



# Racial and Ethnic Relations

Sociological Agents

# Race and Ethnicity Defined

- ***Race*** is a socially defined category, based on real or perceived biological differences between groups of people.
- ***Ethnicity*** is a socially defined category based on common language, religion, nationality, history, or another cultural factor.





# Race as a Social Construct

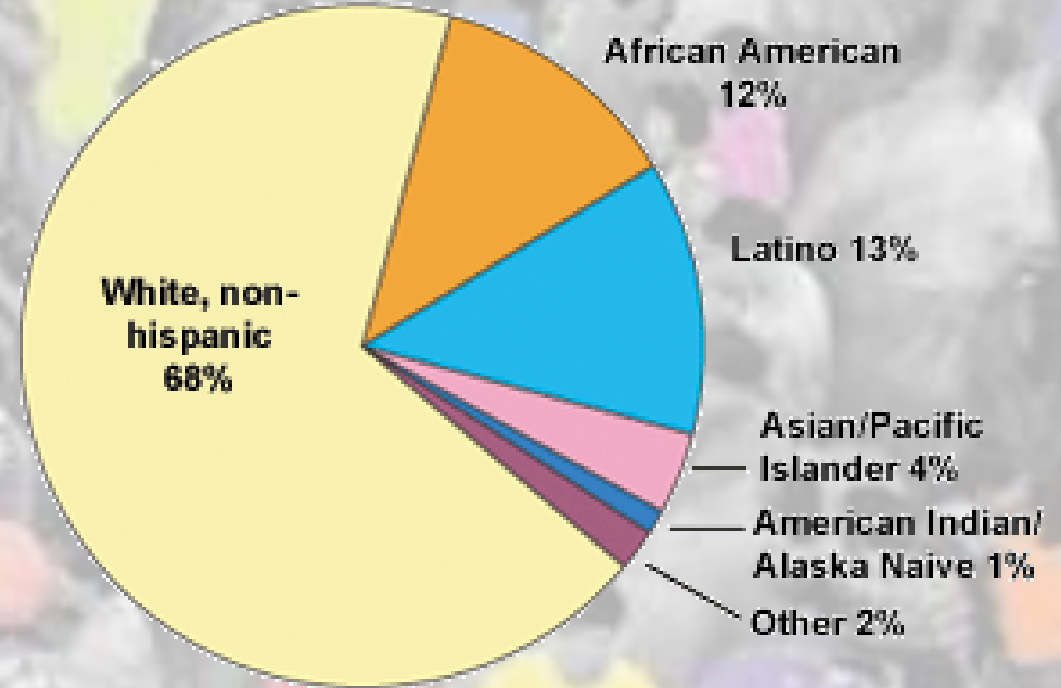
- Sociologists see race and ethnicity as social constructions because they are not rooted in biological differences, they change over time, and they never have firm boundaries.
  - Ex: Differing opinions of how light skin color needs to be in order to be classified as “white”
- The distinction between race and ethnicity is important because ethnicity can be displayed or hidden, depending on individual preferences, while racial identities are always on display.
  - Ex. Skin color can not be permanently hidden, but it is easy to hide German ethnicity



# Minorities

- A **minority group** is made up of members of a social group that is systematically denied the same access to power and resources available to the dominant groups of a society, but who are not necessarily fewer in number than the dominant group.

