

EXERPT: Sociology in our times,  
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## Racial and Ethnic Groups in the United States

How do racial and ethnic groups come into contact with one another? How do they adjust to one another and to the dominant group over time? Sociologists have explored these questions extensively; however, a detailed historical account of the unique experiences of each group is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, we will look briefly at intergroup contacts. In the process, sports will be used as an example of how members of some groups have attempted to gain upward mobility and become integrated into society.

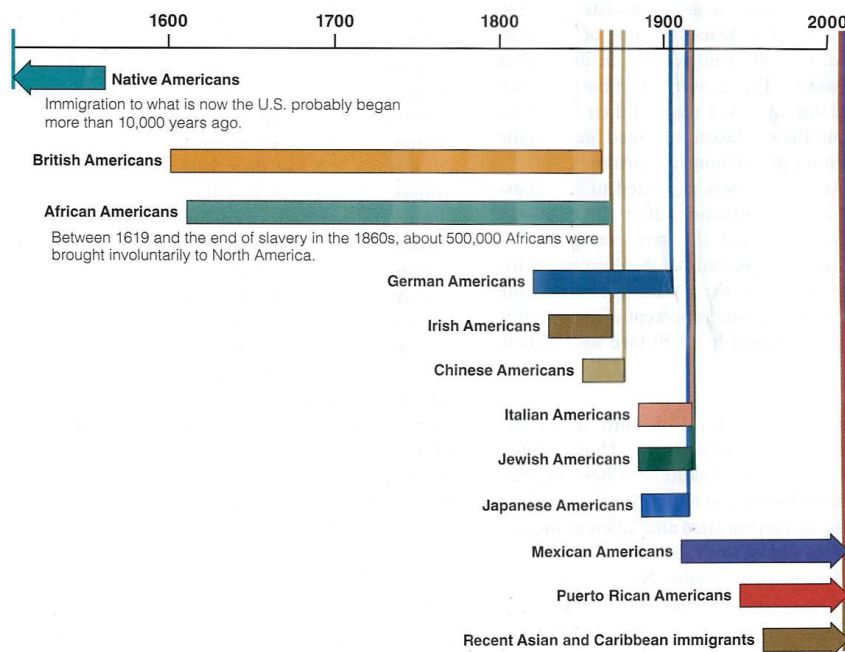
### Native Americans

Native Americans are believed to have migrated to North America from Asia thousands of years ago, as shown on the time line in ► Figure 9.2. One of the

most widely accepted beliefs about this migration is that the first groups of Mongolians made their way across a natural bridge of land called Beringia into present-day Alaska. From there, they moved to what is now Canada and the northern United States, eventually making their way as far south as the tip of South America (Cashmore, 1996).

As schoolchildren are taught, Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus first encountered the native inhabitants in 1492 and referred to them as “Indians.” When European settlers (or invaders) arrived on this continent, the native inhabitants’ way of life was changed forever. Experts estimate that approximately two million native inhabitants lived in North America at that time (Cashmore, 1996); however, their numbers had been reduced to less than 240,000 by 1900.

**Genocide, Forced Migration, and Forced Assimilation** Native Americans have been the victims of genocide and forced migration. Although the



► Figure 9.2 Time Line of Racial and Ethnic Groups in the United States

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation Flag #9: Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content**
- **For Discussion** “Perhaps our national ambition to standardize ourselves has behind it the notion that democracy means standardization. But standardization is the surest way to destroy the initiative, to benumb the creative impulse above all else essential to the vitality and growth of democratic ideals” (Ida M. Tarbell).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation Flag #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis**
- **Historical Perspective** “What connects two thousand years of genocide? Too much power in too few hands” (Simon Wiesenthal).

United States never had an official policy that set in motion a pattern of deliberate extermination, many Native Americans were either massacred or died from European diseases (such as typhoid, smallpox, and measles) and starvation (Wagner and Stearn, 1945; Cook, 1973). In battle, Native Americans were often no match for the Europeans, who had “modern” weaponry (Amott and Matthaeci, 1996). Europeans justified their aggression by stereotyping the Native Americans as “savages” and “heathens” (Takaki, 1993).

After the Revolutionary War, the federal government offered treaties to the Native Americans so that more of their land could be acquired for the growing white population. Scholars note that the government broke treaty after treaty as it engaged in a policy of wholesale removal of indigenous nations in order to clear the land for settlement by Anglo-Saxon “pioneers” (Green, 1977). Entire nations were forced to move in order to accommodate the white settlers. The “Trail of Tears” was one of the most disastrous of the forced migrations. In the coldest part of the winter of 1832, over half of the Cherokee Nation died during or as a result of their forced relocation from the southeastern United States to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma (Thornton, 1984).

Native Americans were subjected to forced assimilation on the reservations after 1871 (Takaki, 1993). Native American children were placed in boarding schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to hasten their assimilation into the dominant culture. About 98 percent of native lands had been expropriated by 1920 (see McDonnell, 1991).

**Native Americans Today** Currently, about 4.5 million Native Americans live in the United States, including Aleuts, Inuit (Eskimos), Cherokee, Navajo, Chippewa, Sioux, and more than five hundred other nations of varying sizes and different locales. Most are concentrated in the Southwest, and about one-third live on reservations. Native Americans are the most disadvantaged racial or ethnic group in the United States in terms of income, employment, housing, nutrition, and health. The life chances of Native Americans who live on reservations are



Native Americans have historically had a low rate of college attendance. However, the development of a network of tribal colleges has provided them a local source of upward mobility.

especially limited. They have the highest rates of infant mortality and death by exposure and malnutrition. They also have high rates of suicide, substance abuse, and school violence (Kershaw, 2005). Reservation-based Native American men have an average life expectancy of less than forty-five years; for women, it is less than forty-eight years. Native Americans have had very limited educational opportunities and have a very high rate of unemployment. In recent years, however, a network of tribal colleges has been successful in providing some Native Americans with the education they need to move into the ranks of the skilled working class and beyond (Bordewich, 1996).

In spite of the odds against them, many Native Americans resist oppression. The American Indian Movement, Women of All Red Nations, and other groups have demanded the recovery of Native American lands and reparation for past losses. Native American women have publicized the harmful conditions (including radiation sickness and the forced sterilization of women) that exist on reservations. The American Indian Anti-Defamation Council advocates doing away with the word *tribe* because it demeans Native Americans by equating their level of cultural attainment with “primitivism” or “barbarism.”

• **Media Coverage** “Rwanda, a country that suffered 100 days of tribal genocide in 1994 and has also been hit hard by the AIDS epidemic, is believed to have the highest percentage of orphans in the world. Now a survey finds that depression is alarmingly common among teenage and young adult orphans there who head households and care for younger children” (*New York Times*, 9/08).

