

Learning Objectives

- 7.1 Describe the growing diversity of the American population. 
- 7.2 Sequence the continuing struggle for minority civil rights. 
- 7.3 Explain the social construction of minority groups. 
- 7.4 Contrast racism, prejudice, and discrimination. 
- 7.5 Summarize the origins of prejudice and discrimination. 
- 7.6 Identify examples of institutional discrimination. 
- 7.7 Discuss some of the consequences of prejudice and discrimination. 
- 7.8 Analyze the policy of affirmative action. 

Michael Brown was an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, who was shot and killed by a white police officer. What do we know about this case? Brown and his friend were walking down the street on a Saturday afternoon. According to Brown's friend, a police officer drove up to them and said "get the f—k on the sidewalk" and then braked in front of Brown. The officer threatened to shoot, then fired multiple shots, and Brown ran for his life. At one point Brown stopped, with his hands up in surrender, yelling "I don't have a gun, stop shooting!" But Brown was then shot and collapsed to the ground. Other witnesses corroborated that Brown had his hands up while the police officer shot at him repeatedly. The police, in contrast, tell a different story. They say that a fight broke out after the police officer asked the two boys to step aside. The gun went off in the police car. The officer was not indicted. A few months after Brown's death, Eric Garner, a black man, died in New York after a police officer put him in a chokehold, despite the fact the New York City Police Department prohibits the use of chokeholds. Garner was accused of selling single cigarettes from packs without tax stamps. When the police officer took Garner's wrist behind his back, Garner swatted his arm away. The officer then put his arm around Garner's neck and pulled him backwards onto the ground. After releasing his arm from Garner's neck, the officer pushed Garner's head into the ground while four other officers moved to restrain Garner, who repeated "I can't breathe" eleven times while lying face down on the sidewalk. Garner lost consciousness, and officers turned him onto his side to ease his breathing while waiting seven minutes for an ambulance to arrive. Garner remained lying on the sidewalk the entire time. The police contend Garner was not put in a headlock and that no choking took place. The officer was not indicted. And then there is the story of Freddie Gray in Baltimore ... The stories go on and on.

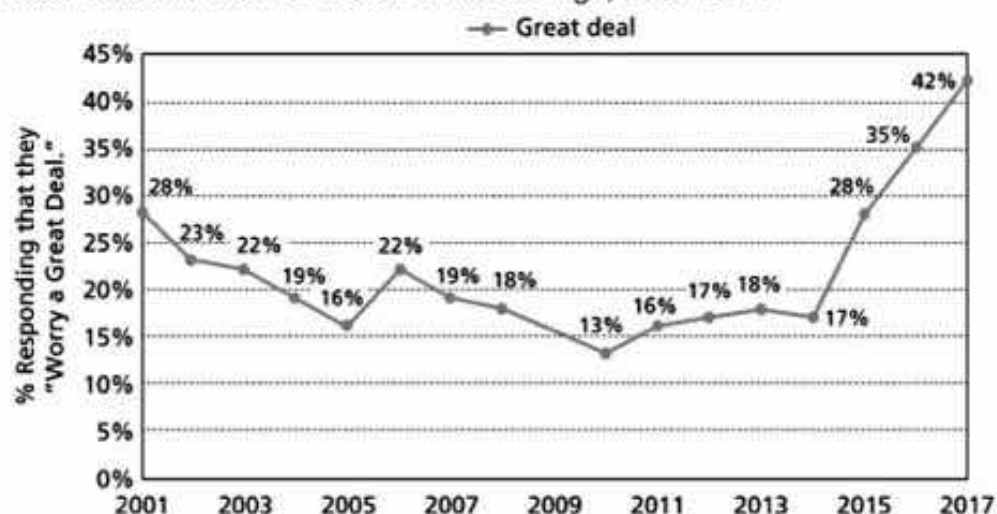
In many ways, the United States prides itself on its ethnic and racial diversity and on the progress it has made since the Civil War toward greater tolerance and racial harmony. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 was right-

tully marked as a historic first of which the nation could be proud. The global response to Obama's victory was amazement that a nation that had fought a civil war largely over slavery could have come so far.

However, the realities of partisan politics, ecological disasters, international conflicts, and signs of racism have lowered the sense of optimism. Americans' worries about race relations are at an all-time high, as shown in **Figure 7-1** (Swift, 2017). In 2001, over one-quarter of respondents to a Gallup poll reported that they worried a "great deal" about race relations. By 2010, early in Barack Obama's presidency, the percentage who expressed a "great deal" of worry about race relations hit an all-time low of 13 percent, a trend that began near the end of the George W. Bush presidency. The level of worry about this issue stayed relatively low until 2015, and then began to climb sharply. This surge in worry about race relations likely stems from the racial tensions and public discussion sparked by high-profile police incidents with unarmed black men, and the public's response. In 2017 concern is at an all-time high, likely fueled by President Trump's derogatory racial comments and concern over immigration.

Figure 7-1

Race Relations Worries in U.S. at Record High, 2001–2017



Source: Based on **Swift, A. (March 15, 2017)** "Americans' Worries About Race Relations at Record High," Gallup. Retrieved from <http://news.gallup.com/poll/206057/americans-worry-race-relations-record-high.aspx>.

It is important to note that the United States has made significant progress in addressing social problems related to racial inequality over the past century. In the early twentieth century, the United States was still characterized by deep racial and ethnic divisions. Its educational and economic institutions were marked by sharp patterns of racial and ethnic exclusion, its communities rigidly segregated along racial lines. Indeed, when he surveyed the situation of prejudice and discrimination in the 1930s and 1940s, the eminent Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal called the situation of "poor and suppressed" minorities in the land of freedom and opportunity "the American dilemma." Although much has changed since that time, racial and ethnic prejudice is still a significant social problem in many areas of American life.

