CHAPTER

4

Industrialization and Dominant-Minority Relations

From Slavery to Segregation and the Coming of Postindustrial Society

One theme stated at the beginning of Chapter 3 was that a society’s subsistence technology profoundly affects the nature of dominant-minority group relations. A corollary of this theme, explored in this chapter, is that dominant-minority group relations change as the subsistence technology changes. As we saw in Chapter 3, agrarian technology and the concern for control of land and labor profoundly shaped dominant-minority relations in the formative years of the United States. The agrarian era ended in the 1800s, and since that time, the United States has experienced two major transformations in subsistence technology, each of which has, in turn, transformed dominant-minority relations.

The first transformation began in the early 1800s as American society began to experience the effects of the Industrial Revolution, or the shift from agrarian technology to machine-based, manufacturing technology. In the agrarian era, as we saw in Chapter 3, work was labor intensive: done by hand or with the aid of draft animals. As industrialization proceeded, work became capital intensive as machines replaced people and animals.

The new industrial technology rapidly increased productivity and efficiency and quickly began to change every aspect of U.S. society, including the nature of work, politics, communication, transportation, family life, birth rates and death rates, the system of education, and, of course, dominant-minority relations. The groups that had become minorities during the agrarian era (African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans) faced new possibilities and new dangers. Industrialization also created new minority groups, new forms of exploitation and
oppression, and, for some, new opportunities to rise in the social structure and succeed in America. In this chapter, we will explore this transformation and illustrate its effects by analyzing the changing status of African Americans after the abolition of slavery. The impact of industrialization on other minority groups will be considered in the case studies presented in Part III.

The second transformation in subsistence technology brings us to more recent times. Industrialization is a continuous process, and beginning in the mid-20th century, the United States entered a stage of late industrialization (also called deindustrialization or the postindustrial era). This shift in subsistence technology was marked by a decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy and a decrease in the supply of secure, well-paying, blue-collar, manual labor jobs. At the same time, there was an expansion in the service and information-based sectors of the economy and an increase in the proportion of white-collar and high-tech jobs. Like the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, these 20th-century changes had profound implications not just for dominant-minority relations but for every aspect of modern society. Work, family, politics, popular culture, and thousands of other characteristics of Americans were, and still are, being transformed as the subsistence technology continues to develop and modernize. In the latter part of this chapter, we examine this latest transformation in general terms and point out some of its implications for minority groups. We also present some new concepts and establish some important groundwork for the case studies in Part III, in which the effects of late industrialization on America’s minority groups will be considered in detail.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE SHIFT FROM PATERNALISTIC TO RIGID COMPETITIVE GROUP RELATIONS

The Industrial Revolution began in England in the mid-1700s and spread from there to the rest of Europe, to the United States, and eventually to the rest of the world. The key innovations associated with the Industrial Revolution were the application of machine power to production and the harnessing of inanimate sources of energy, such as steam and coal, to fuel the machines. As machines replaced humans and animals, work became many times more productive, the economy grew, and the volume and variety of goods produced increased dramatically.

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

Thus, as industrialization progresses, agrarian paternalism tends to give way to rigid competitive group relations. Under this system, minority group members are freer to compete for jobs and other valued commodities with dominant group members, especially the lower-class segments of the dominant group. As competition increases, the threatened members of the dominant group become more hostile, and attacks on the minority groups tend to increase. Whereas paternalistic systems seek to directly dominate and control the minority group (and its labor), rigid competitive systems are more defensive in nature. The threatened segments of the dominant group seek to minimize or eliminate minority group encroachment on jobs, housing, or other valuable goods or services (van den Berghe, 1967; Wilson, 1973).

Paternalistic systems such as slavery required members of the minority group to be active, if involuntary, participants. In rigid competitive systems, the dominant group seeks to preserve its advantage by
handicapping the minority group’s ability to compete effectively or, in some cases, eliminating competition from the minority group altogether. For example, in a rigid competitive system, the dominant group might make the minority group politically powerless by depriving them of (or never granting them) the right to vote. The lower the power of the minority group, the lower the threat to the interests of the dominant group.

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION ON AFRICAN AMERICANS: FROM SLAVERY TO SEGREGATION

Industrial technology began to transform American society in the early 1800s, but its effects were not felt equally in all regions. The northern states industrialized first, whereas the South remained primarily agrarian. This economic diversity was one of the underlying causes of the regional conflict that led to the Civil War. Because of its more productive technology, the North had more resources and, in a bloody war of attrition, was able to defeat the Confederacy. When the South surrendered in April of 1865 and the Civil War ended, slavery was abolished and black-white relations entered a new era.

The southern system of race relations that ultimately emerged after the Civil War was designed in part to continue the control of black labor institutionalized under slavery. It was also intended to eliminate any political or economic threat from the black community. This rigid competitive system grew to be highly elaborate and rigid, partly because of the high racial visibility and long history of inferior status and powerlessness of African Americans in the South and partly because of the particular needs of southern agriculture. In this section, we look at black-white relations from the end of the Civil War through the ascendancy of segregation in the South and the mass migration of African Americans to the cities of the industrializing North.

Reconstruction

The period of Reconstruction, from 1865 to the 1880s, was a brief respite in the long history of oppression and exploitation of African Americans. The Union army and other agencies of the federal government, such as the Freedman’s Bureau, were used to enforce racial freedom in the defeated Confederacy. Black southerners took advantage of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1870, which states that the right to vote cannot be denied on the grounds of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” They registered to vote in large numbers and turned out on Election Day, and some were elected to high political office. Schools for the former slaves were opened, and African Americans purchased land and houses and founded businesses.

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

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

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

**De Jure Segregation**

The system of race relations that replaced slavery in the South was de jure segregation, sometimes referred to as the Jim Crow system. Under segregation, the minority group is physically and socially separated from the dominant group and consigned to an inferior position in virtually every area of social life. The phrase *de jure* ("by law") means that the system is sanctioned and reinforced by the legal code; the inferior status of African Americans was actually mandated or required by state and local laws. For example, southern cities during this era had laws requiring blacks to ride at the back of public buses. If an African American refused to comply with this seating arrangement, he or she could be arrested. De jure segregation came to encompass all aspects of southern life. Neighborhoods, jobs, stores, restaurants, and parks were segregated. When new social forms, such as movie theaters, sports stadiums, and interstate buses appeared in the South, they, too, were quickly segregated.