• **Writing Assignment** Find out and write about the American Indian Movement (AIM): “Young people and Indian people need to know that we existed in the 20th Century. We need to know who our heroes are and to know what we have done and accomplished in this century other than what Olympic athletes Jim Thorpe and Billy Mills have done” (Russell Means, Native American actor and activist).





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Life chances are extremely limited for Native Americans who live on reservations. Although a few Native Americans early in the twentieth century were well-known athletes, Native Americans today have little opportunity to compete in sports at the college, professional, or Olympic level.

**Native Americans and Sports** Early in the twentieth century, Native Americans such as Jim Thorpe gained national visibility as athletes in football, baseball, and track and field. Teams at boarding schools such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania and the Haskell Institute in Kansas were well-known. However, after the first three decades of the twentieth century, Native Americans became much less prominent in sports. Although some Navajo athletes have been very successful in basketball and some Choc-taws have excelled in baseball, Native Americans have seldom been able to compete at the college, professional, or Olympic level. Native American scholar Joseph B. Oxendine (2003) attributes the lack of athletic participation to these factors: (1) a reduction in opportunities for developing sports skills, (2) restricted opportunities for participation, and (3) a lessening of Native Americans' interest in competing with and against non-Native Americans.

## White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (British Americans)

Whereas Native Americans have been among the most disadvantaged peoples, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) have been the most privileged group in this country. Although many English settlers initially came to North America as indentured servants or as prisoners, they quickly emerged as the dominant group, creating a core culture (including language, laws, and holidays) to which all other groups were expected to adapt. Most of the WASP immigrants arriving from northern Europe were advantaged over later immigrants because they were highly skilled and did not experience high levels of prejudice and discrimination.

**Class, Gender, and Wasps** Like members of other racial and ethnic groups, not all WASPs are alike. Social class and gender affect their life chances and opportunities. For example, members of the working class and the poor do not have political and economic power; men in the capitalist class do. WASPs constitute the majority of the upper class and maintain cohesion through listings such as the *Social Register* and interactions with one another in elite settings such as private schools and country clubs (Kendall, 2002). However, WASP women do not always have the same rights as the men of their group. Although WASP women have the privilege of a dominant racial position, they do not have the gender-related privileges of men (Amott and Matthaei, 1996).

**Wasps and Sports** Family background, social class, and gender play an important role in the sports participation of WASPs. Contemporary North American football was invented at the Ivy League colleges and was dominated by young, affluent WASPs who had the time and money to attend college and participate in sports activities. As ♦ Table 9.1 shows, whites are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to become professional athletes in all sports except football and basketball.

Affluent WASP women participated in intercollegiate women's basketball in the late 1800s, and various other sporting events were used as a means to break free of restrictive codes of femininity (Nelson,

• **Recent Events** "More accurately, Barack Obama is the first Hawaiian-born, Kenyan-American, half-black, half-white man to run for a job that has—with the exception of John Kennedy—been the exclusive property of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants" (John Bogert, DailyBreeze.com).

• **For Discussion** "[O]ne of the many advantages whites enjoy in America is a relative freedom from the draining obligation of racial inversion. Whites do not have to spend precious time fashioning an identity out of simply being white. They do not have to self-consciously imbue whiteness with an ideology, look to whiteness for some special essence, or divide up into factions and wrestle over what it means to be white" (Shelby Steele).

◆ **Table 9.1 Odds of Becoming a Professional Athlete by Race/Ethnicity and Sport**

Many young people dream of becoming a professional athlete; however, as this table shows, the odds of actually becoming one are very small.

	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	African American	Latino/a	Asian American
Football	1 in 62,500	1 in 47,600	1 in 2,500,000	1 in 5,000,000
Baseball	1 in 83,300	1 in 333,300	1 in 500,000	1 in 50,000,000
Basketball	1 in 357,100	1 in 153,800	1 in 33,300,000	—
Hockey	1 in 66,700	—	—	—
Golf				
Men's	1 in 312,500	1 in 12,500,000	1 in 33,300,000	1 in 20,000,000
Women's	1 in 526,300	—	1 in 33,300,000	1 in 3,300,000
Tennis				
Men's	1 in 285,700	1 in 2,000,000	1 in 3,300,000	—
Women's	1 in 434,800	1 in 20,000,000	1 in 20,000,000	—

Note: The odds of Native Americans participating in professional football are 1 in 12,500,000; they are not represented in other professional sports.  
Source: Leonard and Reyman, 1988: 162–169.

1994). Until recently, however, most women have had little chance for any involvement in college and professional sports.

### African Americans

The African American (black) experience has been one uniquely marked by slavery, segregation, and persistent discrimination. There is a lack of consensus about whether *African American* or *black* is the most appropriate term to refer to the 36 million Americans of African descent who live in the United States today. Those who prefer the term *black* point out that it incorporates many African-descent groups living in this country that do not use *African American* as a racial or ethnic self-description. For example, people who trace their origins to Haiti, Puerto Rico, or Jamaica typically identify themselves as “black” but not as “African American” (Cashmore, 1996).

Although the earliest African Americans probably arrived in North America with the Spanish conquerors in the fifteenth century, most historians trace their arrival to about 1619, when the first groups of indentured servants were brought to the colony of Virginia. However, by the 1660s, inden-

tured servanthood had turned into full-fledged slavery with the enactment of laws that sanctioned the enslavement of African Americans. Although the initial status of persons of African descent in this country may not have been too different from that of the English indentured servants, all of that changed with the passage of laws turning human beings into property and making slavery a status from which neither individuals nor their children could escape (Franklin, 1980).

Between 1619 and the 1860s, about 500,000 Africans were forcibly brought to North America, primarily to work on southern plantations, and these actions were justified by the devaluation and stereotyping of African Americans. Some analysts believe that the central factor associated with the development of slavery in this country was the plantation system, which was heavily dependent on cheap and dependable manual labor. Slavery was primarily beneficial to the wealthy southern plantation owners, but many of the stereotypes used to justify slavery were eventually institutionalized in southern custom and practice (Wilson, 1978). However, some slaves and whites engaged in active resistance against slavery and its barbaric practices, eventually resulting in slavery being outlawed in the north-

• **For Discussion** Why do most WASPs not think of themselves as having a race or ethnicity? In what ways do you think this belief will change as the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population continues to change?

• **Writing Assignment** What methods have African Americans used to resist oppression and to seek better lives for themselves and their families? What methods have failed?

• **Table Note** This is a great spot to engage any athletes in your class. What kinds of explanations can they give for these kinds of odds? Do they believe it is purely a game of ability?



ern states by the late 1700s. Slavery continued in the South until 1863, when it was abolished by the Emancipation Proclamation (Takaki, 1993).

