



Race and Ethnic Relations

American and Global Perspectives Martin N. Marger

Fifth Edition

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Martin N. Marger

Michigan State University



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PREFACE

THE FIFTH EDITION of *Race and Ethnic Relations*, like its four predecessors, is intended to explore race and ethnic relations in a global context, while covering extensively groups and issues in the United States. The need for such a comparative approach seems more critical than ever in light of the increasing ethnic diversity of a variety of societies as well as the prominence of ethnic conflicts in virtually all world regions. Indeed, with the demise of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War, the new world order seems one in which ethnic nationalism has become the major source of inter- and intrasocietal conflict. Few Americans are unaware of ethnic conflict in societies as distant and exotic as Rwanda and Kosovo, as well as those closer geographically and culturally, such as Canada and Northern Ireland. Moreover, Americans are forced to acknowledge that in their own society unresolved issues of race and ethnicity remain the most critical domestic concern. Although ethnic harmony may typify few contemporary multiethnic societies, there are encouraging instances of the diminishment of ethnic conflict, as in South Africa, and the lessening of racial and ethnic discrimination in the United States and other advanced industrial nations. Nonetheless, it seems clear that racial and ethnic issues and the conflicts they give rise to will continue to engage our attention well into the twenty-first century.

Curiously, American social scientists have not always kept pace in adapting to the global context of race and ethnic relations. Some continue to focus almost ex-

clusively on the United States, paying only incidental attention to ethnic patterns and events in other societies. In line with this view, texts in the field of race and ethnic relations have ordinarily provided no more than cursory coverage to ethnic issues outside the American sphere, if at all. Students, therefore, often continue to think of racial and ethnic, or minority, issues as uniquely American phenomena.

Many other social scientists, however, have come to see the utility and relevance of a more cross-national approach to the study of race and ethnicity. Such an approach set off *Race and Ethnic Relations* from other texts when it was first published in 1985. Its objective was to provide readers with a comparative perspective without sacrificing a strong American component. That objective was retained in subsequent editions and remains unchanged in this, the fifth edition. The book's overriding theme is the global nature of ethnicity and the prevalence of ethnic conflict in the modern world.

At the same time that an international perspective on race and ethnicity seems more compelling than ever, a close and careful analysis of American ethnic relations is surely imperative. For better or worse, the United States, the most diverse of multiethnic societies, more often than not is a global pacesetter in ethnic relations. More important, most readers of *Race and Ethnic Relations* continue to be American students, who require a solid understanding of their own society, which subsequently can be used as a comparative frame of reference. *Race and Ethnic Relations*, therefore, provides thorough coverage of America's major ethnic groups and issues. My own teaching experience has confirmed, however, that American students commonly acquire a broader and richer comprehension of ethnic relations and issues in the United States when these are presented in a global context and can be viewed from a comparative perspective.

The number of American college and university courses with ethnic content has grown enormously in recent years. This, I believe, is a reflection of the pressing problems and commanding issues of race and ethnicity in America and the growing awareness of ethnic divisions and inequalities in an increasingly diverse society. The content of *Race and Ethnic Relations* is comprehensive and thus appropriate for a variety of courses that may be differently titled and structured (for example, "race and ethnicity," "minority relations," "ethnic stratification," "multiculturalism") but that all deal in some fashion with ethnic issues.

The theoretical and conceptual thrust of this edition will be familiar to past readers: a power-conflict perspective, emphasizing the power dynamics among ethnic groups. Race and ethnic relations are seen as manifestations of stratification and of the competition and conflict that develop over societal rewards—power, wealth, and prestige. In accord with this perspective, I have emphasized the structural, or macrolevel, patterns of race and ethnic relations rather than the social-psychological patterns, though the latter are interspersed throughout.

As with previous editions, an instructor's test bank, containing multiple-choice and essay questions, is available to adopters.

NEW TO THE FIFTH EDITION

In the relatively brief span of time since the publication of the fourth edition of *Race and Ethnic Relations*, much has changed in the United States and in other multiethnic societies that bears directly on the study of race and ethnicity. In response to those changes, the fifth edition has been revised with the latest data and the most relevant examples from a variety of societies and includes references to important new studies. In fact, virtually every chapter has been revised substantively.