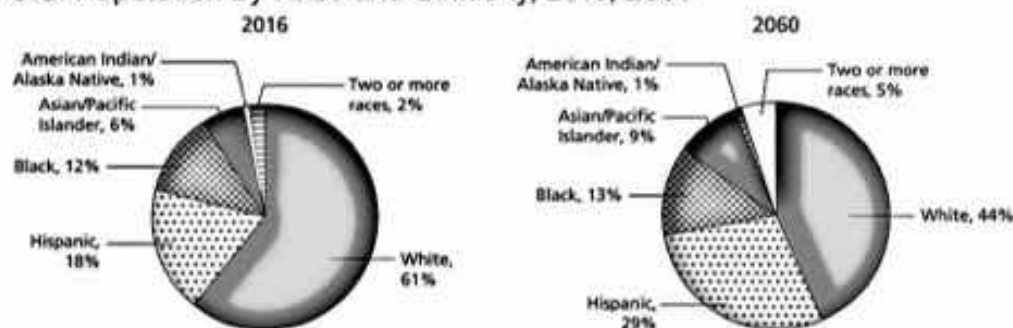
A More Diverse Nation

7.1 Describe the growing diversity of the American population.

Anyone who takes a quick look at the United States cannot help but notice the nation's diversity. An assortment of ethnic restaurants is available from which to choose, within schools many languages may be spoken, and a trip to the mall reveals people dressed quite differently from one another. The United States is quickly becoming more diverse every year due to immigration patterns and birthrates among specific groups, as shown in **Figure 7-2**. Currently, a little more than one person in three is a member of a minority group, but in Hawaii, New Mexico, California, and Texas, minorities outnumber whites. However, by 2060 minority groups are likely to comprise about 56 percent of the U.S. population. The percentage of blacks and American Indians will remain relatively stable, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders will nearly double but remain a small group, and the growth of Hispanic groups will be considerable. Although now making up 17 percent of the population, Hispanics are expected to grow to 29 percent by the year 2060 (Colby and Ortman, 2015; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018).

Figure 7-2

U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2016, 2060



Source: **Colby, S. L., and J. M. Ortman. 2015.** "Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060: Population Estimates and Projections." *Current Population Reports*, 25-1143. March. U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved 9 March 2015 (www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf).; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018.

What Do You Think?

What types of cultural changes do you expect in American society in the future as whites become the minority in number? Do you believe that these potential cultural changes will be good or bad (or neutral) for America, and why?

The Continuing Struggle for Minority Civil Rights

7.2 Sequence the continuing struggle for minority civil rights.

Although the constitutional bases for racial equality were established in the 1860s and 1870s with the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the rights guaranteed by these amendments began to be exercised effectively (Parrillo, 2019; Schaefer, 2019). Starting with Supreme Court decisions that affected specific, small areas of life, black Americans began to work their way toward equality. A major legal breakthrough came in 1954 with the historic decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."¹ The Supreme Court later applied this "separate cannot be equal" doctrine to a wide range of public facilities.

¹*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). US Supreme Court.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was another important step. Unlike the civil rights acts passed in 1957 and 1960, the 1964 act provided a means for fighting discrimination in employment and public accommodations and for denying federal funds to local government units that permitted discrimination. Eventually, the comprehensive Voting Rights Act of 1965 followed, as well as a federal prohibition against housing discrimination in the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Subsequent affirmative-action orders by President Lyndon B. Johnson aided the enforcement of these new laws; in addition, the Johnson administration set up new programs, such as the Head Start preschool program, to counter the effects of discrimination.

But in 1964, when the discrepancy between legal equality and actual inequality was clear, the impatience of some American blacks developed into anger, and in August 1964, a riot erupted in Watts, a black section of Los Angeles. By the time the wave of violent protest set off by the Watts riot subsided, it had struck almost every major urban center in the country. In 1967, after especially destructive riots in Newark and Detroit, President Johnson appointed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate the origins of the disturbances and to recommend ways to prevent or control them in the future. Its findings suggested that there had been very little change since Gunnar Myrdal's early study. Describing the basic causes of the civil disorders, the commission stated,

The first is surely the continuing exclusion of great numbers of Negroes from the benefits of economic progress through discrimination in employment and education, and their enforced segregated housing and schools.

The corrosive and degrading effects of this condition and the attitudes that underlie it are the source of the deepest bitterness and at the center of the problem of racial disorder. (p. 203)

The commission concluded that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal" (p. 1).²

²National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. 1968. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Although the situations of other minority groups—Native Americans, Chicanos (Mexican Americans), Hispanic Americans (especially Puerto Ricans and Cubans), Asian Americans, and some white ethnic groups—have received less intensive study, they are similar to that of black Americans. One form of discrimination to which members of other groups are particularly vulnerable is harassment at the voting booth, largely because of some individuals' inadequate command of English. The 1975 extension of the Voting Rights Act attempted to alleviate this problem by requiring cities with sizable "language minority" populations to provide bilingual ballots in elections; it also permanently banned the use of literacy tests as a prerequisite for voting.

Over the past few decades there has been an influx of immigrants not only from Spanish-speaking countries, but also from Asian countries, especially Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, and Pakistan. The experiences of these immigrants have shown that small groups with education, business experience, and some funds, coupled with cultural values that stress family cohesion and extremely hard work, have less difficulty in adapting to their new environment. In contrast, large populations that gather in concentrated settlements, as Vietnamese immigrants have done in Texas and California, have been targets of racial hostility. Thus, it appears that the larger a group and the more segregated it is, the more hostility it encounters.

In the same vein, **Stanley Lieberson (1990)** argued that when an immigrant group is small, it is relatively easy for it to develop an occupational niche or specialty, as the Greeks and the Chinese have done in the restaurant industry. He cites a study showing that 15 percent of Greek immigrants were working in the restaurant industry and 9 percent of Swedish immigrants were carpenters. But when an immigrant population grows, it becomes far more difficult for the group to retain control of an occupational niche and expand it enough to accommodate newcomers. Later arrivals, therefore, are more dependent than earlier immigrants on the general labor market.

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For those of Middle Eastern descent or appearance, September 11 ushered in fear of reprisal and concern for personal safety. Some Muslims, Arab Americans, and Southeast Asians have paid a high price for sharing a similar appearance or cultural and religious background of the accused terrorists. In the months after the attacks, reports of harassment and assaults against these groups soared, as did complaints of workplace bias and allegations of racial profiling by law enforcement and airline personnel.³

³U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Ohio Advisory Committee. 2001. Briefing on Civil Rights Issues Facing Muslims and Arab Americans in Ohio Post-September 11. 14 November. P.203, 1.