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

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

**The Origins of De Jure Segregation**

Although the South lost the Civil War, its basic class structure and agrarian economy remained intact. The plantation elite, with their huge tracts of land, remained the dominant class, and cotton remained the primary cash crop. As was the case before the Civil War, the landowners needed a workforce to farm the land. Because of the deprivations and economic disruptions of the war, the old plantation elite was short on cash and liquid capital. Hiring workers on a wage system was not feasible for them. In fact, almost as soon as the war ended, southern legislatures attempted to force African Americans back into involuntary servitude by passing a series of laws known as the Black Codes. Only the beginning of Reconstruction and the active intervention of the federal government halted the implementation of this legislation (Geschwender, 1978, p. 158; Wilson, 1973, p. 99).
The plantation elite solved their manpower problem this time by developing a system of sharecropping, or tenant farming. The sharecroppers worked the land, which was actually owned by the planters, in return for payment in shares of the profit when the crop was taken to market. The landowner would supply a place to live and food and clothing on credit. After the harvest, tenant and landowner would split the profits (sometimes very unequally), and the tenant’s debts would be deducted from his share. The accounts were kept by the landowner. Black sharecroppers lacked political and civil rights and found it difficult to keep unscrupulous white landowners honest. The landowner could inflate the indebtedness of the sharecropper and claim that he was still owed money even after profits had been split. Under this system, sharecroppers had few opportunities to improve their situations and could be bound to the land until their “debts” were paid off (Geschwender, 1978, p. 163).

By 1910, more than half of all employed African Americans worked in agriculture, and more than half of the remainder (25% of the total) worked in domestic occupations such as maid or janitor (Geschwender, 1978, p. 169). The manpower shortage in southern agriculture was solved, and the African American community once again found itself in a subservient status. At the same time, the white southern working class was protected from direct job competition with African Americans. As the South began to industrialize, white workers were able to monopolize the better paying jobs. With a combination of direct discrimination by whites-only labor unions and strong anti-black laws and customs, white workers erected barriers that excluded black workers and reserved the better industrial jobs in cities and mill towns for themselves. White workers took advantage of the new jobs brought by industrialization, whereas black southerners remained a rural peasantry, excluded from participation in this process of modernization.

In some sectors of the changing southern economy, the status of African Americans actually fell lower than it had been during slavery. For example, in 1865, 83% of the artisans in the South were African Americans; by 1900, this percentage had fallen to 5% (Geschwender, 1978, p. 170). The Jim Crow system confined African Americans to the agrarian and domestic sectors of the labor force, denied them the opportunity for a decent education, and excluded them from politics. The system was reinforced by still more laws and customs that drastically limited the options and life courses available to black southerners.

A final force behind the creation of de jure segregation was more political than economic. As the 19th century drew to a close, a wave of agrarian radicalism known as populism spread across the country. This anti-elitist movement was a reaction to changes in agriculture caused by industrialization. The movement attempted to unite poor whites and blacks in the rural South against the traditional elite classes. The economic elite were frightened by the possibility of a loss of power and split the incipient coalition between whites and blacks by fanning the flames of racial hatred. The strategy of “divide and conquer” proved to be effective (as it often has both before and since this time), and states throughout the South eliminated the possibility of future threats by depriving African Americans of the right to vote (Woodward, 1974).

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

The policies were extremely effective, and by the early 20th century, the political power of the southern black community was virtually nonexistent. For example, as late as 1896 in Louisiana, there had been
more than 100,000 registered black male voters, and black voters were a majority in 26 parishes (counties). In 1898, the state adopted a new constitution containing stiff educational and property requirements for voting unless the voter’s father or grandfather had been eligible to vote as of January 1, 1867. At that time, the 14th and 15th Amendments, which guaranteed suffrage for black males, had not yet been passed. Such “grandfather clauses” made it easy for white males to register while disenfranchising blacks. By 1900, only about 5,000 African American males were registered to vote in Louisiana, and black voters were not a majority in any parish. A similar decline occurred in Alabama, where an electorate of more than 180,000 black males was reduced to 3,000 by provision of a new state constitution. This story repeated itself throughout the South, and black political powerlessness had become a reality by 1905 (Franklin & Moss, 1994, p. 261).

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

**Reinforcing the System**

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

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

**Increases in Prejudice and Racism**

As the system of racial advantage formed and solidified, levels of prejudice and racism increased (Wilson, 1973, p. 101). The new system needed justification and rationalization, just as slavery did, and anti-black sentiment, stereotypes, and ideologies of racial inferiority grew stronger. At the start of the 20th century, the United States in general—not just the South—was a very racist and intolerant society. This spirit of rejection and scorn for all out-groups coalesced with the need for justification of the Jim Crow system and created an especially negative brand of racism in the South.

**THE “GREAT MIGRATION”**

Although African Americans lacked the power resources to withstand the resurrection of southern racism and oppression, they did have one option that had not been available under slavery: freedom of movement.
African Americans were no longer legally tied to a specific master or to a certain plot of land. In the early 20th century, a massive population movement out of the South began. Slowly at first, African Americans began to move to other regions of the nation and from the countryside to the city. The movement increased when hard times hit southern agriculture and slowed down during better times. It has been said that African Americans voted against southern segregation with their feet.

As Exhibits 4.1 and 4.2 show, an urban black population living outside the South is a late 20th-century phenomenon. Today, the majority of African Americans continue to live in the South, but the group is more evenly distributed across the nation and much more urbanized than a century ago.

The significance of this population redistribution is manifold. Most important, perhaps, was the fact that by moving out of the South and from rural to urban areas, African Americans began to move from areas of great resistance to racial change to areas of lower resistance. In the northern cities, for example, it was far easier to register and to vote. Black political power began to grow and eventually provided many of the crucial resources that fueled the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Exhibit 4.1  Regional Distribution of African American Population

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Life in the North

What did African American migrants find when they got to the industrializing cities of the North? There is no doubt that life in the North was better for the vast majority of black migrants. The growing northern black communities relished the absence of Jim Crow laws and oppressive racial etiquette and the greater freedom to pursue jobs and educate their children. Inevitably, however, life in the North fell short of utopia. Many aspects of African American culture—literature, poetry, music—flourished in the heady new atmosphere of freedom, but on other fronts, northern black communities faced discrimination in housing, schools, and the job market. Along with freedom and such cultural flowerings as the Harlem Renaissance came black ghettos and new forms of oppression and exploitation.

Competition With White Ethnic Groups

It is useful to see the movement of African Americans out of the South in terms of the resultant relationship with other groups. Southern blacks began to migrate to the North at about the same time that a huge wave of emigration from Europe that had begun in the 1820s came to an end. By the time substantial numbers of black southerners began arriving in the North, European immigrants and their descendants had had years, decades, and even generations to establish themselves in the job markets, political systems, labor unions, and neighborhoods of...
the North. Many of the European ethnic groups had also been the victims of discrimination and rejection, and their hold on economic security and status was tenuous for much of the 20th century. They saw the newly arriving black migrants as a threat to their status, a perception that was reinforced by the fact that industrialists and factory owners often used blacks as strikebreakers and scabs during strikes. The white ethnic groups responded by developing defensive strategies to limit the dangers presented by these migrants from the South. They tried to exclude blacks from their labor unions and other associations and limit their impact on the political system. They also attempted, often successfully, to maintain segregated neighborhoods and schools (although the legal system outside the South did not sanction de jure segregation).