**Segregation and Lynching** Gaining freedom did not give African Americans equality with whites. African Americans were subjected to many indignities because of race. Through informal practices in the North and *Jim Crow laws* in the South, African Americans experienced segregation in housing, employment, education, and all public accommodations. African Americans who did not stay in their “place” were often the victims of violent attacks and lynch mobs (Franklin, 1980). *Lynching* is a killing carried out by a group of vigilantes seeking revenge for an actual or imagined crime by the victim. Lynchings were used by whites to intimidate African Americans into staying “in their place.” It is estimated that as many as 6,000 lynchings occurred between 1892 and 1921 (Feagin and Feagin, 2003). In spite of all odds, many African American women and men resisted oppression and did not give up in their struggle for equality (Amott and Mattheai, 1996).

**Discrimination** In the twentieth century, the lives of many African Americans were changed by industrialization and two world wars. When factories were built in the northern United States, many African American families left the rural South in hopes of finding jobs and a better life.

During World Wars I and II, African Americans were a vital source of labor in war production industries; however, racial discrimination continued both on and off the job. In World War II, many African Americans fought for their country in segregated units in the military; after the war, they sought—and were denied—equal opportunities in the country for which they had risked their lives.

African Americans began to demand sweeping societal changes in the 1950s. Initially, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement used *civil disobedience*—nonviolent action seeking to change a policy or law by refusing to comply with it—to call attention to racial inequality and to demand greater inclusion of African Americans in all areas of public life. Subsequently, leaders of the Black Power movement, including Malcolm X

and Marcus Garvey, advocated black pride and racial awareness among African Americans. Gradually, racial segregation was outlawed by the courts and the federal government. For example, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 sought to do away with discrimination in education, housing, employment, and health care. Affirmative action programs were instituted in both public-sector and private-sector organizations in an effort to bring about greater opportunities for African Americans and other previously excluded groups. *Affirmative action* refers to policies or procedures that are intended to promote equal opportunity for categories of people deemed to have been previously excluded from equality in education, employment, and other fields on the basis of characteristics such as race or ethnicity. Critics of affirmative action often assert that these policies amount to *reverse discrimination*—a person who is better qualified being denied a position because another person received preferential treatment as a result of affirmative action.

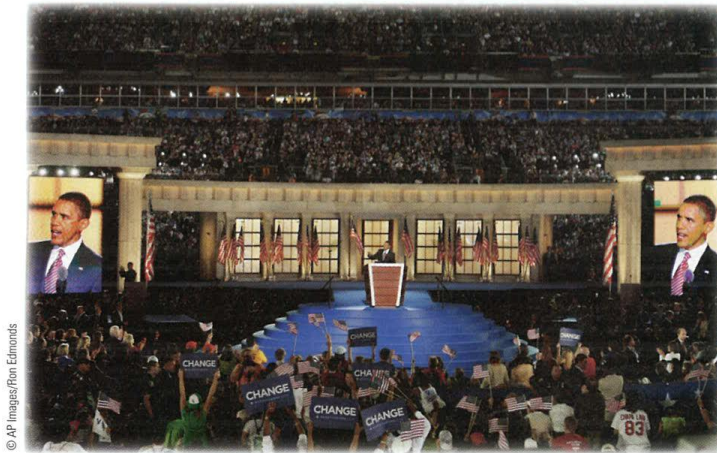
**African Americans Today** African Americans make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population. Some are descendants of families that have been in this country for many generations; others are recent immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean. Black Haitians make up the largest group of recent Caribbean immigrants; others come from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Recent African immigrants are primarily from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya. They have been simultaneously “pushed” out of their countries of origin by severe economic and political turmoil and “pulled” by perceived opportunities for a better life in the United States. Recent immigrants are often victimized by the same racism that has plagued African Americans as a people for centuries.

Since the 1960s, many African Americans have made significant gains in politics, education, employment, and income. Between 1964 and 1999, the number of African Americans elected to political office increased from about 100 to almost 9,000 nationwide (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2000). African Americans won mayoral elections in many major cities that have large African American populations, such as Atlanta, Houston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Washington,

• **U.S. Census** There were 2.3 million black college students in the fall of 2005. This was an increase of roughly 1 million from 15 years earlier.

• **Recent Events** “The U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2007 decision to strike down integration plans in two public school districts was based on a simple premise: discrimination is discrimination. The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race,” Chief Justice John Roberts declared,

“is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.” In the wake of that ruling, large, ethnically diverse districts are now finding themselves in uncharted waters. Though prohibited from using race-conscious measures to integrate their schools, districts also must ensure academic success for all students—regardless of skin color or neighborhoods in which they live” (*Chicago Daily Herald*, 9/08).



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In August 2008, Barack Obama made history by becoming the first African American to receive the presidential nomination of a major political party, and on Election Day was voted to become the first African American president of the United States.

D.C. Despite these political gains, African Americans still represent less than 3 percent of all elected officials in the United States.

Some African Americans have made impressive occupational gains and joined the ranks of professionals in the upper middle class. Others have achieved great wealth and fame as entertainers, professional athletes, and entrepreneurs. African Americans head three of the “Fortune 500” list of the nation’s largest companies (Daniels, 2002). However, even those who make millions of dollars a year and live in affluent neighborhoods are not always exempt from racial prejudice and discrimination. And although some African Americans have made substantial occupational and educational gains, many more have not. The African American unemployment rate remains twice as high as that of whites.

**African Americans and Sports** In recent decades, many African Americans have seen sports as a possible source of upward mobility because other means have been unavailable. However, their achievements in sports have often been attributed to “natural ability” and not determination and hard work. Sociologists have rejected such biological explanations for African Americans’ success in sports and have focused instead on explanations rooted in the structure of society.

During the slavery era, a few African Americans gained better treatment and, occasionally, freedom by winning boxing matches on which their owners had bet large sums of money (McPherson, Curtis, and Loy, 1989). After emancipation, some African Americans found jobs in horse racing and baseball. For example, fourteen of the fifteen jockeys in the first Kentucky Derby (in 1875) were African Americans. A number of African Americans played on baseball teams; a few played in the Major Leagues until the Jim Crow laws forced them out. Then they formed their own “Negro” baseball and basketball leagues (Peterson, 1992/1970).

Since Jackie Robinson broke baseball’s “color line” in 1947, many African American athletes have played collegiate and professional sports. Even now, however, persistent class inequalities between whites and African Americans are reflected in the fact that, until recently, African Americans have primarily excelled in sports (such as basketball or football) that do not require much expensive equipment and specialized facilities in order to develop athletic skills (Coakley, 2004). According to one sports analyst, African Americans typically participate in certain sports and not others because of the *sports opportunity structure*—the availability of facilities, coaching, and competition in the schools and community recreation programs in their area (Phillips, 1993).