The situation of immigrant groups highlights the problems of minority status in the United States. But before discussing these problems in detail, it is important to gain a clearer understanding of the meaning of the term *minority* as it is commonly used today.

The Social Construction of Minorities

7.3 Explain the social construction of minority groups.

One often hears the claim that, due to immigration and differences in the birthrates of various groups within the population, the United States is rapidly becoming a "nation of minorities." This claim refers especially to the increasing numbers of Hispanics, Asians, and other groups, but it does not address the more important sociological aspects of the term *minority*. From the standpoint of social problems, minorities are those groups that do not receive the same treatment as others in society. But how and why does such a situation come about? Arriving at answers to these questions depends on understanding three terms that are central to the discussion: *racial minorities*, *ethnic minorities*, and *assimilation*.

Racial minorities ⓘ are groups of people who share certain inherited characteristics, such as eye folds or brown skin. Most experts believe that the biologically determined racial groups into which humanity is divided—Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid—are strictly social categories and that the actual hereditary differences among them are meaningless. This perspective is known as the "social constructionist" explanation for the existence of racial minorities. Race is a socially constructed concept in that people take what are rather trivial biological distinctions and "construct" ideas about more general differences among groups. Historically, when it is convenient for those in power to do so, they have used socially constructed ideas about racial superiority and inferiority to justify slavery or other extreme forms of racial dominance.

racial minorities

Groups of people who share certain inherited characteristics.

Ethnic minorities ⓘ are made up of people who share cultural features, such as language, religion, national origin, dietary practices, and a common history, and who regard themselves as a distinct group. Ethnicity represents culture, whereas race attempts to represent biological heritage. Thus, a black woman who recently moved to the United States, and grew up in Jamaica, is not really an African American in terms of ethnicity. Her race may be the same as that of an African American (i.e., Negroid), but her cultural heritage is likely to be very different.

ethnic minorities

Groups of people who share cultural features, such as language, religion, national origin, dietary practices, and a common history, and who regard themselves as a distinct group.

This distinction causes some confusion. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau classifies all blacks according to their race—black—not by their ethnicity. Some people, however, use the term *African American* rather than *black* because they are interested in the uniquely African American experience. Likewise, the U.S. Census Bureau often classifies all Hispanics by race—separating white Hispanics from black Hispanics—but generally ignores ethnicity—Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban American—which masks the rich diversity found among Hispanic groups that may have little or nothing to do with skin color or language. After all, how much do Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans really have in common? Other times, the U.S. Census Bureau will single out Hispanics as one ethnic group, combining black and white Hispanics and masking the diversity within these groups.

They, too, have been victims of socially constructed ideas about superiority and inferiority. For example, 6 million Jews were killed by the Nazis because of the socially constructed ideas about them: Jews were thought not only to have abhorrent religious views, and too much economic and political influence, but also to be biologically distinct. From this perspective, there was a biological component to the struggle between Jews and everyone else, and the only way to win the struggle was to exterminate all Jews.

Since this time, there have been other cases of genocide with the intention of eliminating ethnic groups, including Cambodia, Rwanda, Serbia, Syria, and Myanmar. In Rwanda, it is estimated that anywhere from 500,000 to 1,000,000 people were slaughtered in a 100-day period from April 7, 1994, to mid-July of that year. The Hutu majority, incited by top government officials to kill all Tutsi, brutally murdered their neighbors and fellow villagers with machetes and other weapons. Seventy percent of all Tutsi living in Rwanda were killed as the world watched in horror, too stunned to intervene. Former President Bill Clinton referred to America's lack of intervention as one of his biggest regrets while in office.

Syria has been engaged in civil war since 2011. What began as a democratic uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime has transformed into a violent struggle between local, national, regional, and international forces, in which the Syrian government, extremist groups, and outside actors perpetrate atrocities against civilians as a systematic strategy of war. The conflict in Syria has cost the lives of nearly 500,000 people, displaced more than half the country's population, and involved numerous crimes against humanity. Syrians are being subjected to starvation, exposure, preventable diseases, and lack of medical care; to enforced disappearances; to chemical weapons attacks—which are banned under international law—and to torture, rape, and killings. When people are forced to leave the country where they live like this, they become known as refugees. The conflict in Syria has caused one of the largest refugee movements in recent history. The rapidly rising number of Syrian refugees is over 5.5 million, and another 6.1 million are internally displaced (**The U.S. Holocaust Museum, March, 2018**).

The plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar (formerly called Burma) is gaining international attention for the atrocities being committed against this largely Muslim group (**Al Jazeera News, 2018; Kristof, 2018; McCain and Jolie, 2018**). In 2017 over 700,000 Rohingya fled the country to Bangladesh after being targeted by the military for systematic killing, torture, arson, gang rape, and other mass atrocities amounting to ethnic cleansing. They are denied food and medical care. Two-thirds of the refugees are women and girls; the men have been killed. They live in squalid and violent camps. Girls are vulnerable to forced early marriage to "save" them from assault or are tricked into jobs in brothels. The United Nations has said that the situation bears the markings of "genocide," and several world leaders have declared it "ethnic cleansing." The late Republican Senator John McCain and actress Angelina Jolie, a seemingly unlikely pairing, have worked to bring attention to the tragic situation, and pleaded for the United States to take the lead in stopping the violence and safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all Burmese people.



At least 700,000 Rohingya have fled persecution in Myanmar and entered Bangladesh to escape systematic killings, torture, rape, arson, and other forms of violence. Yet, they are largely unwelcome in Bangladesh and live in crowded camps lacking basic necessities.

Suvra Kanti Das/Alamy Stock Photo

It should be noted that the term *minority* as used by sociologists does not refer to a group's numerical size in the population. For example, blacks in South Africa are a minority, even though they make up 90 percent of the population. All minority groups have their own special characteristics, but the following characteristics are sociologically significant (**Feagin, 2013; Simpson and Yinger, 1985**):

- Minorities are subordinate segments of a complex society.
- Minorities tend to have special physical or cultural traits that are seen as undesirable by the dominant segments of the society.
- Minorities develop a group consciousness or "we feeling."