This competition led to hostile relations between black southern migrants and white ethnic groups, especially the lower- and working-class segments of those groups. Ironically, however, the newly arriving African Americans actually helped white ethnic groups become upwardly mobile. Dominant group whites became less vocal about their contempt for white ethnic groups as their alarm over the presence of blacks increased. The greater antipathy of the white community toward African Americans made the white ethnic groups less undesirable and thus hastened their admittance to the institutions of the larger society. For many white ethnic groups, the increased tolerance of the larger society coincided happily with the coming of age of the more educated and skilled descendants of the original immigrants, further abetting the rise of these groups in the U.S. social class structure (Lieberson, 1980).

For more than a century, each new European immigrant group had helped to push previous groups up the ladder of socioeconomic success and out of the old, ghettoized neighborhoods. The Irish, for example, pushed the Germans up and were in turn pushed up by Italians and Poles. Black southerners got to the cities after emigration from Europe had been curtailed, and no newly arrived immigrants appeared to continue the pattern of succession for northern African Americans. Instead, American cities developed a concentration of low-income blacks who were economically vulnerable and politically weak and whose position was further solidified by anti-black prejudice and discrimination (Wilson, 1987, p. 34).

THE ORIGINS OF BLACK PROTEST

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, African Americans have always resisted their oppression and protested their situation. Under slavery, however, the inequalities they faced were so great and their resources so meager that the protest was ineffective. With the increased freedom that followed slavery, a national black leadership developed, spoke out against oppression, and founded organizations that eventually helped to lead the fight for freedom and equality. Even at its birth, the black protest movement was diverse and incorporated a variety of viewpoints and leaders.

Booker T. Washington was the most prominent African American leader prior to World War I. Washington had been born in slavery and was the founder and first president of Tuskegee Institute, a college in Alabama dedicated to educating African Americans. His public advice to African Americans in the South was to be patient, to accommodate the Jim Crow system for now, to raise their levels of education and job skills, and to take full advantage of whatever opportunities became available. This nonconfrontational stance earned Washington praise and support from the white community and widespread popularity in the nation. Privately, he worked behind the scenes to end discrimination and implement full racial integration and equality (Franklin & Moss, 1994, pp. 272–274; Hawkins, 1962; Washington, 1965).

Washington’s most vocal opponent was W. E. B. Du Bois, an intellectual and activist who was born in the North and educated at
some of the leading universities of the day. Among his many other accomplishments, Du Bois was part of a coalition of black and white liberals who founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Du Bois rejected Washington’s accommodationist stance and advocated immediate pursuit of racial equality and a direct assault on de jure segregation. Almost from the beginning of its existence, the NAACP filed lawsuits that challenged the legal foundations of Jim Crow segregation (Du Bois, 1961). As we shall see in Chapter 5, this legal strategy was eventually successful and led to the demise of the Jim Crow system.

Washington and Du Bois may have differed on matters of strategy and tactics, but they agreed that the only acceptable goal for African Americans was an integrated, racially equal United States. A third leader who emerged early in the 20th century called for a very different approach to the problems of U.S. race relations. Marcus Garvey was born in Jamaica and immigrated to the United States during World War I. He argued that the white-dominated U.S. society was hopelessly racist and would never truly support integration and racial equality. He advocated separatist goals, including a return to Africa. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 in his native Jamaica and founded the first U.S. branch in 1916. Garvey’s organization was very popular for a time in African American communities outside the South, and he helped to establish some of the themes and ideas of black nationalism and pride in African heritage that would become prominent again in the pluralistic 1960s (Essien-Udom, 1962; Garvey, 1969, 1977; Vincent, 1976).

These early leaders and organizations established some of the foundation for later protest movements, but prior to the mid-20th century, they made few actual improvements in the situation of black Americans in the North or South. Jim Crow was a formidable opponent, and the southern black community lacked the resources to successfully challenge the status quo until the century was well along and some basic structural features of American society had changed.

APPLYING CONCEPTS

Acculturation and Integration

During this era of southern segregation and migration to the North, assimilation was not a major factor in the African American experience. Rather, black-white relations are better described as a system of structural pluralism combined with great inequality. Excluded from the mainstream but freed from the limitations of slavery, African Americans constructed a separate subsociety and subculture. In all regions of the nation, black Americans developed their own institutions and organizations, including separate neighborhoods, churches, businesses, and schools. Like emigrants from Europe in the same era, they organized their communities to cater to their own needs and problems and pursue their agenda as a group.

During the era of segregation, a small, black middle class emerged based on leadership roles in the church, education, and business. A network of black colleges and universities was constructed to educate the children of the growing middle class as well as other classes. Through this infrastructure, African Americans began to develop the resources and leadership that in the decades ahead would attack, head on, the structures of racial inequality.

Gender and Race

For African American men and women, the changes wrought by industrialization and the population movement to the North created new possibilities and new roles. However, as African Americans continued to be the victims of exploitation and exclusion in both the North and the South, black women continued to be among the most vulnerable groups in society.

Following emancipation, there was a flurry of marriages and weddings among
African Americans as they were finally able to legitimate their family relationships (Staples, 1988, p. 306). African American women continued to have primary responsibility for home and children. Historian Herbert Gutman (1976) reports that it was common for married women to drop out of the labor force and attend solely to household and family duties, because a working wife was too reminiscent of a slave role. This pattern became so widespread that it created serious labor shortages in many areas (Gutman, 1976; see also Staples, 1988, p. 307).

The former slaves were hardly affluent, however, and as sharecropping and segregation began to shape race relations in the South, women often had to return to the fields or to domestic work for the family to survive. One former slave woman noted that women “do double duty, a man’s share in the field and a woman’s part at home” (Evans, 1989, p. 121). During the bleak decades following the end of Reconstruction, southern black families and black women in particular lived “close to the bone” (Evans, 1989, p. 121).

In the cities and in the growing black neighborhoods in the North, African American women played a role that in some ways paralleled the role of immigrant women from Europe. The men often moved north first and sent for the women after they had attained some level of financial stability or after the pain of separation became too great (Almquist, 1979, p. 434). In other cases, black women by the thousands left the South to work as domestic servants; they often replaced European immigrant women who had moved up in the job structure (Amott & Matthaei, 1991, p. 168).