• **Research** “The NFL has kept a steady number of black head coaches, while slightly increasing the ranks of Asian and Latino players, earning a B+ in an annual diversity study. However, the league didn’t get a grade for gender diversity for the fourth year in a row. The NFL is the only pro sports organization that refuses to share its league office data with University of Central Florida’s Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports, which also conducts annual

studies on the NBA, Major League Baseball, WNBA, pro soccer and college athletics” (Associated Press, 8/08).

• **For Discussion** In what ways might participation in interracial sports teams promote intergroup cohesion? How might it reduce/increase prejudice?





As more African Americans have made gains in education and employment, many of them have also made a conscious effort to increase awareness of African culture and to develop a sense of unity, cooperation, and self-determination. The seven-day celebration of Kwanzaa in late December and early January exemplifies this desire to maintain a distinct cultural identity.

Regardless of the sport in which they participate, African American men athletes continue to experience inequalities in assignment of playing positions, rewards and authority structures, and management and ownership opportunities in professional sports (Eitzen and Sage, 1997). For example, at the time of this writing, only 7 of the 32 National Football League head coaches and only 7 of the 119 Division I-A head coaches in college football were African Americans (Gary, 2007). Today, African Americans remain significantly underrepresented in other sports, including hockey, skiing, figure skating, golf, volleyball, softball, swimming, gymnastics, sailing, soccer, bowling, cycling, and tennis (Coakley, 2004).

### White Ethnic Americans

The American Dream initially brought many white ethnics to the United States. The term *white ethnic Americans* is applied to a wide diversity of immigrants who trace their origins to Ireland and to Eastern and Southern European countries such as Poland, Italy, Greece, Germany, Yugoslavia, and Russia and other former Soviet republics. Unlike the WASPs, who immigrated primarily from Northern Europe and assumed a dominant cultural posi-

tion in society, white ethnic Americans arrived late in the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century to find relatively high levels of prejudice and discrimination directed at them by nativist organizations that hoped to curb the entry of non-WASP European immigrants. Because many of the people in white ethnic American categories were not Protestant, they experienced discrimination because they were Catholic, Jewish, or members of other religious bodies, such as the Eastern Orthodox churches (Farley, 2000).

**Discrimination Against White Ethnics** Many white ethnic immigrants entered the United States between 1830 and 1924. Irish Catholics were among the first to arrive, with more than four million Irish fleeing the potato famine and economic crisis in Ireland and seeking jobs in the United States (Feagin and Feagin, 2003). When they arrived, they found that British Americans controlled the major institutions of society. The next arrivals were Italians who had been recruited for low-wage industrial and construction jobs. British Americans viewed Irish and Italian immigrants as “foreigners”: The Irish were stereotyped as ape-like, filthy, bad-tempered, and heavy drinkers; the Italians were depicted as lawless, knife-wielding thugs looking for a fight, “dagos,” and “wops” (short for “without papers”) (Feagin and Feagin, 2003).

Both Irish Americans and Italian Americans were subjected to institutionalized discrimination in employment. Employment ads read “Help Wanted—No Irish Need Apply” and listed daily wages at \$1.30–\$1.50 for “whites” and \$1.15–\$1.25 for “Italians” (Gambino, 1975: 77). In spite of discrimination, white ethnics worked hard to establish themselves in the United States, often establishing mutual self-help organizations and becoming politically active (Mangione and Morreale, 1992).

Between 1880 and 1920, over two million Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States and settled in the Northeast. Jewish Americans differ from other white ethnic groups in that some focus their identity primarily on their religion whereas others define their Jewishness in terms of ethnic group membership (Feagin and Feagin, 2003). In any case, Jews continued to be the victims of *anti-Semitism*—prejudice, hostile attitudes, and discriminatory behavior targeted at Jews. For example, signs in hotels

• **Writing Assignment** Ask students to write a brief essay on the topic of race, class, and sports. Have them tackle this question: In what ways do major league sports reflect the values of U.S. culture?

• **Writing Assignment** For extra credit, ask students to research the kinds of discrimination that white ethnics have experienced in the past (in your state?). Are members of some white ethnic groups still subjected to prejudice and discrimination today?

read “No Jews Allowed,” and some “help wanted” ads stated “Christians Only” (Levine, 1992: 55). In spite of persistent discrimination, Jewish Americans achieved substantial success in many areas, including business, education, the arts and sciences, law, and medicine.

**White Ethnics and Sports** Sports provided a pathway to assimilation for many white ethnics. The earliest collegiate football players who were not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants were of Irish, Italian, and Jewish ancestry. Sports participation provided educational opportunities that some white ethnics would not have had otherwise.

Boxing became a way to make a living for white ethnics who did not participate in collegiate sports. Boxing promoters encouraged ethnic rivalries to increase their profits, pitting Italians against Irish or Jews, and whites against African Americans (Levine, 1992; Mangione and Morreale, 1992). Eventually, Italian Americans graduated from boxing into baseball and football. Jewish Americans found that sports lessened the shock of assimilation and gave them an opportunity to refute stereotypes about their physical weaknesses and counter anti-Semitic charges that they were “unfit to become Americans” (Levine, 1992: 272).

Today, assimilation is so complete that little attention is paid to the origins of white ethnic athletes. As former Pittsburgh Steeler running back Franco Harris stated, “I didn’t know I was part Italian until I became famous” (qtd. in Mangione and Morreale, 1992: 384).

## Asian Americans

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term *Asian Americans* to designate the many diverse groups with roots in Asia. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were among the earliest Asian Americans. Many Filipinos, Asian Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Pakistani, and Indonesians have arrived more recently. Today, Asian Americans belong to the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States.

**Chinese Americans** The initial wave of Chinese immigration occurred between 1850 and 1880, when more than 200,000 Chinese men were

“pushed” from China by harsh economic conditions and “pulled” to the United States by the promise of gold in California and employment opportunities in the construction of transcontinental railroads. Far fewer Chinese women immigrated; however, many of them were brought to the United States against their will and forced into prostitution, where they were treated like slaves (Takaki, 1993).

Chinese Americans were subjected to extreme prejudice and stereotyped as “coolies,” “heathens,” and “Chinks.” Some Asian immigrants were attacked and even lynched by working-class whites who feared that they were losing their jobs to the immigrants. Passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 brought Chinese immigration to a halt. The Exclusion Act was not repealed until World War II, when Chinese Americans who were contributing to the war effort by working in defense plants pushed for its repeal (Takaki, 1993). After immigration laws were further relaxed in the 1960s, the second and largest wave of Chinese immigration occurred, with immigrants coming primarily from Hong Kong and Taiwan. These recent immigrants have had more education and workplace skills than earlier arrivals,



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Historically, Chinatowns in major U.S. cities have provided a safe haven and an economic enclave for many Asian immigrants. Some contemporary Chinese Americans reside in these neighborhoods, whereas others visit to celebrate cultural diversity and ethnic pride.