Percent Distribution of U. S. Population,  
by Race/Ethnicity

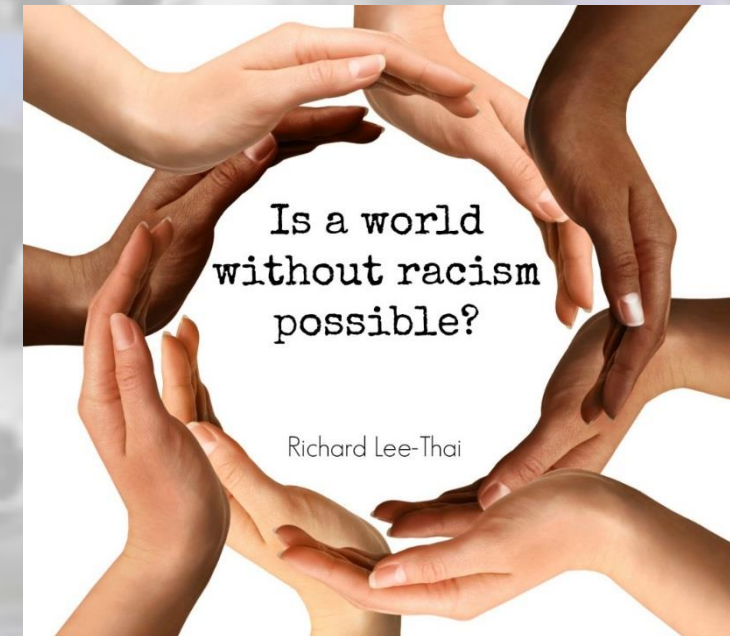


Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Redistricting Data



# Racism and Power

- ***Racism***: a set of beliefs about the superiority of one racial or ethnic group.
  - Used to justify inequality
    - Ex. Apartheid South Africa or Jim Crow United States
  - Often rooted in the assumption that differences between groups are genetic
    - Eugenics
- By definition non-European Americans can not be racist against European Americans because of the lack of political and social dominance over European Americans
  - European Americans have maintained a monopoly over power and have used it to disadvantage other racial groups



# Prejudice, Discrimination, and Bigotry

- ***Prejudice***: (a thought process)
  - an idea about the characteristics of a group
  - applied to all members of that group
  - unlikely to change regardless of the evidence against it.
- ***Discrimination***: (an action)
  - unequal treatment of individuals because of their social group
  - usually motivated by prejudice
- ***Bigotry***: (a thought process)
  - Intolerance to others based on differences of ideals or appearance
    - Ex. Hating someone because of their skin color

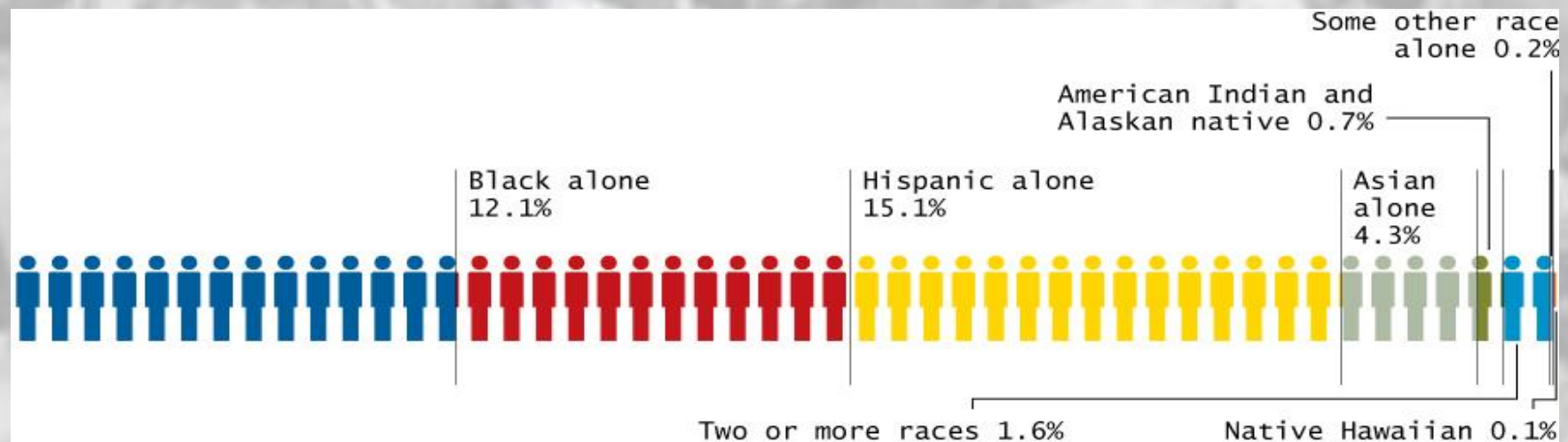
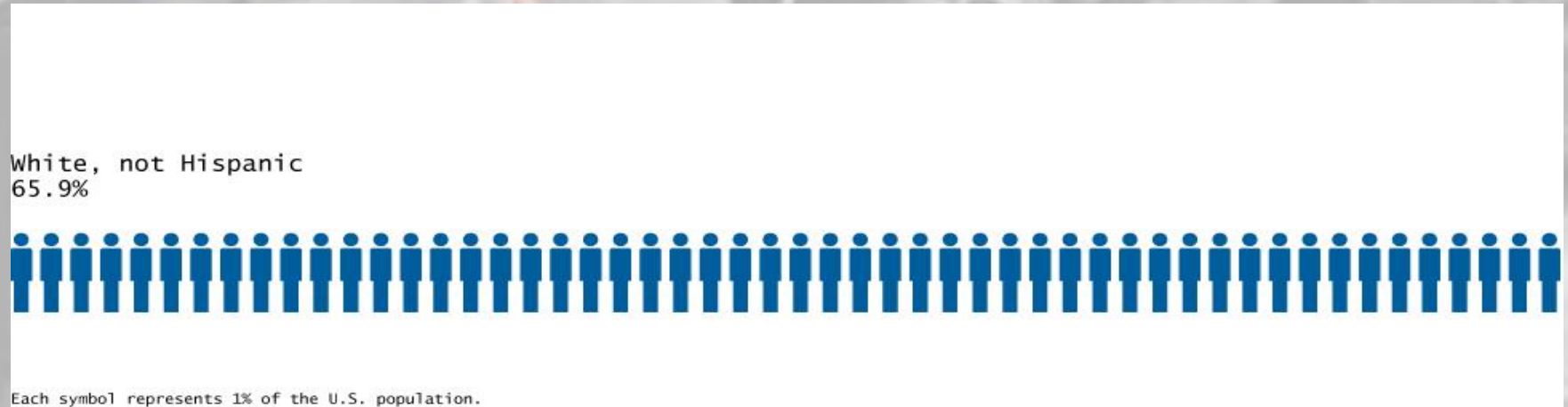