In the North, discrimination and racism created constant problems of unemployment for the men, and families often relied on the income supplied by the women to make ends meet. It was comparatively easy for women to find employment, but only in the low-paying, less desirable areas, such as domestic work. In both the South and the North, African American women worked outside the home in larger proportions than did white women. For example, in 1900, 41% of black women were employed, compared with only 16% of white women (Staples, 1988, p. 307).

In 1890, more than a generation after the end of slavery, 85% of all black men and 96% of black women were employed in just two occupational categories: agriculture and domestic or personal service. By 1930, 90% of employed black women were still in these same two categories, whereas the corresponding percentage for employed black males had dropped to 54% (although nearly all of the remaining 46% were unskilled workers) (Steinberg, 1981, pp. 206–207). Since the inception of segregation, African American women have had consistently higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than black men and white women (Almquist, 1979, p. 437). These gaps, as we shall see in Chapter 5, persist to the present day.

During the years following emancipation, some issues did split men and women, within both the black community and the larger society. Prominent among these was suffrage, or the right to vote, which was still limited to men only. The abolitionist movement, which had been so instrumental in ending slavery, also supported universal suffrage. Efforts to enfranchise women, though, were abandoned by the Republican Party and large parts of the abolitionist movement to concentrate on efforts to secure the vote for black males in the South. Ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 extended the vote, in principle, to African American men, but the 19th Amendment enfranchising women would not be passed for another 50 years (Almquist, 1979, pp. 433–434; Evans, 1989, pp. 121–124).

INDUSTRIALIZATION, THE SHIFT TO POSTINDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, AND DOMINANT-MINORITY GROUP RELATIONS: GENERAL TRENDS

The process of industrialization that began in the 19th century continued to shape the larger society and dominant-minority relations
throughout the 20th century. In the 21st century, the United States bears little resemblance to the society it was a century ago. The population has more than tripled in size and has urbanized even more rapidly than it grew. New organizational forms (bureaucracies, corporations, multinational businesses) and new technologies (nuclear power, cell phones, computers) dominate everyday life. Levels of education have risen, and the public schools have produced one of the most literate populations and well-trained workforces in the history of the world.

Minority groups also grew in size, and most became even more urbanized than the general population. Minority group members have come to participate in an increasing array of occupations, and their average levels of education have also risen. Despite these real improvements, however, virtually all U.S. minority groups continue to face racism, poverty, discrimination, and exclusion. In this section, we outline the ways in which industrialization has changed American society and examine some of the implications for minority groups in general. We also note some of the ways in which industrialization has aided minority groups and address some of the barriers to full participation in the larger society that continue to operate in the present era. The impact of industrialization and the coming of postindustrial society will be considered in detail in the case studies that comprise Part III of this text.

Urbanization

We have already noted that urbanization made class, paternalistic controls of minority groups irrelevant. For example, the racial etiquette required by southern de jure segregation, such as African Americans deferring to whites on crowded sidewalks, tended to disappear in the chaos of an urban rush hour. Besides weakening dominant group controls, urbanization also created the potential for minority groups to mobilize and organize large numbers of people. As stated in Chapter 1, the sheer size of a group is a source of power. Without the freedom to organize, however, size means little, and urbanization increased both the concentration of populations and the freedom to organize.

Occupational Specialization

One of the first and most important results of industrialization, even in its earliest days, was an increase in occupational specialization and the variety of jobs available in the workforce. The growing needs of an urbanizing population increased the number of jobs available in the production, transport, and sale of goods and services. Occupational specialization was also stimulated by the very nature of industrial production. Complex manufacturing processes could be performed more efficiently if they were broken down into the narrower component tasks. It was easier and more efficient to train the workforce in the simpler, specialized jobs. Assembly lines were invented, the work was subdivided, the division of labor became increasingly complex, and the number of different occupations continued to grow.

The sheer complexity of the industrial job structure made it difficult to maintain rigid, caste-like divisions of labor between dominant and minority groups. Rigid competitive forms of group relations, such as Jim Crow segregation, became less viable as the job market became more diversified and changeable. Simple, clear rules about which groups could do which jobs disappeared. As the more repressive systems of control weakened, job opportunities for minority group members sometimes increased. But as the relationships between group memberships and positions in the job market became more blurred, conflict between groups also increased. For example, as we have noted, African Americans moving from the South often found themselves in competition for jobs with white ethnic groups, labor unions controlled by whites, and other elements of the dominant group.

Bureaucracy and Rationality

As industrialization continued, privately owned corporations and businesses came to
have workforces numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Gigantic factories employing thousands of workers became common. To coordinate the efforts of these huge workforces, bureaucracy became the dominant form of organization in the economy and, indeed, throughout the society. Bureaucracies are large-scale, impersonal, formal organizations that run “by the book.” They are governed by rules and regulations (i.e., “red tape”) and are rational in that they attempt to find the most efficient ways to accomplish their tasks. Although they typically fail to attain the ideal of fully rational efficiency, bureaucracies tend to recruit, reward, and promote employees on the basis of competence and performance (Gerth & Mills, 1946).

The stress on rationality and objectivity can counteract the more blatant forms of racism and increase the array of opportunities available to members of minority groups. Although they are often nullified by other forces (see Blumer, 1965), these anti-prejudicial tendencies do not exist at all or are much weaker in preindustrial economies.

The history of the concept of race illustrates the effect of rationality and scientific ways of thinking. Today, virtually the entire scientific community regards race as a biological triviality, a conclusion based on decades of research. This scientific finding undermined and contributed to the destruction of the formal systems of privilege based solely on race (e.g., segregated school systems) and individual perceptual systems (e.g., traditional prejudice) based on the assumption that race was a crucial personal characteristic.

**Growth of White-Collar Jobs and the Service Sector**

Industrialization changed the composition of the labor force. As work became more complex and specialized, the need to coordinate and regulate the production process increased, and as a result, bureaucracies and other organizations grew larger still. Within these organizations, white-collar occupations—those that coordinate, manage, and deal with the flow of paperwork—continued to expand. As industrialization progressed, mechanization and automation reduced the number of manual or blue-collar workers, and white-collar occupations became the dominant sector of the job market in the United States. The changing nature of the workforce can be illustrated by looking at the proportional representation of three different types of jobs:

- **Extractive (or primary) occupations** are those that produce raw materials, such as food and agricultural products, minerals, and lumber. The jobs in this sector often involve unskilled manual labor, require little formal education, and are generally low paid.