- Membership in a minority is transmitted by a rule of descent—one is born into it—which can impose the minority status on future generations even if by then its special physical or cultural traits have disappeared.
- Members of a minority, whether by choice or by necessity, tend to marry within their group.

Sometimes members of either a racial or an ethnic minority slowly cease being “different” by taking on the characteristics of the mainstream culture. This process is called **assimilation** ⓘ. Members of a minority group may adapt their own unique cultural patterns to those of the majority, or intermarry, and over time the group ceases to be singled out as a minority. Many Caucasian immigrant groups in the nineteenth century fit this pattern: The Irish, Greeks, or Italians may have been considered distinct groups, living in their own enclaves, speaking their own language, and eating traditional foods. But over time they assimilated, and today they do not receive a lot of attention for being an ethnic group. It is easier for Caucasians to assimilate because they usually do not have distinctive physical features.

assimilation

A process through which a racial or an ethnic minority group slowly ceases being “different” by taking on the characteristics of the mainstream culture.

What Do You Think?

Assimilation is controversial. Is it a good idea for all Americans to eventually look and sound alike, or should Americans keep their distinct racial and ethnic differences? Which view would make a stronger America in your opinion, and why?

There is no clear-cut distinction between who constitutes a majority or a minority group; rather, any given group can be placed at some point along a continuum of “minorityness.” Sociologist **Michele Lamont (2003)** compared racism in the United States and France, two highly developed nations, and asked the question, “Who counts as ‘them’?”⁴ Lamont interviewed 150 white, working-class men living in the suburbs of Paris and New York. Instead of asking directly about racism, respondents were asked to describe the kinds of people they like and dislike, the kinds of people they feel similar to and different from, and the types of people to whom they feel inferior or superior. The Americans were much more likely than the French to mention race or skin color as a deciding factor. In particular, blacks emerged most often as the group disdained by the white New Yorkers as “them”; yet in France, blacks were not of concern. The French “them” were Muslim immigrants (**Lamont, 2003**).

⁴Lamont, M. (2003). “Who Counts as ‘Them’: Racism and Virtue in the United States and France.” *Contexts* 2 (4):36–41.

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Subordinate status is the principal characteristic of a minority group. Once established, however, the dominant–subordinate relationship is not fixed for all time. Either through the efforts of the subordinate group itself or because of changing legal or economic conditions, power relationships can be altered. You can see in American society, for example, that women are not as subordinate as they were only a generation ago. Similarly, in southern counties where blacks considerably outnumber whites, extensive voter registration has enabled blacks to become politically significant. On a broader scale, most of the former colonial areas of Africa and Asia are now independent nations, and some countries that formerly lacked influence, such as China, are now world powers.

Despite these examples of long-term change, it is usually very difficult for members of a subordinate group to attain a share of power and influence. The dominant group naturally wants to protect its privileged position. Among the weapons it uses to do so are prejudice and discrimination.

Defining Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination

7.4 Contrast racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Racism ⓘ is behavior, in word or deed, that is motivated by the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine abilities. Racists believe in this erroneous concept of race; they also believe that their own race is superior and therefore ought to dominate or rule other races. Racism may be an attribute of an individual, or it may be incorporated into the institutions (social structures and laws) of an entire society. Nazi Germany, South Africa under apartheid, and the United States before the civil rights era of the mid-twentieth century are examples of societies and nations that incorporated racist beliefs within their social institutions. Societies that have attempted to eliminate racism from their institutions continue to struggle with the legacies of their racist histories.

racism

Behavior, in word or deed, motivated by the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine abilities and cultures.

Prejudice ⓘ is an emotional, rigid attitude toward members of the subordinate group. But while prejudices are attitudes, not all attitudes are prejudices. Both share the element of *prejudgment*—the tendency to decide in advance how to think about a situation or event. Unlike other attitudes, however, prejudice involves an emotional investment that strongly resists change. Prejudiced people tend to be so committed to their prejudgments about a particular category of people that even in the face of rational evidence that the prejudgment is wrong, they will maintain their prejudice, even defend it strongly, and denounce the evidence.

prejudice

An emotional, rigid attitude toward members of the subordinate group.

It is important to note that prejudice need not always involve antipathy. One can be prejudiced in favor of a person or group, with a similar degree of disregard for objective evidence. Prejudice is based on attitude; it is a tendency to think about people in a categorical, predetermined way: *My daughter Ashley has a new boyfriend, a Chinese boy. He's a good catch. You know how smart those Chinese people are.*

Discrimination ⓘ is the differential treatment of individuals considered

to belong to a particular social group. To treat a member of a subordinate group as inferior is to discriminate against that person. Members of the dominant group tend to use one standard of behavior among themselves and a different standard for any member of a subordinate group.

discrimination

The differential treatment of individuals considered to belong to a particular social group.

Discrimination is overt behavior, although it may sometimes be difficult to observe—as in tacit agreements among real estate agents to steer members of minority groups to certain blocks or neighborhoods. To justify the behavior to themselves, people tend to rationalize it by claiming that those whom they discriminate against are less worthy of respect or fair treatment than people like themselves. Moreover, people tend to be ethnocentric—to see their own behavioral patterns and belief structures as desirable and natural and those of others as less so.