# Conflict or Cooperation

- ***Assimilation*** the minority group is absorbed into the mainstream or dominant group, making society more homogeneous.
  - ***Racial assimilation*** racial minority groups are absorbed into the dominant group through intermarriage.
  - ***Cultural assimilation*** racial or ethnic groups are absorbed into the dominant group by adopting the dominant group's culture.

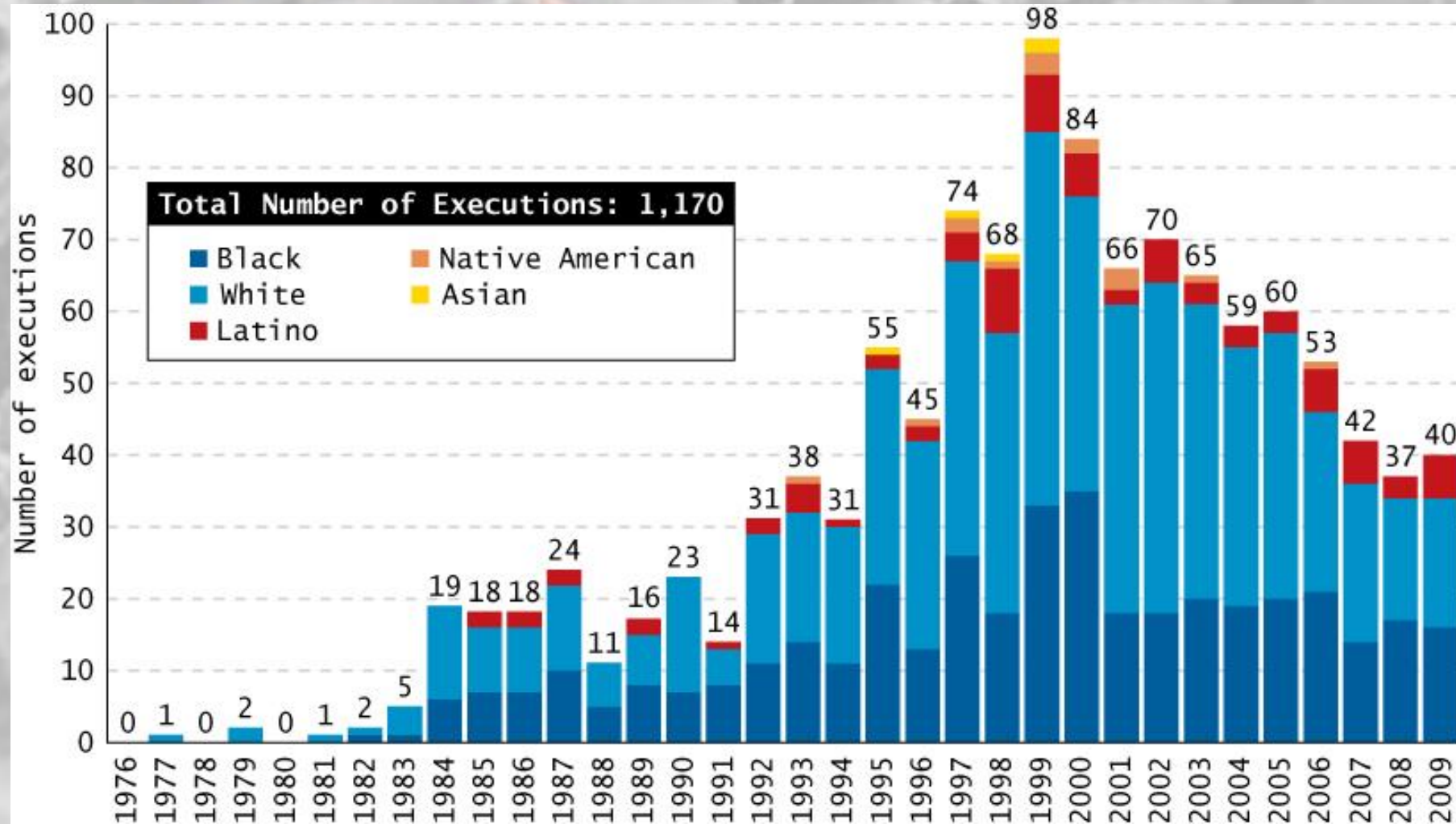


# Present Racial Makeup of United States

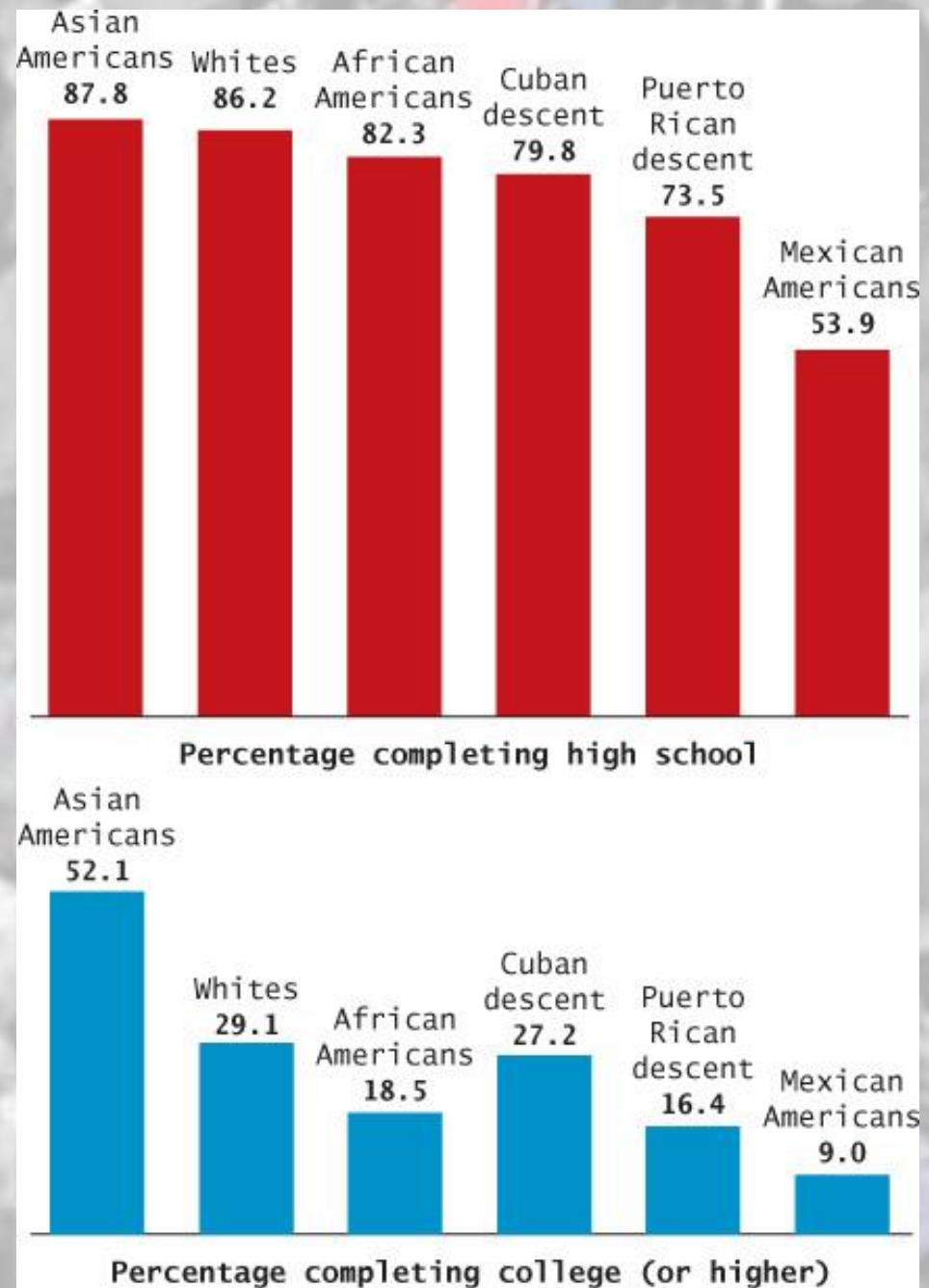




