Today’s lecture: ethnicity and race

1. social construction of race
2. prejudice and discrimination
3. keys to “successful” immigrant groups
4. black-white differences in wealth and the race-class debate

Race and biology

1. Attempts by anthropologists and biologists to specify the number of “races” have varied anywhere from 3-100
2. No matter what the definition of “race” that you use, the amount of genetic variation WITHIN any race is FAR greater than the amount of genetic differences BETWEEN “races.”
3. In terms of variation BETWEEN populations, the variation among different African populations is greater than that of the rest of the world combined.

Myrdal, The American Dilemma (1944)

The dilemma is the contradiction between basic American values and American practices regarding race.

Race is commonly considered to be a biological concept, but the meaning and definition of race is socially/historically constructed.

rates of female-headed households with children under 18 in the United States (1997)

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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>African-Americans</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(African Americans, 1970)</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican-Americans</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>Puerto Ricans</td>
<td>43%</td>
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Racial privilege built into law: comparing apartheid South Africa to the Jim Crow South
- Definitions of race in the American South based on one-drop rule
- Few of those who are socially defined as Black in the US have exclusively African ancestry (5-10% or less)
- Definitions of race in apartheid South Africa based on physical characteristics

Prejudice and discrimination
- Prejudice: attitudes (usually negative) toward members of an outgroup
- Discrimination: unequal treatment of individuals based on one of their group characteristics
- The social psychological theory of contact is that contact reduces prejudice only if groups are of equal status and are NOT in a situation of direct competition with one another

Individual racism vs. institutional racism
- “Individual racism”: single individuals actively holding prejudices against outgroups and/or actively practicing discrimination against outgroups
- “Institutional racism”: norms and practices that have discriminatory consequences, even if they are enacted by people who are not prejudiced

Black progress relative to other groups: where to start the clock?
- 1630’s: first African slaves in US
- 1865: Emancipation after Civil War
- 1940’s: Northern migration of many Blacks
- 1960’s: Civil Rights movement

Keys to “successful” immigrant groups
- Wherever you look, voluntary immigrants tend to achieve economic parity faster than involuntary immigrants
  - (at least three reasons why this is the case)
- Geographic concentration often helps immigrant groups attain economic parity, through the development of ethnic enclaves
- Enclave economy: business opportunities generated by the spatial concentration of an immigrant group through (1) occupational specialization and (2) internal economic development

Black-White differences in wealth
- Gains by Blacks toward closing the income gap between Blacks and Whites have not done nearly as much to close the wealth gap
- In 1994, the median (average) White family held assets worth seven times more than the median Black family
Black-White differences in wealth

- At the end of the Civil War (1865), African-Americans controlled approximately 0.5% of the wealth in the United States
- In 2000, African-Americans controlled approximately 1% of the wealth in the United States

race-class debate:
To what extent are persistent racial inequalities sustained by unique disadvantages that the ethnic group faces versus the general disadvantages that all low-wealth persons face?

Consider: What affects might discriminatory housing practices and “white flight” have on the accumulation of wealth?

1. Some evidence suggests that Blacks may pay 15% to 25% more for housing of equivalent quality
2. Black investments in residential real estate appreciate at a slower rate than White investment in real estate