• **Popular Culture** “The bridge of their Enterprise, however, may now have a Klingon on board as the symbol of galactic coexistence, but at least a third of the population of our world and certainly the twenty-fourth century was absent. There were no Asians on their bridge” (George Takei [Mr. Sulu], writing about the TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*).

• **Active Learning** Ask students to take a look at their favorite television programs and find Asian characters. How are these characters presented? Create a chart to record those presented in a positive role or negatively, stereotypically, etc.



and they brought families and capital with them to pursue the American Dream (Chen, 1992).

Today, many Chinese Americans live in large urban enclaves in California, New York, Hawaii, Illinois, and Texas. As a group, they have enjoyed considerable upward mobility. Some own laundries, restaurants, and other businesses; others have professional careers (Chen, 1992). However, many Chinese Americans, particularly recent immigrants, remain in the lower tier of the working class—providing low-wage labor in garment and knitting factories and Chinese restaurants.

**Japanese Americans** Most of the early Japanese immigrants were men who worked on sugar plantations in the Hawaiian Islands in the 1860s. Like Chinese immigrants, the Japanese American workers were viewed as a threat by white workers, and immigration of Japanese men was curbed in 1908. However, Japanese women were permitted to enter the United States for several years thereafter because of the shortage of women on the West Coast. Although some Japanese women married white men, this practice was stopped by laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

With the exception of the enslavement of African Americans, Japanese Americans experienced one of the most vicious forms of discrimination ever sanctioned by U.S. laws. During World War II, when the United States was at war with Japan, nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps, where they remained for more than two years despite the total lack of evidence that they posed a security threat to this country (Takaki, 1993). This action was a direct violation of the citizenship rights of many *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese Americans), who were born in the United States (see Daniels, 1993). Ironically, only Japanese Americans were singled out for such harsh treatment; German Americans avoided this fate even though the United States was also at war with Germany. Four decades later, the U.S. government issued an apology for its actions and eventually paid \$20,000 each to some of those who had been placed in internment camps (Daniels, 1993; Takaki, 1993).

Since World War II, many Japanese Americans have been very successful. The median income of Japanese Americans is more than 30 percent

above the national average. However, most Japanese Americans (and other Asian Americans) live in states that not only have higher incomes but also higher costs of living than the national average. In addition, many Asian American families have more persons in the paid labor force than do other families (Takaki, 1993).

**Korean Americans** The first wave of Korean immigrants were male workers who arrived in Hawaii between 1903 and 1910. The second wave came to the U.S. mainland following the Korean War in 1954 and was made up primarily of the wives of servicemen and Korean children who had lost their parents in the war. The third wave arrived after the Immigration Act of 1965 permitted well-educated professionals to migrate to the United States. Korean Americans have helped one another open small businesses by pooling money through the *kye*—an association that grants members money on a rotating basis to gain access to more capital.

Today, many Korean Americans live in California and New York, where there is a concentration of Korean-owned grocery stores, businesses, and churches. Unlike earlier Korean immigrants, more-recent arrivals have come as settlers and have brought their families with them. However, their experiences with other subordinate racial and ethnic groups have not always been harmonious. Ongoing discord has existed between African Americans and Korean Americans in New York and among African Americans, Latinos, and Korean Americans in California.

**Filipino Americans** Today, Filipino Americans constitute the second largest category of Asian Americans, with over a million population in the United States. To understand the status of Filipino Americans, it is important to look at the complex relationship between the Philippine Islands and the United States government. After Spain lost the Spanish-American War, the United States established colonial rule over the islands, a rule that lasted from 1898 to 1946. Despite control by the United States, Filipinos were not granted U.S. citizenship, but male Filipinos were allowed to migrate to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland to work in agriculture and in fish canneries in Seattle and Alaska. Like other Asian Americans, Filipino

• **Historical Perspective** “In 2000, the Census Bureau acknowledged and apologized for its role in sharing aggregate data with the U.S. military to help relocate Japanese Americans from the West Coast to inland camps after Japan’s 1941 Pearl Harbor attack” (*Los Angeles Times*, 3/07).

• **Media Coverage** “When it comes to the Blackhawk Country Club each fall, the Ladies Professional Golf Association attracts Korean-

American fans thrilled to see the league’s South Korean women golf stars in action. But that relationship was chilled by an LPGA policy imposed this week that has many fans upset. By the end of next year, says the 58-year-old women’s golf organization, those international golf stars must speak English well or face suspension” (*Mercury News* [Silicon Valley, California], 8/08).

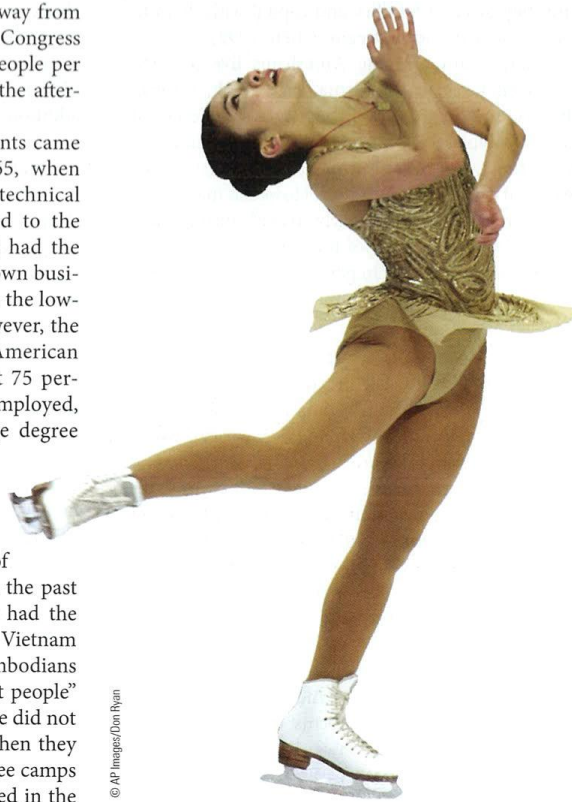
Americans were accused of taking jobs away from white workers and suppressing wages, and Congress restricted Filipino immigration to fifty people per year between the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II.

The second wave of Filipino immigrants came following the Immigration Act of 1965, when large numbers of physicians, nurses, technical workers, and other professionals moved to the U.S. mainland. Most Filipinos have not had the start-up capital necessary to open their own businesses, and many have been employed in the low-wage sector of the service economy. However, the average household income of Filipino American families is relatively high because about 75 percent of Filipino American women are employed, and nearly half have a four-year college degree (Espiritu, 1995).