# Number of Executions and Race of Prisoners Executed, 1976–2009

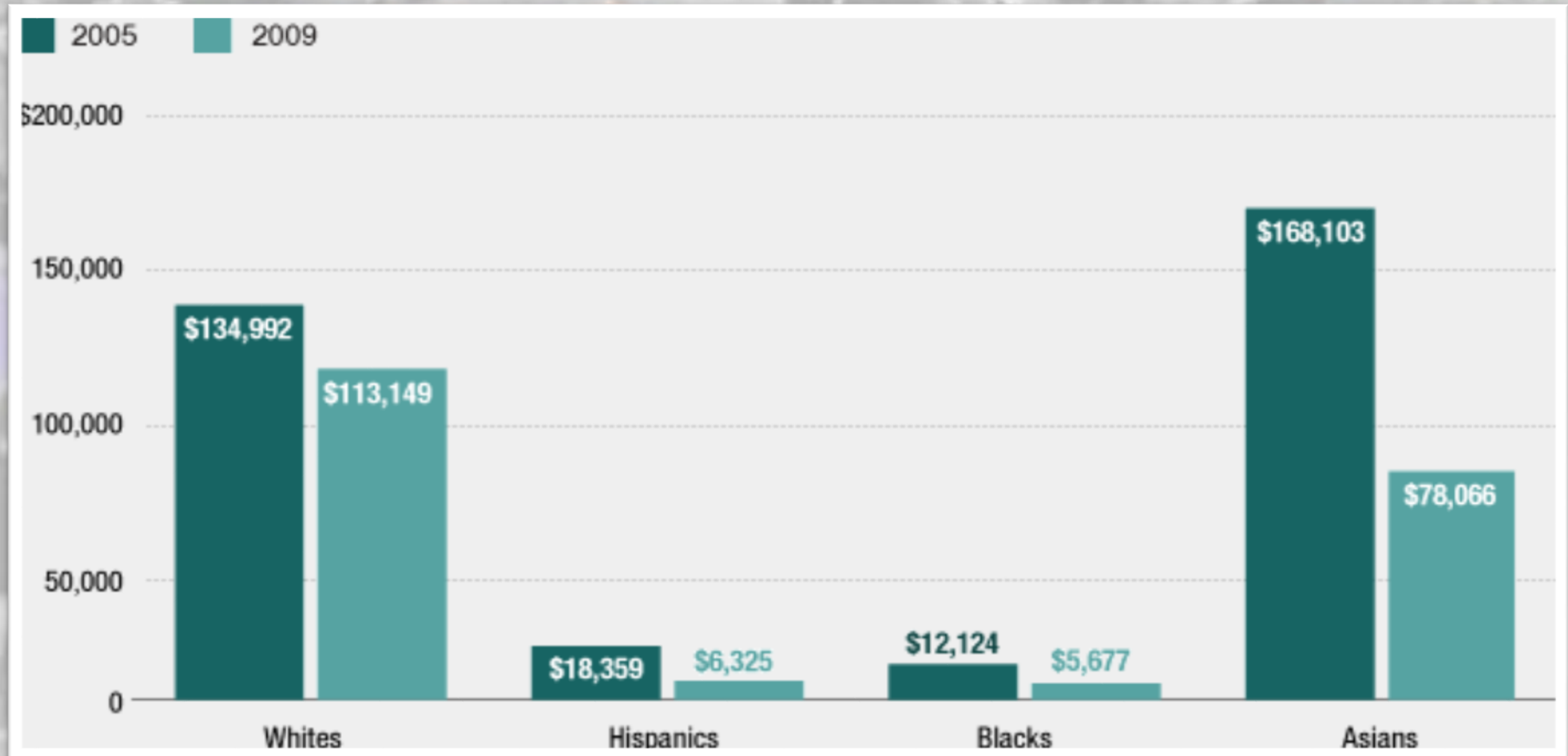


# Educational Attainment Based on Race, 2007





# Median Net Worth of Households



# U.S. Life Expectancy by Race, 2007