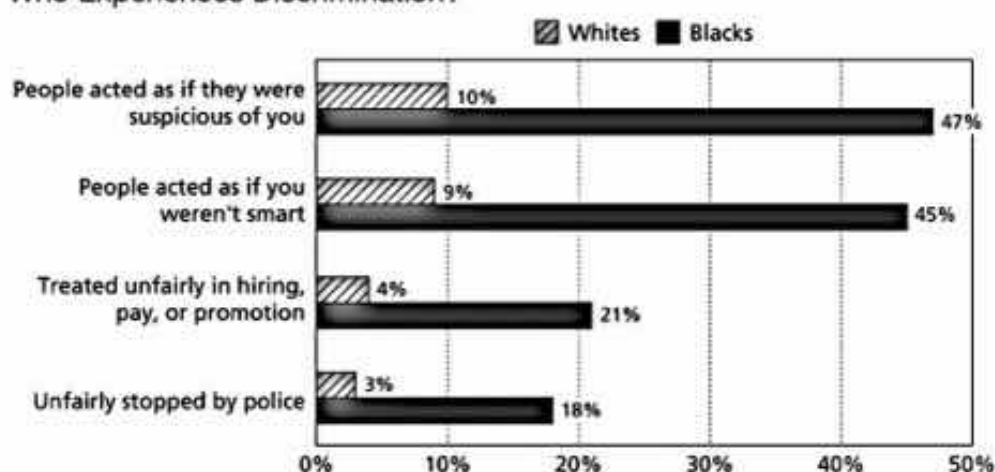
Cassius Clay (now known as Muhammad Ali) won the 1964 World Heavyweight Boxing Championship. Despite the honor, he was routinely denied service in restaurants for being black.

ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo

It may be easy to say that discrimination is a thing of the past, but it would be untrue, as shown in **Figure 7-3**. A recent survey asked a representative sample of white and black persons about their experiences with discrimination. Have people acted as if they were suspicious of you, or that you weren't smart? Have you been treated unfairly in hiring, pay, or promotion? Have you been unfairly stopped by police? As you can see in the Figure, blacks are five to six times more likely than whites to say that these things have happened to them (**Pew Research Center, June, 2016**).

Figure 7-3

Who Experiences Discrimination?



Source: Based on "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart," *Social Demographic Trends*, **Pew Research Center (June 27, 2016)**. Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/st_2016-06-27_race-inequality-overview-09/.

Sociologists and others have conducted many natural experiments and found that, despite what people say they would do, many do discriminate. Discrimination occurs among employers (**Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh, 2014; Quillian, Pager, Hexel, and Midtbøen, 2017**); on eBay auctions in which an iPod held by a white hand received 21 percent more offers than one held by a black hand (**Doleac and Stein, 2013**); by service workers who may give black customers less than optimal service (**Brewster, Brauer, and Lynn, 2015**); and landlords posting on Craigslist who were less likely to respond to e-mails with stereotypical black-sounding names than to their white counterparts (**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013**).

Even highly educated persons exhibit racism. In academia, college professors report incidents of racial and ethnic discrimination by their peers and administration (**Zambrana et al., 2017**). Our state legislators are less likely to respond to constituents with black-sounding names than to

those with white-sounding names (**Butler and Brockman, 2011**). Physicians have described black patients—regardless of their education and income levels—as less intelligent, less educated, more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, less likely to follow medical advice, and less likely to participate in rehabilitation than white patients (**Williams and Wyatt, 2015**). Perhaps it’s not surprising that discrimination itself contributes to racial disparities in health care and higher death rates among minorities from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and HIV infection (**Cloustin, Rubin, Phelan, and Link, 2016; Colen, Ramey, Cooksey, and Williams, 2017**).

Prejudice and discrimination are closely related, and both are often present in a given situation. But this pairing is not always the case. **Robert Merton (1949)** outlined four possible relationships between prejudice and discrimination: unprejudiced and nondiscriminatory (integration), unprejudiced and discriminatory (institutional discrimination), prejudiced and nondiscriminatory (latent bigotry), and prejudiced and discriminatory (outright bigotry) (see **Table 7-1** ). Although it is possible to be both completely free of prejudice and completely nondiscriminatory—or to be a complete bigot—most people fall somewhere between these two extremes. It is possible to be prejudiced against a particular group but not to discriminate against it; it is also possible to discriminate against a particular group but not be prejudiced against it.

Table 7-1
A Typology of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice (the Attitude)	Discrimination (the Behavior)	
	Yes	No
Yes	Outright bigotry	Latent bigotry
No	Institutional discrimination	Integration (both psychological and institutional)

Source: Based on **Merton, R. K. (1949)** *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.

The builders of a new, expensive cooperative apartment house may not be personally prejudiced against Arabs, but they may refuse to sell apartments to Arab families (i.e., they may discriminate against Arabs) out of fear that the presence of Arab families would make it more difficult to sell the remaining apartments. This example is a clear case of institutional discrimination (the lower-left cell in **Table 7-1** ). Or the reverse may occur: In a corporation that holds a government contract, and hence is subject to federal equal employment opportunity regulations, the personnel director may be very prejudiced personally against blacks but may hire a black woman as a management trainee—that is, not discriminate—to comply with the law. This behavior is an example of latent bigotry (the upper-right cell).

Suppose the builders were confronted with a different situation: a His-

Yes	Outright bigotry	Latent bigotry
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Suppose the builders were confronted with a different situation: a Hispanic family attempting to buy one of their apartments. On the one hand, they might very well discriminate out of both personal prejudice and concern for profits—a case of outright bigotry (the upper-left cell). On the other hand, there can be situations in which legal controls prevent latent bigotry from affecting such behaviors as the sale of a house to a Hispanic family, but those controls cannot prevent social isolation of the family after the sale. These examples illustrate the difficulty of keeping personal prejudices from leading, sooner or later, to some form of discrimination, particularly if a significant number of people share the same prejudice (**Ore, 2006**).

Origins of Prejudice and Discrimination

7.5 Summarize the origins of prejudice and discrimination.

Although prejudice and discrimination are weapons used by a dominant group to maintain its dominance, sometimes they are used unconsciously. Do patterns of prejudice and discrimination result from the aggregation of individual attitudes and behaviors, or do prejudice and discrimination arise from the society? In fact, neither argument excludes the other; both are possible.

7.5.1 Prejudice and Discrimination in the Individual

Prejudice and bigotry may manifest in individuals in several ways. Two are discussed below: frustration-aggression, and projection.

Frustration-Aggression

At one time or another, most human beings feel frustrated. They want something, but because of events or other people they cannot get it. This can lead to anger and to aggression, which may be expressed in any of several ways. The most obvious way is to strike at the source of the frustration, but often that action is impossible; frustrated individuals may not know the source, or are subjectively unable to recognize it, or are in a position in which they cannot risk such an action. Whatever the reason, the results are the same: They are unable to vent their anger on the real source of their frustration.

