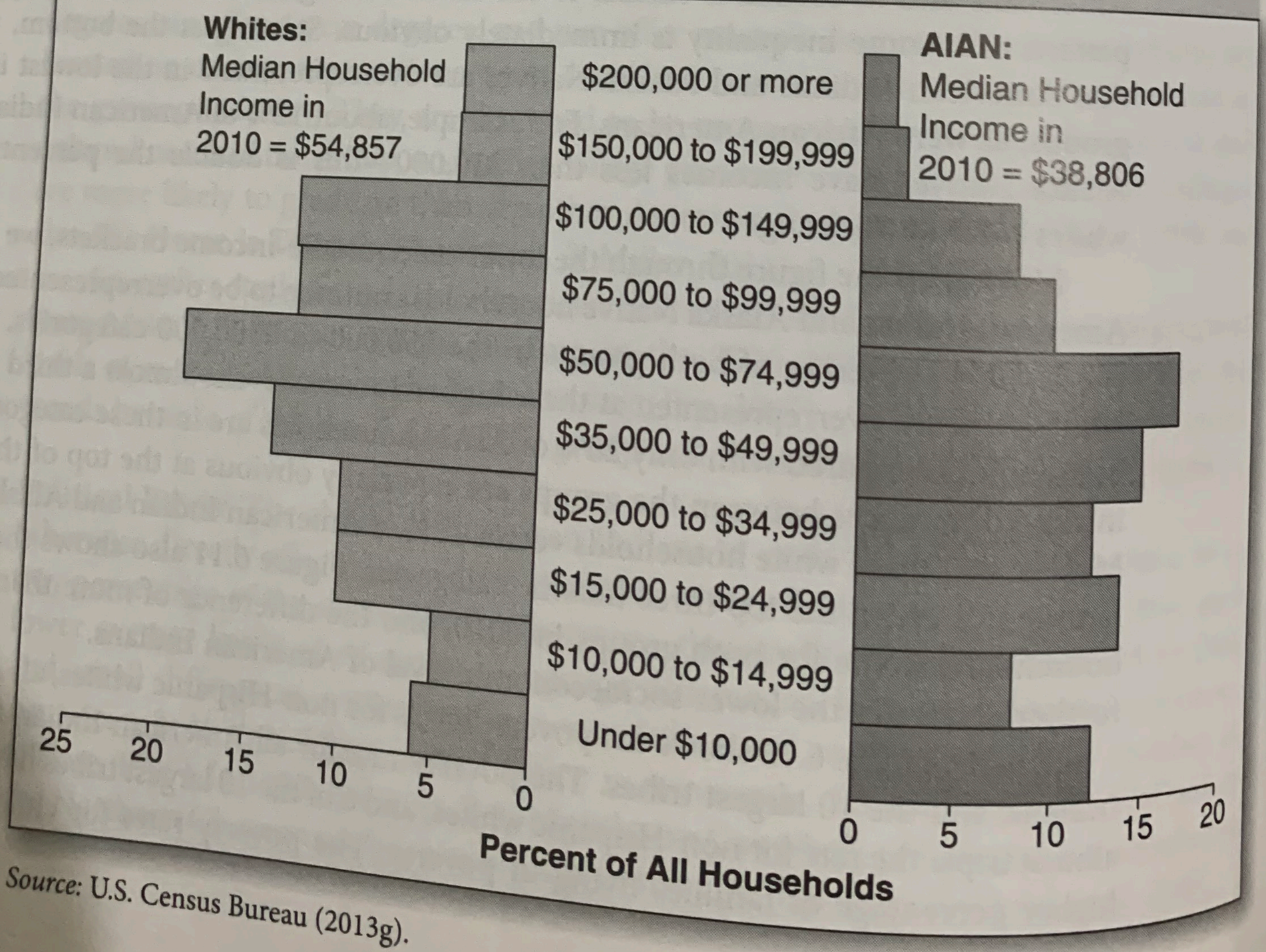
Finally, Figure 6.12 shows the poverty levels for non-Hispanic whites, all American Indians, and the 10 largest tribes. The poverty rate for all American Indian families is almost triple the rate for non-Hispanic whites, and 6 of the 10 largest tribes have an even higher percentage of families living in poverty. The poverty rates for children show

Figure 6.10 Median Household Income for Non-Hispanic Whites, All American Indians (AIAN), and 10 Largest Tribes, 2012