The basic organization of the book has not been altered. The intent of the chapters that make up Part I is to introduce the principal terms, concepts, and theories of the field of race and ethnic relations. Although illustrations of ideas and concepts and applications of theory are related primarily to the United States, whenever appropriate they are presented in an international context. New discussions have been incorporated into these chapters, including coverage of the concepts of statistical discrimination and segmented assimilation, and several new illustrative figures are presented.

Part II, which focuses on American society, has been kept intact organizationally, though timely changes in content have been made throughout. Descriptions and analyses of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Euro-Americans in Chapters 5 through 10 are presented within the framework of theories and concepts introduced in Part I. All chapters have been brought up to date with the most current statistical data and topical illustrations. A section on Central and South American and Caribbean groups as part of the Hispanic-American ethnic category has been added to Chapter 9. Chapter 11 is intended to present what I believe are the major ongoing issues of race and ethnic relations in the United States: the persistent gap between Euro-Americans and racial-ethnic groups; policies designed to address that gap (such as affirmative action); and large-scale immigration. Discussion of these issues has been revised to reflect pertinent societal events and policy changes that have occurred in the last few years.

Each of the societies examined in Part III continues to be a case of major significance in the study of race and ethnic relations in the contemporary world. Moreover, each stands as an intriguing comparative case vis-à-vis the United States. Important events and processes during the 1990s, however, have produced changes in all, especially South Africa, Northern Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia. In the case of South Africa, though massive obstacles remain in the path toward a just and equitable multiethnic society, structural changes that

seemed unimaginable only a decade ago continue to evolve. Indeed, South Africa represents an encouraging example of how societies with the most rigid and oppressive systems of ethnic inequality are capable of fundamental systemic change in a surprisingly brief time with a minimum of violence. Today South Africa is, as journalist Anthony Lewis has called it, “a land of possibility.” A description of the South African transformation serves as an important case for students of contemporary ethnic relations. In Northern Ireland, too, although a long-awaited peace accord hangs fragily in the balance, events of recent years have contributed to a reduction of violence and have given hope to an eventual cessation of three decades of ethnically inspired hostility. The area comprising the former Yugoslavia, by contrast, tragically endured an ever more frightful expansion of ethnic conflict throughout the 1990s. If South Africa, and to a lesser degree Northern Ireland, serve as examples of ethnic conflict reduction, the former Yugoslavia informs students of ethnic relations of how in the modern world multiethnic societies can disintegrate while creating, in the process, a monstrous scene of torture chambers and killing fields.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin N. Marger received his bachelor's degree from the University of Miami, his master's from Florida State University, and his doctorate from Michigan State University. In addition to his research and writing in the field of race and

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PART

I

THE NATURE OF ETHNIC RELATIONS



THE FOLLOWING four chapters erect a framework for analyzing ethnic relations in the United States (in Part II) and in five other societies (in Part III). Each chapter in Part I deals with a particular dimension of interethnic relations. Chapter 1 introduces some basic concepts and terminology of the field; in particular, ethnicity and race, the latter an especially misunderstood term in everyday usage. Chapter 2 concerns the structure of inequality, which seems to be an inevitable outcome when diverse ethnic groups live side by side under a common political and economic system. Chapter 3 explains the techniques by which this system of inequality is maintained. Finally, Chapter 4 introduces the notion of conflict and explains it as an inherent characteristic of interethnic relations. However, there are differing degrees of group inequality and differing levels of group conflict, and these variations create different types of multiethnic societies; several of these types are described.

One objective of Part I is to explain the sociological approach to race and ethnic relations. This approach is fundamentally different from the manner in which relations among racial and ethnic groups are commonly viewed and interpreted. Sociologists see everyday social occurrences differently from laypersons, and they describe them differently as well. They go beneath the superficial to uncover the unseen and often unwitting workings of society, frequently exposing the erroneous nature of much of what is considered well-established knowledge. Sociologist Peter Berger has put it well: "It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem" (1963:23). This is particularly so in the study of race and ethnic relations.

As an example, most people, if asked, could attempt an explanation of why black-white relations in the United States have been customarily discordant, and they might even venture to explain why conflict is also so commonplace among ethnic groups in other parts of the world. They would probably explain that humans are belligerent "by nature" or that there are