The United States has traditionally been a diverse society, but increasingly nations around the globe are experiencing the movement and flows of people, ideas, and cultures. To grasp these transformations—which are in many ways the key challenges of the 21st century—sociologists are refashioning old concepts and creating new ones. To capture the new lived experience of people on the move and people in place, we examine how race and ethnicity are socially constructed, and the trends and patterns associated with the categories of race, ethnicity, and migration.

Questions guiding scholarship of ethnicity and migration have traditionally emphasized the ways “new” groups become incorporated into well-established social systems. This body of work investigates themes related to assimilation, acculturation, identity formation, and mobility within and across generations. Essentially, this scholarship examines how people fare in the long term as they adjust to new environments, and how they create new spaces and new communities.

Race scholarship, on the other hand, focuses on race as a fundamental stratifying force organizing, ordering, and impacting society. At its core, race scholarship answers the question of how race shapes life chances and how enduring is the power of race yesterday, today, and in the future. It asks questions such as how these processes become real through institutions and allocation of resources, through relationships, and through the formation of identities.

Students who concentrate on Race, Ethnicity, and Migration with the Sociology PhD program will engage with ideas across national state boundaries and time. Faculty members in the department employ a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches to study of race and ethnicity in a constantly changing world. Our faculty members conduct research in a variety of areas including the intersections of race, identity, and family and how these intersections impact patterns of resource deprivation. We study the organization of how race becomes real within urban settings, such as through segregation. We examine how cultural practices shape and are shaped by racial dynamics. We examine questions such as how immigrants are integrated into a new society and what happens when they return to their homelands. And we examine the level and persistence of race/ethnic based disparities related to acquiring education and health outcomes.

Related Faculty:

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