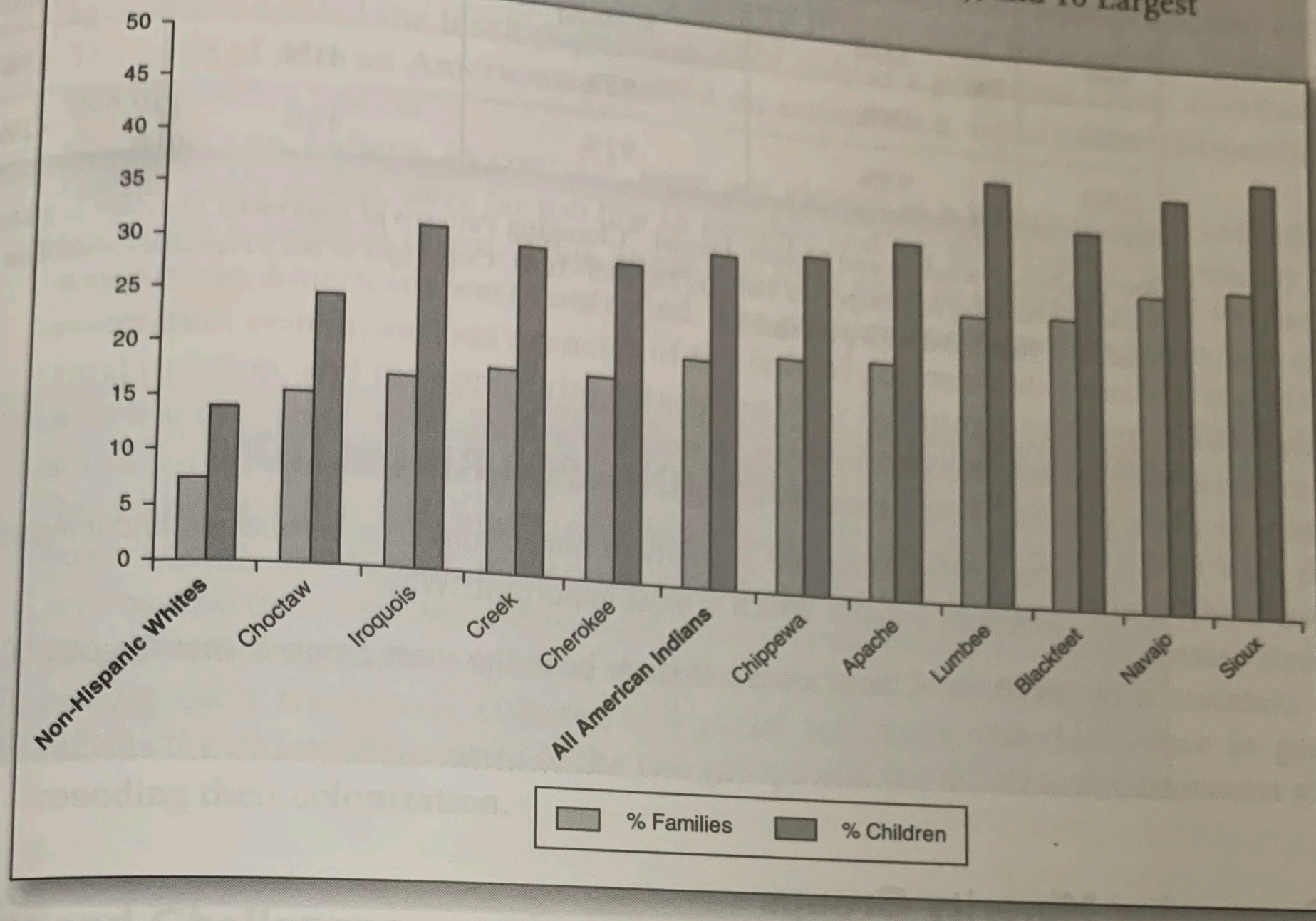
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2013a).

Figure 6.11 Distribution of Household Income for Non-Hispanic Whites and American Indians and Alaska Natives, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2013g).

Figure 6.12 Families and Children in Poverty for Non-Hispanic Whites, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN), and 10 Largest Tribes, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2013a).

a similar pattern, with very high rates for the Lumbee, Navajo, and Sioux. As a whole, this information on income and poverty shows that despite the progress American Indians have made over the past several decades, a sizable socioeconomic gap persists.

Primary Structural Assimilation

Rates of out-marriage for American Indians are quite high compared with those of other groups, as displayed in Table 6.4. While the overwhelming majority of whites were married to other whites in both years, a little more than 40% of American Indians had marriage partners within the group. This pattern is partly the result of the small size of the group. As less than 1% of the total population, American Indians are numerically unlikely to find dating and marriage partners within their own group, especially in those regions of the country and urban areas where the group is small in size. For example, an earlier study found that in New England, which has the lowest relative percentage of American Indians of any region, more than 90% of Indian marriages were to partners outside the group. But even in the mountain states, which have a greater number of American Indians who are also highly concentrated on reservations, only about 40% of Indian marriages involved partners outside the group (Snipp, 1989, pp. 156–159). Also, the social and legal barriers to Indian–white intermarriages have been comparatively weak (Qian & Lichter, 2011).