Instead, the aggression is often directed at a safer and more convenient target, usually one that somewhat resembles the real source of the frustration. In other words, the aggression is displaced onto a scapegoat. When this displacement is not limited to one person but is extended to include all similar people, it may produce prejudice.

For example, suppose a middle-aged man who has been working for 20 years at the same job is told by his young supervisor that his job will soon be eliminated because of automation. The man is understandably angry and frightened. But if he were to vent his aggression on the supervisor, he would almost certainly be fired. That evening, as he is telling his woes to friends at the local bar, a young man comes in for a beer. The middle-aged man accuses the youth, and "all you lazy kids," of being a good-for-nothing and ruining the country, and only the intervention of the bartender prevents him from assaulting the young man.

It is clear that this man has displaced his aggression toward his young supervisor onto all young people. Rather than deal with the supervisor and the whole range of factors that led to the elimination of his job, he

blames the problems of the country on young people; that is, he uses them as a scapegoat.

Projection

Another source of prejudice and discrimination is **projection** ⓘ. Many people have personal traits that they consider undesirable. They wish to rid themselves of those traits, but they cannot always do it directly—either because they find the effort too difficult or because they are unable to admit to themselves that they possess those traits. They may relieve their tension by attributing the unwanted traits to others, often members of another group. This behavior makes it possible for them to reject and condemn the traits without rejecting and condemning themselves. Since the emotional pressures underlying projection can be very intense, it is difficult to counter them with rational arguments.

projection

The act of attributing the unwanted traits of oneself onto others.

An often-cited example of projection is white attitudes toward black sexuality. Historically, many whites saw blacks as extremely promiscuous and uninhibited in their sexual relations, and there was much concern about protecting white women from sexual attacks by black men. Actually, it was white men who enjoyed virtually unlimited sexual access to black women, particularly slaves. White society, however, regarded overt sexuality as unacceptable, and it is likely that white men felt some guilt about their sexual desires and assaults on black women. To alleviate their guilt, they projected their own lust and sexuality onto black men—a much easier course than admitting the discrepancy between their own values and behavior.

7.5.2 Prejudice and Discrimination in Social Structures

Looking at individuals does not fully explain why certain groups face prejudice and discrimination. To understand this behavior, you will need to look at larger social processes.





Protesters in California demonstrate against illegal immigration and amnesty for undocumented immigrants. The frustration-aggression perspective suggests that the real frustration among protesters is a lack of jobs with good pay and benefits. The protesters use illegal immigrants as a scapegoat.

Reza Estakhrian/Getty Images

Political Dominance and Economic Exploitation

In many societies, the demand for more than the available supply of certain goods gives rise to a competitive struggle, which usually results in the dominance of one group and the subordination of others. Even if the initial competition is for economic goods, the contest is ultimately a struggle for power and hence, a political process. Once established, political dominance is likely to be reinforced by economic exploitation. Slavery and serfdom are the most obvious forms of exploitation, but “free” workers may also be exploited. Migrant farmworkers are an example. They work in dirty jobs in the hot sun, stooped over for hours, and receive low pay and no benefits.

Economic exploitation is one form of discrimination practiced by the dominant group against a subordinate group. Historically, the subordinate group has consisted of unskilled workers. In the case of blacks, for example, unskilled jobs were plentiful and available (at low wages) before the 1940s. With the development of protective labor legislation (e.g., minimum wage, antidiscrimination, and workers’ compensation laws), employers could no longer use the subordinate group as a source of cheap labor. Blacks were then systematically denied jobs as white-dominated unions maintained control over skilled jobs and employers sought cheaper unskilled labor by transferring basic manufacturing operations abroad (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo, 2000).

A recent example involves the change in the policy of the U.S. Census under President Trump that would include questions about citizenship, something that was dropped from the Census more than 50 years ago. At first glance we might think, well, why not ask about citizenship? The problem is that the Census is designed to be a *count* of people, and the federal government allocates billions of dollars to regions based on the count of people who live there. For example, school funding may increase or decrease because of how many young people live in a certain area. If people who are undocumented are asked about their citizenship,

crease or decrease because of how many young people live in a certain area. If people who are undocumented are asked about their citizenship, it is likely that they will not fill out the form for fear of exposing their status, which could lead to deportation. And since those who are undocumented tend to live in certain regions, the count of residents in these regions may be grossly underestimated, thereby curtailing services for all people who live there.

Laws and Policies

Discrimination can take many other forms. Members of the subordinate group may be legally prevented from owning property or voting or may be terrorized into submission. Some legal forms of discrimination are symbolic measures to keep the subordinate people “in their place,” such as the severe immigration control law passed in the Arizona State Legislature in 2010 and signed into law by the state’s governor, Jan Brewer. The law, nicknamed the “show me your papers law,” requires state troopers to ask for identification and proof of citizenship or legal status in the United States from anyone they stop who, in their judgment, might be an illegal immigrant. It was unclear how a state trooper would make such a judgment, and it was left to the troopers’ discretion. After much controversy and court hearings, the law was enforced beginning in 2012. The law is an example of many initiatives in the Southwest that are designed to address what advocates regard as a crime wave by illegal immigrants. In the meantime, one very immediate effect is the rise of protests throughout the nation, and especially in cities with large numbers of immigrants of Hispanic origin. After SB 1070 passed in 2010, two dozen copycat bills were introduced in state legislatures across the country; five passed in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Utah. The ACLU and a coalition of civil rights organizations have filed lawsuits in all six states. Laws inspired by Arizona’s SB 1070 invite rampant racial profiling against Latinos, Asian Americans and others presumed to be “foreign” based on how they look or sound.

Social Norms

A **social norm** ⓘ is a commonly accepted standard that specifies the kind of behavior appropriate in a given situation. It is relevant to this discussion because, although it does not clarify why prejudice and discrimination begin, it helps explain how and why they are perpetuated.

social norm

A commonly accepted standard that specifies the kind of behavior appropriate in a given situation.