- **Manufacturing (or secondary) occupations** transform raw materials into finished products ready for sale in the marketplace. Like jobs in the extractive sector, these blue-collar jobs involve manual labor, but they tend to require higher levels of skill and are more highly rewarded. Examples of occupations in this sector include the assembly line jobs that transform steel, rubber, plastic, and other materials into finished automobiles.

- **Service (or tertiary) occupations** don’t produce “things,” but, rather, provide services. As urbanization increased and self-sufficiency decreased, opportunities for work in this sector grew. Examples of tertiary occupations include police officer, clerk, waiter, teacher, nurse, doctor, and cab driver.

The course of industrialization is traced in the changing structure of the labor market depicted in Exhibit 4.3. In 1840, when industrialization was just beginning in the United States, most of the workforce was in the extractive sector, with agriculture being the dominant occupation. As industrialization progressed, the manufacturing, or secondary, sector grew, reaching a peak after World War II. Today, the large majority of jobs are in the service, or tertiary, sector. This shift away from blue-collar jobs and manufacturing is sometimes referred to as deindustrialization or discussed in terms of the emergence of
postindustrial society. The U.S. economy has lost millions of unionized, high-paying factory jobs over the past several decades, and the downward trend will continue. The industrial jobs that sustained so many generations of American workers have moved to other nations, where wages are considerably lower than in the United States, or have been eliminated by robots or other automated manufacturing processes (see Rifkin, 1996).

The changing structure of the job market helps to clarify the nature of intergroup competition and the sources of wealth and power in the society. Job growth in the United States today is largely in the service sector, and these occupations are highly variable. At one end are low-paying jobs with few, if any, benefits or chances for advancement (e.g., washing dishes in a restaurant). At the upper end are high-prestige, lucrative positions, such as Supreme Court justice, scientist, and financial analyst. The new service sector jobs are either highly desirable technical, professional, or administrative jobs with demanding entry requirements (e.g., physician or nurse) or low-paid, low-skilled jobs with few benefits and little security (e.g., receptionist, nurse’s aide). For the past half century, job growth in the United States has been either in areas in which educationally deprived minority group members find it difficult to compete or in areas that offer little compensation, upward mobility, or security. As we will see in Part III, the economic situation of contemporary minority groups reflects these fundamental trends.

**The Growing Importance of Education**

Education has been an increasingly important prerequisite for employability. A high school or, increasingly, a college degree has become the minimum entry-level requirement for employment. However, opportunities for high-quality education are not distributed equally across the population. Some minority groups, especially those created by colonization, have been systematically excluded from the schools of the dominant society, and today, they are less likely to have the educational backgrounds needed to compete for better jobs. Access to education is a key issue

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**Exhibit 4.3** The Changing American Workforce: Distribution of Jobs

![Graph showing the changing distribution of jobs from 1840 to 2000, with a decrease in extractive and manufacturing jobs and an increase in service sector jobs.](source)

for almost all U.S. minority groups, and the average educational levels of these groups have been rising since World War II. Still, minority children continue to be much more likely to attend segregated, underfunded, deteriorated schools and to receive inferior educations (see Orfield, 2001).

**A Dual Labor Market**

The changing composition of the labor force and increasing importance of educational credentials has split the U.S. labor market into two segments or types of jobs. The primary labor market includes jobs usually located in large, bureaucratic organizations. These positions offer higher pay, more security, better opportunities for advancement, health and retirement benefits, and other amenities. Entry requirements often include college degrees, even when people with fewer years of schooling could competently perform the work.

The secondary labor market, sometimes called the competitive market, includes low-paid, low-skilled, insecure jobs. Many of these jobs are in the service sector. They do not represent a career and offer little opportunity for promotion or upward mobility. Very often, they do not offer health or retirement benefits; have high rates of turnover; and are part time, seasonal, or temporary.

Many American minority groups are concentrated in the secondary job market. Their exclusion from better jobs is perpetuated not so much by direct or obvious discrimination as by educational and other credentials required to enter the primary sector. The differential distribution of educational opportunities, in the past as well as in the present, effectively protects workers in the primary sector from competition from minority groups.

**Globalization**

Over the past century, the United States became an economic, political, and military world power with interests around the globe. These worldwide ties have created new minority groups through population movement and have changed the status of others. Immigration to this country has been considerable for the past three decades. The American economy is one of the most productive in the world, and jobs, even those in the low-paid secondary sector, are the primary goals for millions of newcomers. For other immigrants, this country continues to play its historic role as a refuge from political and religious persecution.

Many of the wars, conflicts, and other disputes in which the United States has been involved have had consequences for American minority groups. For example, both Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans became U.S. minority groups as the result of processes set in motion during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Both World War I and World War II created new job opportunities for many minority groups, including African Americans and Mexican Americans. After the Korean War, international ties were forged between the United States and South Korea, and this led to an increase in emigration from that nation. In the 1960s and 1970s, the military involvement of the United States in Southeast Asia led to the arrival of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Asian immigrants.

Dominant-minority relations in the United States have been increasingly played out on an international stage as the world has effectively “shrunk” in size and become more interconnected by international organizations such as the United Nations, by ties of trade and commerce, and by modern means of transportation and communication. In a world in which two thirds of the population is nonwhite and many important nations (such as China, India, and Nigeria) represent peoples of color, the treatment of racial minorities by the U.S. dominant group has come under increased scrutiny. It is difficult to preach principles of fairness, equality, and justice—which the United States claims as its own—when domestic realities suggest an embarrassing failure to fully implement these standards. Part of the pressure for the United States to end blatant systems of discrimination such as de jure segregation came from the desire to maintain a leading position in the world.
THE SHIFT FROM RIGID TO FLUID COMPETITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The recent changes in the structure of American society are so fundamental and profound that they are often described in terms of a revolution in subsistence technology: from an industrial society, based on manufacturing, to a postindustrial society, based on information processing and computer-related or other new technologies.

As the subsistence technology has evolved and changed, so have American dominant-minority relations. The rigid competitive systems (such as Jim Crow) associated with earlier phases of industrialization have given way to fluid competitive systems of group relations. In fluid competitive relations, there are no formal or legal barriers to competition such as Jim Crow laws. Both geographic and social mobility are greater, and the limitations imposed by minority group status are less restrictive and burdensome. Rigid caste systems of stratification, in which group membership determines opportunities, adult statuses, and jobs, are replaced by more open class systems, in which there are weaker relationships between group membership and wealth, prestige, and power. Because fluid competitive systems are more open and the position of the minority group is less fixed, the fear of competition from minority groups becomes more widespread for the dominant group, and intergroup conflict increases. Exhibit 4.4 compares the characteristics of the three systems of group relations.

