

# Race and Ethnicity

Social Problems  
And  
Racial Inequality

## What is Race?

- Race – a category of people who share a genetic or biological heritage as demonstrated by distinct physical characteristics (e.g., eye color, skin color, hair texture, facial features)
- Caucasian
- African- American
- Hispanic

## What is Ethnicity?

- Ethnicity – a category of people who share a cultural heritage as demonstrated by distinct cultural characteristics (e.g., traditions, beliefs, clothing, food, language)
- Jews
- Italians
- Bohemians

## What is a Minority Group?

- Minority group – a social group that is singled out for differential treatment or discrimination due to physical or cultural characteristics and have traditionally been disadvantaged or experienced less access to resources. Also known as “subordinate groups” in society.

## Minority Groups

- Women
- African-Americans
- Disabled
- Hispanics
- Gays and Lesbians

## What is a Majority Group?

- Majority group – a social group who has traditionally experienced most of the access to resources and whose actions and behaviors are harmful to the minority group. Also known as the “dominant group” in society.
- In our society white males are the majority or dominant group.

### What is Social Oppression?

- Social oppression – the process in which minorities experience socially supported mistreatment, injustice and exploitation.
- Racism
- Genocide
- Expulsion
- Segregation
- Discrimination

### What are Stereotypes?

- Stereotypes – rigid, oversimplified generalizations about the characteristics of a social group.
- Stereotypes are often faulty, misleading and inaccurate.
- We often use them to make assumptions about people who are different.

### What is Ethnocentrism?

- Stereotypes develop from ethnocentrism.
- Ethnocentrism – the tendency to judge other cultures based on the standards of your own
- 2 Types of Ethnocentrism:
  - Eurocentrism
  - Afrocentrism

### Types of Ethnocentrism

- Eurocentrism – the belief that European culture is better than other cultures and that European culture is the centerpiece of all reality
- Afrocentrism – the belief that African culture is better than all other cultures and that African culture is the centerpiece of all reality

### Stereotypes and Social Problems

- Stereotypes lead to:
  - Prejudice
  - Racism
  - Discrimination

### What is Prejudice?

- Prejudice – a negative attitude held toward individuals of a social group
- A negative attitude more often than a positive one
- Prejudice can foster feelings of dislike, suspicion and hatred.

**What is Prejudice?**

- Prejudice is promoted by 4 aspects:
- Prejudice is promoted by stereotypes that reflect perceived or imagined differences between groups
- Cultural values are used to promote the superiority of majority groups and maximize perceived differences between groups

**What is Prejudice?**

- Prejudice is used to generalize to the individuals of target groups
- Differences between groups are perceived as inevitable, absolute and unchangeable

**How can prejudice be explained?**

- Frustration-aggression hypothesis – members of the majority group experience blocked goals and take out their frustration and aggression on members of the minority group who are unable to retaliate or fight back. Also known as the “scapegoat theory.”

**How can prejudice be explained?**

- Social learning theory – prejudice is learned through observation and modeling, and reenacted by children due to behaviors rewarded (psychological approach).

**How can prejudice be explained?**

- Authoritarian personality – those who exhibit an “authoritarian personality” characterized by excessive obedience to authority, intolerance, stereotypical thinking and submissiveness to conformity are more likely to be prejudiced (psychological approach)

**How is prejudice measured?**

- In the research literature, prejudice has been measured by the concept of social distance.
- Social distance - is exhibited by the extent to which individuals are unwilling to interact with or form meaningful relationships with those who are different from them
- A higher degree of prejudice is exhibited by greater social distance held between persons

### What is Racism?

- Racism – a belief system or ideology used to justify the superiority of one race over another based on physical characteristics
- Racism reinforces the status quo or the current state of affairs

### 2 Types of Racism

- “Classic racism” – more overt, blatant or “out in the open” (e.g., lynching of blacks in broad daylight)
- Modern racism – more covert, hidden or subtle. Characterized by non-traditional racist beliefs but more subversive beliefs intertwined with current social, political and economic issues

### Modern Racism

- Modern racism involves the belief that discrimination or social oppression does not exist, that minorities already have “too many opportunities” and that minorities have themselves to blame for their own oppression

### Examples of Modern Racism

- 2 Examples of Modern Racism:
- “Stacking” (sports institutions)
- “Tokenism” (corporate businesses)

### Other Types of Racism

- Individual Racism – the belief that certain groups are superior to others as exhibited by face-to-face interactions
- Institutional Racism – the superiority of certain groups over others which is promoted by the day-to-day practices, policies and procedures of social institutions

### What is Discrimination?

- Discrimination – the actions, behaviors or differential treatment that accompanies prejudice and racism which is harmful to members of the minority group
- 2 Types of Discrimination:
- Individual discrimination
- Institutional discrimination

### 2 Types of Discrimination

- Individual discrimination – the actions, behaviors and differential treatment which occurs between members of minority and majority groups within face-to-face interactions which is harmful to the members of the minority group

### 2 Types of Discrimination

- Institutional discrimination – the process in which the day-to-day practices, procedures and policies of social institutions promote differential treatment which is harmful to members of the minority group

### Institutional Discrimination

- 2 Examples of Institutional discrimination:
- Redlining ( banks)
- Racial Steering (real estate companies)

### Social Problems and Racial Inequality

- Other social problems related to racial inequality include:
- Genocide – the systematic killing of a race or nation of people (e.g., the Holocaust)
- Expulsion – the forced migration of a minority group by a majority group (e.g., The Trail of Tears)
- Segregation – the physical or spatial separation of social groups due to race or ethnicity

### Types of Segregation

- “De Jure” segregation – segregation that is enforced by law (e.g., Jim Crowe)
- De Facto segregation – when social groups take it upon themselves to separate from other groups different from them due to tradition or custom (e.g., residential segregation indicated by whites moving out of neighborhoods recently occupied by blacks)

### Processes resulting from racial and ethnic interactions

- Assimilation – the process in which the minority culture is incorporated or absorbed into the dominant culture; the process in which the minority culture conforms to the dominant culture (e.g., many Chinese immigrants conform to the dominant culture to avoid discrimination and racial or ethnic violence)
- Is racial or cultural identity lost due to assimilation?

**Processes resulting from racial and ethnic interactions**

- Acculturation – the minority groups incorporates the cultural elements of the majority group or cultural assimilation (e.g., immigrants learn the English language)
- Amalgamation – the blending of two different cultures into one new single culture or biological assimilation (e.g., interracial marriage)

**Processes resulting from racial and ethnic interactions**

- Integration – the process in which different cultural groups freely interact through social activities and within social institutions or structural assimilation (e.g., the busing of black students to white schools)
- Some individuals (called seperatists) still oppose desegregation or integration

**Processes resulting from racial and ethnic interactions**

- Ethnic pluralism – a state in which different cultures peacefully coexist, maintain their distinct identity, and a sense of respect, appreciation and regard is fostered for differences between groups; also known as cultural diversity