A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market

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An important source of antagonism between ethnic groups is hypothesized to be a split labor market, i.e. one in which there is a large differential in price of labor for the same occupation. The price of labor is not a response to race or ethnicity of those entering the labor market. A price differential results from differences in resources and motives which are often correlates of ethnicity. A split labor market produces a three-way conflict between business and the two labor groups, with business seeking to displace higher paid by cheaper labor. Ethnic antagonism can take two forms: exclusion movements and "caste" systems. Both are seen as victories for higher paid labor since they prevent undercutting.

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