**Indochinese Americans** Indochinese Americans include people from Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, most of whom have come to the United States in the past three decades. Vietnamese refugees who had the resources to flee at the beginning of the Vietnam War were the first to arrive. Next came Cambodians and lowland Laotians, referred to as “boat people” by the media. Many who tried to immigrate did not survive at sea; others were turned back when they reached this country or were kept in refugee camps for long periods of time. When they arrived in the United States, inflation was high, the country was in a recession, and many native-born citizens feared that they would lose their jobs to these new refugees, who were willing to work very hard for low wages.

Today, many Indochinese Americans are foreign born; about half live in the western states, especially California. Even though most Indochinese immigrants spoke no English when they arrived in this country, some of their children have done very well in school and have been stereotyped as “brains.”

**Asian Americans and Sports** Until recently, Asian Americans received little recognition in sports. However, as women’s athletic events, including ice skating and gymnastics, have garnered more



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Increasing numbers of Asian Americans are distinguishing themselves in college and professional athletics. Champion figure skater Michelle Kwan is one of the best-known recent Asian American sports heroes.

media coverage, names of persons such as Kristi Yamaguchi, Michelle Kwan, and Amy Chow have become widely known and often idolized by fans. As one sports analyst stated, “[These athletes] are of Asian descent, but more importantly they are Asian Americans whose actions reflect upon the United States. . . . As role models, particularly for the Asian-American community, they exemplify success, integrity, discipline and a dedicated work ethic” (Shum, 1997).

• **Popular Culture** “... Filipino singer Arnel Pineda (pronounced ‘pin-eh-da’) posted footage of himself performing Journey covers with his band the Zoo and was discovered half a world away by Journey guitarist Neal Schon, who was trolling [YouTube] for new blood. Schon got in touch with Pineda (and convinced the vocalist he wasn’t pulling a prank on him) and voila: Pineda has been named the band’s latest frontman” (*Rolling Stone*, 12/07).

• **Popular Culture** “Tiger Woods was asked if it bothered him to be called an African-American. ‘It does,’ he said. ‘Growing up, I came up with this name: I’m a “Cablinasian.” As in Caucasian-black-Indian-Asian.’ Did Tiger Woods’ refusal to be racially pigeonholed signal the beginning of the end for racial identity politics?” (Gary Kamiya, *Salon.com*).



## Latinos/as (Hispanic Americans)

The terms *Latino* (for males), *Latina* (for females), and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably to refer to people who trace their origins to Spanish-speaking Latin America and the Iberian peninsula. However, as racial-ethnic scholars have pointed out, the label *Hispanic* was first used by the U.S. government to designate people of Latin American and Spanish descent living in the United States, and it has not been fully accepted as a source of identity by the more than 42 million Latinos/as who live in the United States today (Oboler, 1995; Romero, 1997). Instead, many of the people who trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries think of themselves as Mexican Americans, Chicanos/as, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, Argentines, Hondurans, Dominicans, or members of other categories. Many also think of themselves as having a combination of Spanish, African, and Native American ancestry.

**Mexican Americans or Chicanos/as** Mexican Americans—including both native- and foreign-born people of Mexican origin—are the largest segment (approximately two-thirds) of the Latino/a population in the United States. Most Mexican Americans live in the southwestern region of the United States, although more have moved throughout the United States in recent years.

Immigration from Mexico is the primary vehicle by which the Mexican American population grew in this country. Initially, Mexican-origin workers came to work in agriculture, where they were viewed as a readily available cheap and seasonal labor force. Many initially entered the United States as undocumented workers (“illegal aliens”); however, they were more vulnerable to deportation than other illegal immigrants because of their visibility and the proximity of their country of origin. For more than a century, there has been a “revolving door” between the United States and Mexico that has been open when workers were needed and closed during periods of economic recession and high rates of U.S. unemployment.

Mexican Americans have long been seen as a source of cheap labor, while—ironically—at the same time, they have been stereotyped as lazy and

unwilling to work. As has been true of other groups, when white workers viewed Mexican Americans as a threat to their jobs, they demanded that the “illegal aliens” be sent back to Mexico. Consequently, U.S. citizens who happen to be Mexican American have been asked for proof of their citizenship, especially when anti-immigration sentiments are running high. Many Mexican American families have lived in the United States for four or five generations—they have fought in wars, made educational and political gains, and consider themselves to be solid U.S. citizens. Thus, it is a great source of frustration for them to be viewed as illegal immigrants or to be asked “How long have you been in this country?”

**Puerto Ricans** When Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States in 1917, Puerto Ricans acquired U.S. citizenship and the right to move freely to and from the mainland. In the 1950s, many migrated to the mainland when the Puerto Rican sugar industry collapsed, settling primarily in New York and New Jersey. Although living conditions have improved substantially for some Puerto Ricans, life has been difficult for the many living in poverty in Spanish Harlem and other barrios. Nevertheless, in recent years Puerto Ricans have made dramatic advances in education, the arts, and politics. Increasing numbers have become lawyers, physicians, and college professors (see Rodriguez, 1989).

**Cuban Americans** Cuban Americans live primarily in the Southeast, especially Florida. As a group, they have fared somewhat better than other Latinos/as because many Cuban immigrants were affluent professionals and businesspeople who fled Cuba after Fidel Castro’s 1959 Marxist revolution. This early wave of Cuban immigrants has median incomes well above those of other Latinos/as; however, this group is still below the national average. The second wave of Cuban Americans, arriving in the 1970s, has fared worse. Many had been released from prisons and mental hospitals in Cuba, and their arrival fueled an upsurge in prejudice against all Cuban Americans. The more recent arrivals have developed their own ethnic and economic enclaves in Miami’s Little Havana, and many of the earlier immigrants have become mainstream professionals and entrepreneurs.

• **Historical Perspective** “There can be no fifty-fifty Americanism in this country. There is room here for only 100 percent Americanism, only for those who are Americans and nothing else” (Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. President from 1901 to 1909). “We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams” (Jimmy Carter, U.S. president from 1976 to 1980). What do you think each president’s main concerns were?

• **Recent Events** Outline for students the current debate on immigration. Outline the human rights concerns, the business needs for cheap labor, the fears about an unsecured border, and our historic dependence upon Mexico and Latin America for cheap labor.

• **Research** “The income gap between the U.S. and Mexico is the widest of any two contiguous countries in the world” (*Newsweek*).

© AP Images/Kathy Willens



Pedro Martinez of the New York Mets is one of the most visible Latino athletes. Latino and Latina sports figures have gained prominence in a wide variety of sports, including boxing, baseball, golf, and tennis.

