

Racial and Ethnic Relations

Seventh Edition



Joe R. Feagin • Clairece Booher Feagin

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SEVENTH EDITION

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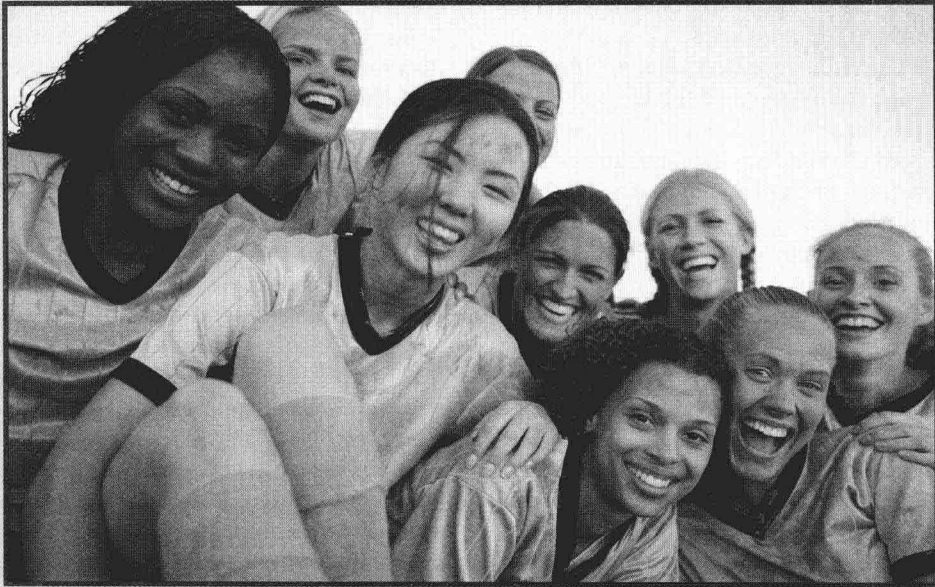
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Preface



OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, NUMEROUS SCHOLARS, JOURNALISTS, AND POLITICIANS have argued that there is a “declining significance of race” or an “end to racism” in the United States. They have written or spoken optimistically about the decrease in discrimination and the improving character of racial and ethnic relations in this country. Over the same period of time, however, the scholarly journals and mass media have been filled with accounts of violent hate crimes targeting people of color, accounts of the violent views and actions of white supremacist groups, discussions of many lawsuits over racial discrimination in employment and public accommodations, studies showing widespread housing discrimination, descriptions of community rebellions against local police brutality incidents, and controversies over affirmative action and other anti-discrimination programs. In recent years, we have also seen intense debates about the character and impact of the recent immigrants to the United States, many of whom are immigrants of color from Latin American or Asian countries.

As we move into the new millennium, there is much scholarly and public discussion and argument about racial and ethnic discrimination, oppression, and conflict.

Contrary to what some scholars and journalists assert, this debate reflects the underlying social, economic, and political realities in the United States. Today, many Americans are well aware, or are becoming aware, of the continuing significance of “race,” racism, and ethnicity, not only in this country but also in other countries—from the Republic of South Africa to Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East. Racial and ethnic oppression and conflict are extraordinarily important in the modern world and have the potential to tear apart any country, including highly industrialized countries.

One result of the reinvigorated interest in racial and ethnic issues in many areas of the United States is the creation of college and university courses that focus on racial and ethnic divisions, cultural diversity, and multicultural or multiracial issues. We have revised this seventh edition of *Racial and Ethnic Relations* with this growing interest in U.S. racial and ethnic heritages, developments, conflicts, and coalitions in mind. This textbook is designed for sociology courses, other social science courses, and education courses variously titled Racial and Ethnic Relations, Race Relations, Minority Groups, and Minority Relations, and also for various other courses on cultural diversity, multiculturalism, and racial and ethnic groups offered in college, university, business, and governmental settings.

One purpose of this book is to provide readers with access to the important literature on racial and ethnic groups in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in certain other countries around the globe. We have drawn on a broad array of sources, including articles, books, and other data analyses by sociologists, political scientists, social psychologists, anthropologists, historians, economists, investigative journalists, and legal scholars.

We have limited space, so we have not been able to deal with all the important racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Instead, we have focused on a modest number of major racial and ethnic groups, generally preferring to accent depth rather than breadth in the analyses. In recent decades, social science analyses have begun to dig deeper into the “what,” “why,” and “how” of racial and ethnic oppression and conflict. We draw heavily on this ever-growing research.

The introduction to Part I looks briefly at the origins of the racial and ethnic mosaic that is the United

States. It serves as an introduction to Chapters 1 and 2, which discuss major concepts and theories in the study of racial and ethnic relations. The introduction to Part II sketches the political and economic history of the United States in order to provide the context for understanding the adaptation and oppression of the various immigrant groups that have come, voluntarily or involuntarily, to U.S. shores. Only one major group, Native Americans (Indians), cannot be viewed as such immigrants; indeed, as the original inhabitants of this continent, they were often the victims of actions by the early immigrants (colonists) from outside North America. The situations and experiences of Native American societies and the various groups that have immigrated to North America are considered in Chapters 3–13. In Part III, Chapter 14 moves away from the United States to look at patterns of racial and ethnic relations in several other countries around the world, including France, South Africa, and Brazil. In the latter two cases, we examine how global patterns of racial oppression and conflict have often been developed or fostered by the outside European colonizers and their descendants during the colonial and decolonization periods in the histories of such countries.

In this seventh edition of *Racial and Ethnic Relations* we have updated each chapter with much new material and research, such as that on housing discrimination facing Latinos in Chapters 8 and 9. We have added a new and timely chapter on Arab Americans, many of whom have recently immigrated from the Middle East. In several chapters we give expanded attention to new conceptual approaches to racial and ethnic relations. For example, in Chapter 2 and elsewhere, we explore how new theorizing about assimilation and racial and ethnic discrimination is forcing a deeper probing of the dimensions and variations in intergroup relationships and adaptation, including the sometimes negative consequences of group integration into the dominant culture. Where possible in the group chapters, we have given attention to current events and issues. In addition, in Chapter 13 we deal with the increasingly multiracial and multicultural character of U.S. society. We examine the implications of the forecasts by demographers that by the middle of the twenty-first century the United States will become a country whose population majority is composed of Latino, African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native Americans.

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We hope that you find this seventh edition informative and intellectually stimulating. We welcome your comments. Please write to us at the Department of Sociology, Box 117330, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 32611-2036.

Joe R. Feagin
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