Social norms are learned in a process that begins almost at birth. Small

children soon learn what kind of behavior elicits the approval of their parents and what kind is likely to elicit a rebuke. The same process continues as they encounter other significant adults. Gradually, children internalize the values and norms of their society. They receive approval from parents and other adults, and later from their peers, when they behave in socially acceptable ways; they experience disapproval when they do not.

A good example of a social norm that pertains to minority–majority relations is **homogamy** ⓘ, the requirement or expectation that one must marry a person like oneself with respect to such characteristics as religion, social class, and race or ethnicity. This expectation has been a particularly strong norm in the United States for race. The early U.S. censuses included a category called *mulatto* to describe people of multiple races. **Antimiscegenation laws** ⓘ banning marriage between whites and other races were common well into the latter half of the twentieth century. Racially mixed couples often encountered severe hostility, and many felt compelled to move to places like Greenwich Village in New York City or Hyde Park in Chicago, where there were similar couples and they could feel less “deviant.” The U.S. Supreme Court struck down such laws in 1967 in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*; however, Alabama was the last state to formally repeal its antimiscegenation law through a state constitutional amendment as late as 2000.

homogamy

The expectation that one must marry a person like oneself with respect to such characteristics as religion, social class, and race or ethnicity.

antimiscegenation laws

Laws banning marriage between whites and other races.

Today, fifty years after *Loving v. Virginia*, interracial marriage is on the rise. By 2015, 17 percent of newlyweds were interracial couples, and among Asians and Hispanics, that figure is close to 30 percent (**Livingston and Brown, 2017**). Attitudes toward interracial marriages have become more favorable over the decades, and now only about 9 percent think that it is a bad thing for society (**Livingston and Brown, 2017**). The norm of homogamy is far weaker today than it was even a generation ago. Younger adults have grown up in an environment immersed with multicultural images including those in music, art, sports, and television. They saw a biracial man as president when many of them were still children. On the contrary, older Americans grew up with the notion that segregation was normal, justifiable, and the appropriate way for Americans to live their lives. Even so, the views of many elderly persons have evolved over time.

Slide Show

Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes

Stereotypes are exaggerations of some small element of truth, grossly distorted and taken out of context. They are usually negative in nature, but not always. Nonetheless, whether positive or negative, stereotypes are harmful because they treat people as one homogeneous group and ignore personality and other individual differences.



Asian Americans are stereotyped as smart and as having professional, well-paying careers. Although the median income of Asians is the highest among all racial and ethnic groups, it is not fair to say that all Asians are doing well financially. Many Asians, especially those from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, work in poorly paid service work or in factories.

9 Lives Illustration/Shutterstock





One of the many stereotypes about blacks, especially black men, is that they are good in sports. Yes, a look at professional sports teams usually shows an overrepresentation of blacks, but that observation is a far cry from assuming that most blacks are good athletes. Black people come in all shapes, sizes, and abilities.

Robert Miu/Shutterstock



The image of the Mexican bandit, wearing a sombrero, red bandana, a vest, and boots with spurs is widespread. The "Frito Bandito" was a classic image in advertising. However, most Mexican men do not look like this, are definitely not bandits, and could be highly offended by the stereotype.

Anton Lunkov/Shutterstock



Stereotypes of Native Americans are less than flattering. Images like this one do not represent the lives of Native Americans, and yet, these images are common, including as mascots for sports teams. Many teams have changed their mascots, but others such as the Washington Redskins, have resisted changes despite some degree of public outcry.

patrimonio designs ltd/Shutterstock



Stereotypes also abound regarding white people; they have the world in the palm of their hands! However, race and ethnicity are also interwoven with class and sex. Rich white men may be overrepresented among the powerful, but poor whites, and poor white women in particular, generally do not have the same opportunities.

yuriytsirkunov/Shutterstock

Critical Thinking

What other racial or ethnic stereotypes exist? Make a list of stereotypes for each primary racial and ethnic group. Compare and contrast these stereotypes: Is the list longer for some groups than others? Do some groups have more positive (or negative) stereotypes than other groups?

Stereotypes

Still another source of prejudice and discrimination is **stereotyping** , or attributing a fixed and usually unfavorable or inaccurate conception to a category of people. Whereas social norms are concerned primarily with behavior and only indirectly with attitudes, stereotyping is a matter of attitude.

Stereotypes

Still another source of prejudice and discrimination is **stereotyping** ⓘ, or attributing a fixed and usually unfavorable or inaccurate conception to a category of people. Whereas social norms are concerned primarily with behavior and only indirectly with attitudes, stereotyping is a matter of attitude.

stereotyping

Attributing a fixed, and usually unfavorable or inaccurate, conception to a category of people.

Usually a stereotype contains (or once contained) some element of truth, but it is exaggerated, distorted, or taken out of context. We tend to perceive and understand things in categories and apply the same mental process to people. We build up mental pictures of various groups, pictures made from overgeneralized impressions and selected bits of information, and then use them to define all members of a group regardless of their individual differences. Thus, we come to assume that all Native Americans are alcoholics, all women are emotional, all African Americans are good at sports, all residents of Appalachia or the Ozarks are hillbillies, all Puerto Ricans are short, all Italians are gangsters, all Jews are religious, all Asians are smart, all Swedes are blond, all Frenchmen are amorous, all old people are senile, and so forth. None of these generalizations will stand up to even perfunctory analysis, yet many people habitually use them in thinking about minority groups. **The slide show, "Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes** ⓘ," reveals some common stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups.

Institutional Discrimination

7.6 Identify examples of institutional discrimination.

If discrimination is a socially learned behavior of members of dominant groups, designed to support and justify their continued dominance, it is reasonable to expect that it will be built into the structure of society. When members of a society are socialized to believe that certain groups are naturally to be treated as inferiors, it would seem perfectly reasonable to formulate public policies and build public institutions that discriminate against them.

To some extent, this type of socialization is exactly what has happened in the United States. When many Hispanics, blacks, Native Americans, Asians, women, and members of other minority groups are not treated fairly, it is not necessarily because of the conscious prejudices of individual public officials. It often is not a case of "I don't like your kind, so I am not going to hire you." There are laws in place designed to protect people from discrimination of that nature.