**Latinos/as and Sports** For most of the twentieth century, Latinos have played Major League Baseball. Originally, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Venezuelans were selected for their light skin as well as for their skill as players (Hoose, 1989). Today, Latinos represent more than 20 percent of all major leaguers. If not for a 1974 U.S. Labor Department quota limiting how many foreign-born players can play professional baseball, this number might be even larger (Hoose, 1989).

Education is a crucial issue for Latinos/as. Because of past discrimination and unequal educational opportunities, many Latinos/as currently have low levels of educational attainment. Many are unable to attend college or participate in collegiate sports, which is essential for being drafted in professional sports other than baseball. Consequently, the overall number of Latinas/os in college and professional sports is low compared to the rest of the U.S. population who are in this age bracket.

### Middle Eastern Americans

Since 1970, many immigrants have arrived in the United States from countries located in the “Middle East,” which is the geographic region from Afghani-

stan to Libya and includes Arabia, Cyprus, and Asiatic Turkey. Placing people in the “Middle Eastern” American category is somewhat like placing wide diversities of people in the categories of Asian American or Latino/a; some U.S. residents trace their origins to countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE (United Arab Emirates), and Yemen. Middle Eastern Americans speak a variety of languages and have diverse religious backgrounds: Some are Muslim, some are Coptic Christian, and others are Melkite Catholic. Although some are from working-class families, Lebanese Americans, Syrian Americans, Iranian Americans, and Kuwaiti Ameri-

cans primarily come from middle- and upper-income family backgrounds. For example, numerous Iranian Americans are scientists, professionals, and entrepreneurs.

In cities across the United States, Muslims have established social, economic, and ethnic enclaves. On the Internet, they have created websites that provide information about Islamic centers, schools, and lists of businesses and services run by those who adhere to Islam, one of the fastest-growing religions in this country. In cities such as Seattle, incorporation into the economic mainstream has been relatively easy for Palestinian immigrants who left their homeland in the 1980s. Some have found well-paid employment with corporations such as Microsoft because they bring educational skills and talents to the information-based economy, including the ability to translate software into Arabic for Middle Eastern markets (Ramirez, 1999). In the United States, Islamic schools and centers often bring together people from a diversity of countries such as Egypt and Pakistan. Many Muslim leaders and parents focus on how to raise children to be good Muslims and good U.S. citizens. However, recent immigrants continue to be torn between establishing roots in the

• **Media Coverage** “Construction begins on the \$57 million San Diego border fence. At a cost of about \$16 million a mile, the fence will be far more expensive than fences the U.S. government is building elsewhere along the nation’s 1,952-mile border with Mexico. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the average cost along the entire border is \$2 million to \$3 million a mile” (Associated Press, 8/08).

• **Active Learning** Take your class online to the Immigration and Naturalization Service web page for an in-class exploration. Make it an individual or group assignment by designing a series of questions to guide their exploration: [www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm](http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm).



United States and the continuing divisions and strife that exist in their homelands. Some Middle Eastern Americans experience prejudice and discrimination based on their speech patterns, appearance (such as the *hijabs*, or “head-to-toe covering” that leaves only the face exposed, which many girls and women wear), or the assumption that “all Middle Easterners” are somehow associated with terrorism.

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by terrorists whose origins were traced to the Middle East, hate crimes and other forms of discrimination against people who were assumed to be Arabs, Arab Americans, or Muslims escalated in this country. With the passage of the U.S. Patriot Act—a law giving the federal government greater

authority to engage in searches and surveillance with less judicial review than previously—in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, many Arab Americans have expressed concern that this new law could be used to target people who appear to be of Middle Eastern origins.

**Middle Eastern Americans and Sports** Although more Islamic schools are beginning to focus on sports, particularly for teenage boys, there has been less emphasis on competitive athletics among many Middle Eastern Americans. Based on popular sporting events in their countries of origin, some Middle Eastern Americans play golf or soccer. As well, some Iranian Americans follow the soccer careers of professional players from Iran who now play for German, Austrian, Belgian, and Greek clubs. Keeping up with global sporting events is easy with all-sports television cable channels and websites that provide up-to-the-minute information about players and competitions. Over time, there will probably be greater participation by Middle Eastern American males in competitions such as soccer and golf; however, girls and women in Muslim families are typically not allowed to engage in athletic activities. Although little research has been done on this issue in the United States, one study of Islamic countries in the Middle East found that female athletes face strong cultural opposition to their sports participation (Dupre and Gains, 1997).



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Muslims in the United States who wear traditional attire may face prejudice and/or discrimination as they go about their daily lives.

## Global Racial and Ethnic Inequality in the Future

Throughout the world, many racial and ethnic groups seek *self-determination*—the right to choose their own way of life. As many nations are currently structured, however, self-determination is impossible.

## Worldwide Racial and Ethnic Struggles

The cost of self-determination is the loss of life and property in ethnic warfare. In recent years, the Cold War has given way to dozens of smaller wars over ethnic dominance. In Europe, for example, ethnic

• **Recent Events** Describe for students the various categories of discrimination that many Middle Eastern Americans are currently experiencing in a post-9/11 world: media, religious, criminal justice, economic, and social.

• **Research** Although the INS has very serious shortcomings, it is not primarily responsible for this situation (115,000 people from Middle Eastern countries live in the United States illegally). Instead, the problem lies with Congress and successive administrations. All have failed to provide the money or political support the INS needs to enforce the ban on hiring illegals and to track down those who overstay their visas.

### Box 9.3 You Can Make a Difference



#### Working for Racial Harmony

Suppose that you are talking with several friends about a series of racist incidents at your college. Having studied the sociological imagination, you decide to launch an organization similar to No Time to Hate, which was started at Emory University several years ago to reduce racism on campus. In analyzing racism, your group identifies factors contributing to the problem: (1) divisiveness between different cultural and ethnic communities, (2) persistent lack of trust, (3) the fact that many people never really communicate with one another, (4) the need to bring different voices into the curriculum and college life generally, and (5) the need to learn respect for people from different backgrounds (Loeb, 1994). Your group also develops a set of questions to be answered regarding racism on campus:

- *Encouraging inclusion and acceptance.* Do members of our group reflect the college's racial and ethnic diversity? How much do I know about other people's history and culture? How can I become more tolerant—or accepting—of people who are different from me?
- *Raising consciousness.* What is racism? What causes it? Can people participate in racist language and behavior without realizing what they are doing? What is our college or university doing to reduce racism?
- *Becoming more self-aware.* How much do I know about my own family roots and ethnic background? How do

the families and communities in which we grow up affect our perceptions of racial and ethnic relations?