Compared with previous systems, the fluid competitive system is closer to the American ideal of an open, fair system of stratification in which effort and competence are rewarded and race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other “birthmarks” are irrelevant. However, as we will see in

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**Exhibit 4.4 Characteristics of Three Systems of Group Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsistence Technology</th>
<th>Paternalistic</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Fluid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stratification</strong></td>
<td>Caste. Group determines status</td>
<td>Mixed. Elements of caste and class. Status largely determined by group</td>
<td>Variable. Status strongly affected by group. Inequality varies within groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division of labor</strong></td>
<td>Simple. Determined by group</td>
<td>More complex. Job largely determined by group but some sharing of jobs by different groups</td>
<td>Most complex. Group and job less related. Complex specialization and great variation within groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact between groups</strong></td>
<td>Common but statuses unequal</td>
<td>Less common and mostly unequal</td>
<td>More common. Highest rates of equal-status contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overt intergroup conflict</strong></td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>More common</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power differential</strong></td>
<td>Maximum. Minority groups have little ability to pursue self-interests</td>
<td>Less. Minority groups have some ability to pursue self-interest</td>
<td>Least. Minority groups have more ability to pursue self-interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chapters to come, race and ethnicity continue to affect life chances and limit opportunities for minority group members even in fluid competitive systems. As suggested by the Noel hypothesis, people continue to identify themselves with particular groups (ethnocentrism), and competition for resources continues to play out along group lines. Consistent with the Blauner hypothesis, the minority groups that were formed by colonization remain at a disadvantage in the pursuit of opportunities, education, prestige, and other resources.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN A GLOBALIZING, POSTINDUSTRIAL WORLD

Deindustrialization and globalization are transforming gender relations along with dominant-minority relations. Everywhere, even in the most traditional and sexist societies, women are moving away from their traditional “wife/mother” roles, taking on new responsibilities, and facing new challenges. Some women are also encountering new dangers and new forms of exploitation that perpetuate their lower status and extend it into new areas.

Changing Gender Relations in the United States

The transition of the United States to a postindustrial society has changed gender relations and the status of women on a number of levels. Women and men are now equal in terms of levels of education (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006, p. 147), and the shift to fluid competitive group relations has weakened the barriers to gender equality along with the barriers to racial equality. The changing role of women is also shaped by other characteristics of a modern society: smaller families, high divorce rates, and rising numbers of single mothers who must work to support their children as well as themselves.

Many of the trends have coalesced to motivate women to enter the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers over the past half century. Women are now employed at almost the same levels as men. In the year 2004, for example, 66% of single women (vs. about 70% of single men) and about 61% of married women (vs. about 77% of married men) had jobs outside the home (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006, p. 392). Furthermore, between 1970 and 2004, the participation of married women with children in the workforce increased from a little less than 40% to almost 70% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006, p. 393).

Many female workers enter the paid labor force to compensate for the declining earning power of men. Before deindustrialization began to transform U.S. society, men monopolized the more desirable, higher-paid, unionized jobs in the manufacturing sector. For much of the 20th century, these blue-collar jobs paid well enough to subsidize a comfortable lifestyle, a house in the suburbs, and vacations, with enough money left over to save for a rainy day or for college for the kids. However, when deindustrialization began, many of these desirable jobs were lost to automation and to cheaper labor forces outside the United States and were replaced, if at all, by low-paying jobs in the service sector. Thus, deindustrialization tended to drive down men’s wages, and many women were forced to take jobs to supplement the family income. This trend is reflected in Exhibit 4.5, which shows that, from the early 1970s until the mid-1990s, average wages for men have been stagnant or actually declining.

A large number of the “new” female workers have taken jobs in a limited number of female-dominated occupations, most of which are in the less well-paid service sector, and this pattern of occupational segregation is one important reason for the continuing gender gap in income. For example, Exhibit 4.6 lists some of the occupations that were dominated by females in 1983 and 2004 along with the percentages of females in comparable but higher-status occupations. For example, 93% of nurses and nearly 100% of dental hygienists were female in 2004. The comparable figures for
Exhibit 4.5  Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers Over Age 15 by Gender, 1966–2003


Exhibit 4.6  Gender Composition of Selected Occupations, 1983 and 2004

physicians and dentists were 29% and 22%, respectively.

In part, this occupational segregation is a result of the choices women make to balance the demands of their jobs with their family obligations. Whereas men are expected to make a total commitment to their jobs and careers, women are expected to find ways to continue to fulfill their domestic roles even while working full-time, and many “female jobs” offer some flexibility in this area (Shelton & John, 1996). For example, many women become elementary educators despite the relatively low salaries because the job offers predictable hours and long summer breaks, both of which can help women meet their child care and other family responsibilities. This pattern of gender occupational segregation testifies to the lingering effects of minority status for women and the choices they make to reconcile the demands of career and family.

Exhibit 4.6 also shows that gender segregation in the world of work is declining, at least in some areas. Women are moving into traditionally male (and higher-paid) occupations, as reflected by the rising percentages of female physicians, dentists, university professors, and lawyers. Also, some of the occupational areas that traditionally have had high concentrations of women—for example, the so-called FIRE sector, or finance, insurance, and real estate—actually benefited from deindustrialization and the shift to a service economy. Job opportunities in the FIRE sector have expanded rapidly since the 1960s and have provided opportunities for women to rise in the social structure, and this has, in turn, tended to elevate the average salaries for women in general (Farley, 1996, pp. 95–101). The movement of females into these more lucrative occupations is one reason why the gender gap in income is decreasing, as reflected in Exhibit 4.5.

Changing Gender Relations Around the World

How have deindustrialization and globalization affected women internationally? In part, the trends worldwide parallel those in the United States. According to a recent United Nations report (United Nations, 2000), indicators such as rising education levels for women and lower rates of early marriage and childbirth show that women around the world are moving out of their traditional (and often highly controlled and repressed) status. They are entering the labor force in unprecedented numbers virtually everywhere, and women now comprise at least a third of the global workforce.

Although their status is generally rising, the movement away from traditional gender roles also exposes many women to new forms of exploitation. Around the globe, women have become a source of cheap labor, often in jobs that have recently been exported from the U.S. economy. For example, many manufacturing jobs formerly held by men in the United States have migrated just south of the border to Mexico, where they are held by women. Maquiladoras are assembly plants built by corporations, often headquartered in the United States, to take advantage of the plentiful supply of working-class females who will work for low wages and in conditions that would not be tolerated in the United States (for a recent analysis of the Mexican female labor force and the maquiladora phenomenon, see Parrado & Zenteno, 2001).

The weakening of traditional gender roles has increased women’s vulnerability in other areas as well. A global sex trade in prostitution and pornography is flourishing and accounts for a significant portion of the economy of Thailand, the Philippines, and other nations. This international industry depends on impoverished women (and children) pushed out of the subsistence rural economy by industrialization and globalization and made vulnerable for exploitation by their lack of resources and power (Poulan, 2003).