These laws are not always successful, however, as evidenced by the 37,000 individual filings of discrimination based on race or national origin to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2017. As you can see in **Table 7-2** , these types of filings have remained about level since 2000 (**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2018**). Nonetheless, there is another type of discrimination that is even more difficult to prove.

Table 7-2

Number of Individual Filings of Discrimination Based on Race or National Origin, 2000, 2017

	2000	2017
Race	28,945	28,528
National Origin	7,792	8,299

Source: **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. 2018.** "Statistics." Retrieved 15 March 2018 (www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/index.cfm).

As a Native American student in the public school system in Oklahoma, I always felt a bit offended when we celebrated Columbus Day, or when we learned that Columbus "discovered" America. Oh really? My forbearers were here long before Columbus sailed over in his funky boats. Yes,

Columbus opened up North America for white people, but he also brought death and destruction to MY people. I didn't like celebrating that. —Tiva, 18-year-old recent high school graduate

Institutional discrimination ⓘ is an unconscious result of the structure and functioning of the public institutions and policies themselves. It often goes unnoticed by the dominant group because it is woven into the cultural fabric of society. Our culture celebrates Christopher Columbus; Southern culture celebrates the Confederate flag (although as of July 2015 it no longer flies over the statehouse in South Carolina); and Mississippi and Alabama continue to celebrate Robert E. Lee (the leader of the Confederate army) on the same day as the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday, despite the obvious conflict of interest. Practices such as these are rarely noticed as racist or discriminatory until a crisis occurs, such as the gunning down of nine black church-goers in South Carolina in 2015, which began the national outcry to remove the Confederate flag from South Carolina's state capital.

institutional discrimination

An unconscious result of the structure and functioning of the public institutions and policies themselves.

Racial profiling provides another example. It refers to the practice—by law enforcement personnel, security agents, or any person in a position of authority—of disproportionately selecting people of color for investigations. To a large degree, racial profiling is a form of institutional discrimination because police or intelligence organizations unfairly single out certain groups, distinguished by racial characteristics, in seeking to enforce rules or laws. From the authorities' viewpoint, this behavior may be justified by the belief that their suspicions correspond to realistic probabilities of wrongdoing by members of those groups. Thus, after 9/11, Arab Americans and Indian American Sikhs wearing turbans—in fact, anyone with swarthy skin and a beard—have been far more likely than lighter-skinned individuals to be searched at airports.

Racial profiling has also been a major subject of controversy among blacks and other people of color who are disproportionately stopped while driving and searched for possible drug possession. According to the theory among law enforcement personnel, such people are more likely than others to be involved in drug use and drug dealing (Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Harkel, 2014). Others argue that racial profiling is justified because the facts show that blacks and Hispanics are indeed disproportionately more likely to drive fast and to be carrying drugs than whites. But as we see in **A Closer Look: "Driving while Black,"** ⓘ the best research on this issue to date has convinced judges in many courts

that indeed racial profiling violates the civil rights of innocent people and must be curtailed.

Since it would be difficult to discuss all categories of institutional discrimination against all minority groups, this discussion focuses on four major categories: education, housing, employment and income, and social justice.

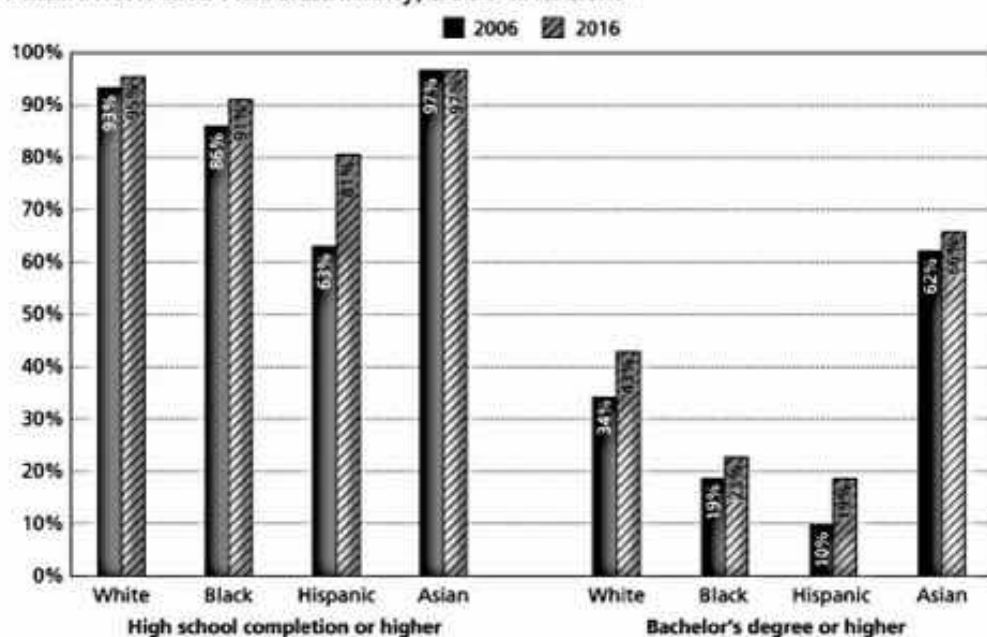
7.6.1 Education

Americans take public school systems very seriously. Undoubtedly, one reason is that, in this country, education has generally been seen as the road to social and economic advancement. It is almost an article of faith that American children should get more education than their parents and achieve higher social and economic status.

Since the 1940 census, which was the first to ask about educational attainment, the average number of years of school completed by all Americans has increased steadily, and the educational gap between racial and ethnic groups has declined considerably (McFarland, Cui, and Stark, 2018; Musu-Gillette et al., 2016; Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow, 2018). Despite these gains, members of minority groups remain less likely to finish high school or attend college than are whites, as shown in **Figure 7-4** (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow, 2018). The figure reports the percentage of persons age 25-29 who have (a) completed high school or higher; and (b) completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 7-4

Percentage of Persons Ages 25-29, By Selected Levels of Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2006 and 2016



Source: Based on **Snyder, T. D., de Brey, C., & Dillow, S. A. (2018).** *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, NCES 2017-094. National Center for Education Statistics.