CHAPTER 13  Inequalities of Race and Ethnicity

Lecture Outline

I. The Meaning of Race and Ethnicity
   A. In biology, race refers to an inbreeding population that develops distinctive physical characteristics that are hereditary. Race is also a social concept that varies from one society to another, depending on how the people of that society feel about the importance of certain physical differences.
   B. Racism is an ideology based on the belief that certain observable, supposedly inherited traits are marks of inferiority that justify discriminatory treatment of people with those traits.
   C. Ethnic groups are populations that have a sense of group identity based on a distinctive cultural pattern and, usually, shared ancestry.
      1. A minority group is a set of people who share the same physical or cultural characteristics and are singled out for differential or unequal treatment by the society in which they live. A minority is not always numerically inferior to the dominant group.
      2. Often the identity of an ethnic group is defined through the experience of coping with life in the new society as well as through the group’s desire to hold on to its language, food, and other cultural ways.

II. When Worlds Collide: Patterns of Intergroup Relations
   A. Intergroup relations vary along a continuum that extends from complete intolerance to complete tolerance.
      1. Genocide is state-sponsored mass killing explicitly designed to completely exterminate a population deemed to be racially or ethnically different and threatening to the dominant population.
      2. Expulsion is the forcible removal of one population from territory claimed by another.
      3. Slavery is the ownership and control of one population by another.
      4. Segregation is the ecological and institutional separation of races or ethnic groups.
         a. Voluntary segregation may result from a people’s desire to live separately and maintain its own culture and institutions.
5. Assimilation is the blending of a minority group into the majority population, leading to its eventual disappearance as a distinct people.

a. Three ideological tendencies have affected the treatment of minority groups in the United States. They are Anglo-conformity, the melting-pot theory, and cultural pluralism.

b. The valuation of different groups according to how closely they conform to Anglo-Saxon standards of appearance, behavior, and values is known as ethnic stratification.

c. A pluralistic society is one in which different ethnic and racial groups are able to maintain their own cultures and lifestyles even as they gain equality in the institutions of the larger society.

III. Culture and Intergroup Relations

A. Stereotypes are inflexible images of a racial or cultural group that are held without regard to whether they are true.

B. Prejudice is an attitude that prejudgets a person, either positively or negatively, on the basis of real or imagined characteristics of a group of which that person is a member. Discrimination is actual unfair treatment of people on the basis of their group membership.

1. The systematic exclusion of people from equal access to and participation in a particular institution because of their race, religion, or ethnicity is called institutional discrimination.

C. Ethnic nationalism is the belief that one’s ethnic group constitutes a distinct people whose culture is and should be separate from that of the larger society.

D. Affirmative action policies are designed to correct persistent racial and ethnic inequalities in promotion, hiring, and access to other opportunities.

IV. Theories of Racial and Ethnic Inequality

A. Social-psychological theories view prejudice as a symptom of other aspects of intergroup relations.

1. The frustration-aggression hypothesis holds that the origin of prejudice is a buildup of frustration, which may be taken out on a scapegoat.

2. Projection is the process whereby behaviors and feelings that people find unacceptable in themselves are attributed to other people.
3. Theodor Adorno found that people with an “authoritarian personality” have a strong tendency to display prejudice.

B. Interactionists look at how hostility or sympathy toward members of other groups is produced through the norms of interaction within and between groups.
   1. Georg Simmel found that the intensity of interactions within a group leads to hostility against members of other groups.

C. From the functionalist perspective, inequalities among ethnic or racial groups exist because they have served important functions for particular societies.

D. Conflict theories trace the origins of racial and ethnic inequality to the conflict between classes in capitalist societies.
   1. The theory of *internal colonialism* states that many minority groups are colonial or “ghettoized” populations within the larger society.

E. Ecological theories explore the processes by which conflict between racial or ethnic groups develops and is resolved. Robert Park devised a model of urban intergroup relations that consists of five stages: invasion, resistance, competition, accommodation and cooperation, and assimilation.

V. A Piece of the Pie

A. The persistence of racial inequality in the United States is a complex problem.
   1. As a result of the legacy of slavery, blacks have been excluded from full participation in U.S. social institutions longer than any other group.
   2. Black families have higher rates of family breakup than white families.
   3. Structural changes in the U.S. economy have continually placed blacks at a disadvantage.