Across all these changes and around the globe, women commonly face the challenge of reconciling their new work demands with their traditional family responsibilities. Also, women face challenges and issues, such as sexual harassment and domestic
violence, that clearly differentiate their status from that of men. In this context, minority group women face a double disadvantage because the issues they face as women are overlaid on the barriers of racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination. As we shall see in Chapters 5 to 10, minority group women are often the poorest, most vulnerable, and most exploited groups in U.S. society and around the globe.

Modern Institutional Discrimination

Virtually all American minority groups continue to lag behind national averages in income, employment, and other measures of equality despite the greater fluidity of group relations, the greater openness in the U.S. stratification system, dramatic declines in overt prejudice, and the introduction of numerous laws designed to ensure that all people are treated without regard to race, gender, or ethnicity. After all this change, shouldn’t there be more equality?

In fact, many Americans attribute the persisting patterns of inequality to the minority groups’ lack of willpower or motivation to get ahead. In the remaining chapters of this text, however, I argue that the major barrier facing minority groups in late industrial, post-Jim Crow America is a more subtle but still powerful form of discrimination: modern institutional discrimination.

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

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

When employers make hiring decisions based solely on educational criteria, they may be putting minority group members at a disadvantage. When banks use strictly economic criteria to deny money for home mortgages or home improvement loans in certain run-down neighborhoods, they may be handicapping the efforts of minority groups to cope with the results of the blatant, legal housing segregation of the past. When businesspeople decide to lower their overhead by moving their operations away from center cities, they may be reducing the ability of America’s highly urbanized minority groups to earn a living and educate their children. When educators rely solely on standardized tests of ability that have been developed from white, middle-class experiences to decide who will be placed in college preparatory courses, they may be limiting the ability of minority group children to compete for jobs in the primary sector.

Any and all of these decisions can and do have devastating consequences for minority individuals, even though decision makers may be entirely unaware of the discriminatory effects. Employers, bankers, and educators do not have to be personally prejudiced for their actions to have negative consequences for minority groups. Modern institutional discrimination helps to perpetuate systems of inequality that can be just as pervasive and stifling as those of the past.

To illustrate, consider the effects of past-in-present institutional discrimination, which involves practices in the present that have discriminatory consequences because of some pattern of discrimination or exclusion in the past (Feagin & Feagin, 1986, p. 32). One form of this discrimination is found in workforces organized around the principle of seniority. In these systems, which are quite common, workers who
have been on the job longer have higher incomes, more privileges, and other benefits, such as longer vacations. The “old-timers” often have more job security and are designated in official, written policy as the last to be fired or laid off in the event of hard times. Workers and employers alike may think of the privileges of seniority as just rewards for long years of service, familiarity with the job, and so forth.

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

It is much more difficult to identify, measure, and eliminate the more subtle forms of modern institutional discrimination, and some of the most heated disputes in recent group relations have concerned public policy and law in this area. Among the most controversial issues are affirmative action programs that attempt to ameliorate the legacy of past discrimination or increase diversity in the workplace or schools. In many cases, the Supreme Court has found that programs designed to favor minority employees as a strategy for overcoming overt discrimination in the past are constitutional (e.g., Firefighters Local Union No. 1784 v. Stotts, 1984; Sheet Metal Workers v. EEOC, 1986; United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO-CLC v. Weber, 1979). Virtually all of these decisions, however, were based on narrow margins (votes of 5 to 4) and featured acrimonious and bitter debates. More recently, the Court narrowed the grounds on which such past grievances could be redressed, and in the eyes of many observers, dealt serious blows to affirmative action programs (e.g., Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Pena, 1995).

One of the more prominent battlegrounds for affirmative action programs has been in higher education. Since the 1960s, it has been common for colleges and universities to implement programs to increase the number of minority students on campus at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, sometimes admitting minority students who had lower grade point averages or test scores than dominant group students who were turned away. In general, universities have justified these programs in terms of redressing past discriminatory practices or increasing diversity on campus and making the student body a more faithful representation of the surrounding society.

To say the least, these programs have been highly controversial and the targets of frequent lawsuits, some of which have found their way to the highest courts in the land. The future of these programs remains unclear. At present, a number of states have banned affirmative action programs in their universities and colleges, but the legality of these outright bans remains in some doubt. For example, in 1996, the voters in California passed an amendment to the state constitution that banned all use of racial, ethnic, or sexual preferences in education, hiring, and the conduct of state business. In the spring of 2001, after years of protest and pressure by a variety of groups, the governing body of the California system of higher education ended the ban on affirmative action. This decision seems mainly symbolic, however, because the university system cannot exempt itself from the state constitution.

Recent lawsuits have upheld some affirmative action programs in higher education but only under very limited conditions. In the spring of 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in two cases involving the University of Michigan (Grutter v. Bollinger and Gratz vs. Bollinger).

The Court ruled that the university’s law school could use race as one criterion in
deciding admissions, but that undergraduate admissions could not award an automatic advantage to minority applicants. Both rulings were split, and these decisions were widely interpreted as, at best, weak endorsements of very limited affirmative action programs. The administration of President Bush took the side of the plaintiffs in both cases (i.e., in opposition to affirmative action) and made it clear that, while respecting the law, they were opposed to affirmative action in general and would not place a high priority on these programs.

Although the Supreme Court did not end affirmative action with these decisions, these programs appear to be very much in danger. Furthermore, there is very little support for affirmative action in the society as a whole. According to a public opinion survey conducted in 2004, affirmative action based on race is supported by only 12% of white respondents and, perhaps surprisingly, by less than a majority of black respondents (45%). Also, affirmative action for women is supported by about 18% of men and 40% of women (National Opinion Research Council, 2004).

It would not be surprising to see all affirmative action programs end in the next 5 to 10 years, and if they do, one of the few tools available to combat modern institutional discrimination will be eliminated.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND MINORITY GROUP ACTIVISM

This chapter has focused on the continuing industrial revolution and its impact on minority groups in general and black-white relations in particular. For the most part, changes in group relations have been presented as the results of the fundamental transformation of the U.S. economic institution from agrarian to industrial to late industrial (or postindustrial). However, the changes in the situation of black Americans and other minority groups didn’t “just happen” as society modernized. Although the opportunity to pursue favorable change was the result of broad structural changes in American society, the realization of these opportunities came from the efforts of the many who gave their time, their voices, their resources, and sometimes their lives in pursuit of racial justice in America. Since World War II, African Americans have often been in the vanguard of protest activity, and we focus on the contemporary situation of this group in the next chapter.