Table 6.4 Percentage Married to a Person of the Same Race, 1980 and 2008

	Whites		*Native Americans*	
Year	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
1980	96%	95%	41%	43%
2008	93%	92%	43%	42%

Source: Qian, Zhenchao and Lichter, Daniel. "Changing Patterns of Interracial Marriage in a Multiracial Society." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75:1065–1084. Copyright © 2011 National Council on Family Relations. Reprinted with permission.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

11. This section examined a variety of dimensions of acculturation and integration for American Indians. Which is most important? Why?
12. In which of these areas has there been the most progress over the past 50 years? Explain.

Comparing Minority Groups

Comparing the experiences of American Indians with those of other groups will further our understanding of the complexities of dominant–minority relationships and permit us to test the explanatory power of the concepts and theories that are central to this text. No two minority groups have had the same experiences, and our concepts and theories should help us understand the differences and the similarities. We will make it a point to compare groups in each of the chapters in this part of the text. We begin by comparing American Indians with African Americans.

First, note the differences in the stereotypes attached to the two groups during the early years of European colonization. While Indians were seen as cruel savages, African Americans under slavery were seen as lazy, irresponsible, and in need of constant supervision. The two stereotypes are consistent with the outcomes of the contact period. The supposed irresponsibility of blacks under slavery helped justify their subordinate, highly controlled status, and the alleged savagery of American Indians helped to justify their near extermination by white society.

Second, both American Indians and African Americans were colonized minority groups, but their contact situations were governed by very different dynamics (competition for labor vs. land) and a very different dominant group agenda (the capture and control of a large, powerless workforce vs. the elimination of a military threat). These differing contact situations shaped subsequent relationships with the dominant group and the place of the groups in the larger society.

For example, consider the situations of the two groups a century ago. At that time, the most visible enemy for African Americans was de jure segregation, the elaborate system of repression in the South that controlled them politically, economically, and socially (see Chapters 4 and 5). In particular, the southern system of agriculture needed the black population—but only as a powerless, cheap workforce. The goals of African Americans centered on assimilation, equality, and dismantling this oppressive system.

American Indians, in contrast, were not viewed as a source of labor and, after their military defeat, were far too few in number and too dispersed geographically to constitute a political threat. Thus, there was little need to control them in the same way African Americans were controlled. The primary enemies of the tribes were the reservation system, various agencies of the federal government (especially the BIA), rural isolation, and the continuing attacks on their traditional cultures and lifestyles, which are typical for a colonized minority group. American Indians had a different set of problems, different resources at their disposal, and different goals in mind. They always have been more oriented toward a pluralistic relationship with the larger society and toward preserving what they could of their autonomy, their institutions, and their heritage. African Americans spent much of the 20th century struggling for inclusion and equality; American Indians were fighting to maintain or recover their traditional cultures and social structures. This difference in goals reflects the different histories of the two groups and the different circumstances surrounding their colonization.

Progress and Challenges

What does the future hold for American Indians? Their situation has certainly changed over the past 100 years, but is it "better" or just "different," as is the case for large segments of the African American community? The answer seems to be a little of both, as the group grows in size and improves its status. To reach some conclusions, we will look at several aspects of the situation of American Indians and assess the usefulness of our theoretical models and concepts.

Since the 1960s, the decline of intolerance in society, the growth of pride in ancestry in many groups (e.g., Black Power), and the shift in federal government policy to encourage self-determination have all helped spark a reaffirmation of commitment to tribal cultures and traditions. Like the Black Power movement, the Red Power movement asserted a distinct and positive Indian identity, a claim for the validity of American Indian cultures within the broad framework of the larger society. During the same period, the favorable settlements of treaty claims, the growth in job opportunities, and the growth of the gambling industry have enhanced the flow of resources and benefits to some reservations. In popular culture, American Indians have enjoyed a strong upsurge of popularity and sympathetic depictions. This enhanced popularity accounts for much of the growth in population size as people of mixed ancestry resurrect and reconstruct their Indian ancestors and their own ethnic identities.