MAIN POINTS

- Group relations change as the subsistence technology and the level of development of the larger society change. As nations industrialize and urbanize, dominant-minority relations change from paternalistic to rigid competitive forms.
- In the South, slavery was replaced by de jure segregation, a system that combined racial separation with great inequality. The Jim Crow system was motivated by a need to control labor and was reinforced by coercion and intense racism and prejudice.
- Black southerners responded to segregation in part by moving to northern urban areas. The northern black population enjoyed greater freedom and developed some political and economic resources, but a large concentration of low-income, relatively powerless African Americans developed in the ghetto neighborhoods.
- In response to segregation, the African American community developed a separate institutional life centered on family, church, and community. A black middle class emerged, as well as a protest movement.
- African American women remain one of the most exploited groups. Combining work with family roles, black females were employed mostly in agriculture and domestic service during the era of segregation.
Industrialization continued throughout the 20th century and has profoundly affected dominant-minority relations. Urbanization, specialization, bureaucratization, and other trends have changed the shape of race relations, as have the changing structure of the occupational sector and the growing importance of education. Group relations have shifted from rigid to fluid competitive. Modern institutional discrimination is one of the major challenges facing minority groups.

**QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND STUDY**

1. A corollary to two themes from Chapter 3 is presented at the beginning of Chapter 4. How exactly does the material in the chapter illustrate the usefulness of this corollary?

2. Explain paternalistic and rigid competitive relations and link them to industrialization. How does the shift from slavery to de jure segregation illustrate the dynamics of these two systems?

3. What was the “Great Migration” to the North? How did it change American race relations?

4. Explain the transition from rigid competitive to fluid competitive relations, and explain how this transition is related to the coming of postindustrial society. Explain the roles of urbanization, bureaucracy, the service sector of the job market, and education in this transition.

5. What is modern institutional discrimination? How does it differ from “traditional” institutional discrimination? Explain the role of affirmative action in combating each.

6. Explain the impact of industrialization and globalization on gender relations. Compare and contrast these changes with the changes that occurred for racial and ethnic minority groups.

**INTERNET RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**A. Everyday Life Under Jim Crow**

The daily workings of the Jim Crow system of segregation are analyzed and described in a collection of interviews, photos, and memories archived at [http://www.americanradioworks.org/features/remembering/](http://www.americanradioworks.org/features/remembering/). Explore the site, look at the photos, listen to the clips, and analyze them in terms of the concepts introduced in this chapter.

**B. The Debate Over Affirmative Action**

Update and supplement the debate on affirmative action presented at the end of the chapter. Start with newspaper home pages and search for recent news items or opinion pieces on the issue. Search the Internet for other viewpoints and perspectives from other groups and positions on the political spectrum. One place you might start is [http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/](http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/), a Web site that presents diverse opinions on the topic and brings many different voices to the debates. Analyze events and opinions in terms of the concepts introduced in this chapter, especially modern institutional discrimination.

**FOR FURTHER READING**


An important analysis of the shift from a manufacturing to a service-based, information society.


A comprehensive and provocative look at modern institutional discrimination.
An excellent review and analysis of the myths and realities surrounding affirmative action.


Three outstanding analyses of black-white relations in the United States, with a major focus on the historical periods covered in this chapter.

**NOTE**

1. Women (of all races) were not given the right to vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920.
PART III

Understanding Dominant-Minority Relations in the United States Today

CHAPTER 5
African Americans: From Segregation to Modern Institutional Discrimination and Modern Racism

CHAPTER 6
Native Americans: From Conquest to Tribal Survival in a Postindustrial Society

CHAPTER 7
Hispanic Americans: Colonization, Immigration, and Ethnic Enclaves

CHAPTER 8
Asian Americans: Are Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans “Model Minorities”? 

CHAPTER 9
New Americans: Immigration and Assimilation

CHAPTER 10
White Ethnic Groups: Assimilation and Identity—The Twilight of Ethnicity?
In Part III, we turn to contemporary intergroup relations in the United States. The emphasis is on the present, but the recent past also is investigated to see how present situations developed. We explore how minority and dominant groups respond to a changing American society and to each other, and how minority groups define and pursue their own self-interest in interaction with other groups, American culture and values, and the institutions of the larger society.

The themes and ideas developed in the first two parts of this text will continue to be central to the analysis. For example, the case study chapters are presented in an order that roughly follows the Blauner hypothesis: Colonized groups are presented first, and we end with groups created by immigration. We also will continue to rely on the concepts of the Noel hypothesis to analyze and explain contemporary dominant-minority patterns.

The history and present conditions of each minority group are unique, and no two groups have had the same experiences. To help identify and understand these differences, a common comparative frame of reference—stressing assimilation and pluralism; inequality and power; and prejudice, racism, and discrimination—is used throughout these case studies.

Much of the conceptual frame of reference employed in these case studies can be summarized in six themes. The first five themes are based on material from previous chapters; the sixth is covered in forthcoming chapters.

1. Consistent with the Noel hypothesis, the present condition of America’s minority groups reflects their contact situations, especially the nature of their competition with the dominant group (e.g., competition over land vs. competition over labor) and the size of the power differential between groups at the time of contact.

2. Consistent with the Blauner hypothesis, minority groups created by conquest and colonization experience economic and political inequalities that have lasted longer and been more severe than those experienced by minority groups created by immigration.

3. Power and economic differentials and barriers to upward mobility are especially pronounced for groups identified by racial or physical characteristics, as opposed to cultural or linguistic traits.

4. Consistent with the themes stated in Chapters 3 and 4, dominant-minority relations reflect the economic and political characteristics of the larger society and change as those characteristics change. Changes in the subsistence technology of the larger society are particularly consequential for dominant-minority relations. The shift from a manufacturing to a service economy (“deindustrialization”) is one of the key factors shaping dominant-minority relations in the United States today.

5. The development of group relations, both in the past and for the future, can be analyzed in terms of assimilation (more unity) and pluralism (more diversity). Group relations in the past (e.g., the degree of assimilation permitted or required of the minority group) primarily reflected the needs and wishes of the dominant group. Although the pressure for Americanization remains considerable, there is more flexibility and variety in group relations today. One important variation on the theme of assimilation is segmented assimilation. This concept was introduced in Chapter 2 and will be applied in this part to post-1965 immigrants, particularly in Chapter 9.

6. Since World War II, minority groups have gained significantly more control over the direction of group relationships. This trend reflects the decline of traditional prejudice in the larger society and the successful efforts of minority groups to protest, resist, and change patterns of exclusion and domination. These successes have been possible, in large part, because American minority groups have increased their share of political and economic resources.