Linear or simplistic views of assimilation do not fit the current situation or the past experiences of American Indians very well. Some American Indians are intermarrying with whites and integrating into the larger society; others strive to retain a tribal culture in the midst of an urbanized, industrialized society; and still others labor to use the profits from gaming and other enterprises for the benefit of the tribe as a whole. Members of the group can be found at every degree of acculturation and integration, and the group seems to be moving toward assimilation in some ways and away from it in others.

From the standpoint of the Noel and Blauner hypotheses, we can see that American Indians have struggled with conquest and colonization, experiences made more difficult by the loss of so much of their land and other resources and by the concerted, unrelenting attacks on their culture and language. The legacy of conquest and colonization was poor health and housing, an inadequate and misdirected education system, and slow (or nonexistent) economic development. For most of the 20th century, American Indians were left to survive as best they could on the margins of the larger society, too powerless to establish meaningful pluralism and too colonized to pursue equality.

Today, one key to further progress for some members of this group is economic development on reservation lands and the further strengthening of the tribes as functioning social units. Some tribes do have assets—natural resources, treaty rights, and the gambling industry—that could fuel development. However, they often do not have the expertise or the capital to finance the exploitation of these resources. They must rely, in whole or in part, on non-Indian expertise and white-owned companies and businesses. Thus, non-Indians, rather than the tribes, may be the primary beneficiaries of some forms of development. (This would, of course, be quite consistent with American history.) For those reservations for which gambling is not an option and for those without natural resources, investments in human capital (primarily education) may offer the most compelling direction for future development.

Urban Indians confront the same patterns of discrimination and racism that confront other minority groups of color. Members of the group with lower levels of education and job skills face the prospect of becoming a part of a permanent urban underclass. More educated and more skilled American Indians share with African Americans the prospect of a middle-class lifestyle that is more tenuous compared with comparable segments of the dominant group.

The situation of American Indians today is vastly superior to the status of the group a century ago, and this chapter has documented the notable improvements that have occurred since 1990. Given the depressed and desperate conditions of the reservations in the early 20th century, however, it would not take much to show an improvement. American Indians are growing rapidly in numbers and are increasingly diversified by residence, education, and degree of assimilation. Some tribes have made dramatic progress over the past several decades, but enormous problems remain, both on and off the reservations. The challenge for the future, as it was in the past, is to find a course between pluralism and assimilation, pan-tribalism and traditional lifestyles that will balance the issues of quality of life against the importance of retaining an Indian identity.

Main Points

- American Indian and Anglo American cultures are vastly different. These differences have hampered communication and understanding, usually in ways that harmed American Indians or weakened the integrity of their tribal structures.
- At the beginning of the 20th century, American Indians faced the paternalistic reservation system, poverty and powerlessness, rural isolation and marginalization, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. American Indians began to urbanize rapidly in the 1950s but are still less urbanized than is the population as a whole. They are the least urbanized American minority group.
- The Red Power movement rose to prominence in the 1960s and had some successes but was often simply ignored. The Red Power movement was partly assimilationist even though it pursued pluralistic goals and greater autonomy for the tribes.
- Current conflicts between American Indians and the dominant group center on control of natural resources, preservation of treaty rights, and treaties that have been broken in the past. The gaming industry offers another possible source of development (and conflict).
- Anti-Indian prejudice seems to have shifted to more modern forms. Institutional discrimination and access to education and employment remain major problems confronting American Indians.
- American Indians have preserved much of their traditional culture, although in altered form. The secondary structural assimilation of American Indians remains relatively low, despite recent improvements in quality of life for many tribes. Primary structural assimilation is comparatively high.
- Over the course of the past 100 years, American Indians have struggled from a position of powerlessness and isolation. Today, the group faces an array of problems similar to those faced by all American colonized minority groups of color, as Indians try to find ways to raise their quality of life and continue their commitment to their tribes and to an Indian identity.

APPLYING CONCEPTS

How much do you and Americans in general know about Native Americans? Here is a true/false quiz that tests your knowledge. Some items can be answered from information presented in this chapter, but others test your knowledge in general. How well do you think most Americans would do on this quiz? Why?

1. Native Americans have their college expenses paid for by their tribe.
2. Pocahontas was a real American Indian princess.
3. Native Americans scalped their enemies.
4. The term *powwow* is a derogatory, stereotypical term used to describe negotiating sessions between Indians and whites.
5. Native Americans practiced slavery.
6. Native Americans use the drug peyote in religious ceremonies.
7. American Indians are getting rich from casinos.
8. Anyone with an American Indian ancestor is automatically a member of that ancestor's tribe.
9. American Indians were always considered U.S. citizens.
10. American Indian tribes are sovereign nations.

SEE THE ANSWERS AT THE END OF THIS SECTION.