- *Using available resources.* What resources are available for learning more about working to reduce racism? Here are some agencies to contact:
  - ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), 125 Broad Street, 18th floor, New York, NY 10094. Online: <http://www.aclu.org>
  - ADL (Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith), 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. Online: <http://www.adl.org>
  - NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215. Online: <http://www.naacp.org>
  - National Council of La Raza, 1111 19th, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036. Online: <http://www.nclr.org>

What additional items would you add to the list of problem areas on your campus? How might your group's objective be reached? Over time, many colleges and universities have been changed as a result of involvement by students like you!

violence has persisted in Yugoslavia, Spain, Britain (between the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland), Romania, Russia, Moldova, and Georgia. Ethnic violence continues in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Hundreds of thousands have died from warfare, disease, and refugee migration.

Ethnic wars have a high price even for survivors, whose life chances can become bleaker even after the violence subsides. In ethnic conflict between Abkhazians and Georgians in the former Soviet Union, for example, as many as two thousand people have been killed and more than eighty thousand dis-

placed. Ethnic hatred also devastated the province of Kosovo, which is located in Serbia, and brought about the deaths of thousands of ethnic Albanians (Bennahum, 1999).

In the twenty-first century, the struggle between the Israeli government and various Palestinian factions over the future and borders of Palestine continues to make headlines. Discord in this region has heightened tensions among people not only in Israel and Palestine but also in the United States and around the world as deadly clashes continue and political leaders are apparently unable to reach a lasting solution to the decades-long strife.

• **Extra Examples** Breakdown of Iraq's ethnic populations: 60 percent Shiite, 20 percent Sunni, 17 percent Kurd, 3 percent other.

• **Writing Assignment** Your students can use the *You Can Make a Difference* box to start a public information project to help people in your circle of influence become more knowledgeable about different racial and ethnic groups at your school.



## Growing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States

Racial and ethnic diversity is increasing in the United States. African Americans, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and Native Americans constitute one-fourth of the U.S. population, whereas whites are a shrinking percentage of the population. Today, white Americans make up 70 percent of the population, in contrast to 80 percent in 1980. It is predicted that by 2056, the roots of the average U.S. resident will be in Africa, Asia, Hispanic countries, the Pacific islands, and the Middle East—not white Europe.

What effect will these changes have on racial and ethnic relations? Several possibilities exist. On the one hand, conflicts may become more overt and confrontational as people continue to use *sincere fictions*—personal beliefs that reflect larger societal mythologies, such as “I am not a racist” or “I have never discriminated against anyone”—even when these are inaccurate perceptions (Feagin and Vera, 1995). Interethnic tensions may increase as competition for education, jobs, and other resources continues to grow.

On the other hand, there is reason for cautious optimism. Throughout U.S. history, members of diverse racial and ethnic groups have struggled to

gain the freedom and rights that were previously withheld from them. Today, minority grassroots organizations are pressing for affordable housing, job training, and educational opportunities. As discussed in Box 9.3, movements composed of both whites and people of color continue to oppose racism in everyday life, to seek to heal divisions among racial groups, and to teach children about racial tolerance. Many groups hope not only to affect their own microcosm but also to contribute to worldwide efforts to end racism.

To eliminate racial discrimination, it will be necessary to equalize opportunities in schools and workplaces. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 158) have emphasized,

Today more than ever, opposing racism requires that we notice race, not ignore it, that we afford it the recognition it deserves and the subtlety it embodies. By noticing race we can begin to challenge racism, with its ever-more-absurd reduction of human experience to an essence attributed to all without regard for historical or social context. . . . By noticing race we can develop the political insight and mobilization necessary to make the U.S. a more racially just and egalitarian society.

## Chapter Review

### • How do race and ethnicity differ?

A race is a category of people who have been singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, or eye shape. An ethnic group is a collection of people distinguished primarily by cultural or national characteristics, including unique cultural traits, a sense of community, a feeling of ethnocentrism, ascribed membership, and territoriality.

### • What are dominant and subordinate groups?

A dominant group is an advantaged group that has superior resources and rights in society. A sub-

ordinate group is a disadvantaged group whose members are subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group. Use of the terms *dominant* and *subordinate* reflects the importance of power in relationships.

### • How is prejudice related to discrimination?

Prejudice is a negative attitude often based on stereotypes, which are overgeneralizations about the appearance, behavior, or other characteristics of all members of a group. Discrimination involves actions or practices of dominant-group members that have a harmful effect on members of a subordinate group.



● **What are the major psychological explanations of prejudice?**

According to the frustration-aggression hypothesis of prejudice, people frustrated in their efforts to achieve a highly desired goal may respond with aggression toward others, who then become scapegoats. Another theory of prejudice focuses on the authoritarian personality, marked by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, superstition, and rigid thinking.

● **How do individual discrimination and institutional discrimination differ?**

Individual discrimination involves actions by individual members of the dominant group that harm members of subordinate groups or their property. Institutional discrimination involves day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful effect on members of subordinate groups.

● **How do sociologists view racial and ethnic group relations?**

Symbolic interactionists suggest that increased contact between people from divergent groups should lead to favorable attitudes and behavior when members of each group (1) have equal status, (2) pursue the same goals, (3) cooperate with one another to achieve goals, and (4) receive positive feedback when they interact with one another. Functionalists stress that members of subordinate groups become a part of the mainstream through assimilation, the process by which members of subordinate groups become absorbed into the dominant culture. Conflict theorists focus on economic stratification and access to power in race and ethnic relations. The caste perspective views inequality as a permanent feature of society, whereas class perspectives focus on the link between capitalism and racial exploitation. According to racial formation theory, the actions of the U.S. government substantially define racial and ethnic relations.

● **How have the experiences of various racial-ethnic groups differed in the United States?**

Native Americans suffered greatly from the actions of European settlers, who seized their lands and

made them victims of forced migration and genocide. Today, they lead lives characterized by poverty and lack of opportunity. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants are the most privileged group in the United States, although social class and gender affect their life chances. White ethnic Americans, whose ancestors migrated from southern and eastern European countries, have gradually made their way into the mainstream of U.S. society. Following the abolishment of slavery in 1863, African Americans were still subjected to segregation, discrimination, and lynchings. Despite civil rights legislation and economic and political gains by many African Americans, racial prejudice and discrimination continue to exist. Asian American immigrants as a group have enjoyed considerable upward mobility in U.S. society in recent decades, but many Asian Americans still struggle to survive by working at low-paying jobs and living in urban ethnic enclaves. Although some Latinos/as have made substantial political, economic, and professional gains in U.S. society, as a group they are nevertheless subjected to anti-immigration sentiments. Middle Eastern immigrants to the United States speak a variety of languages and have diverse religious backgrounds. Because they generally come from middle-class backgrounds, they have made inroads into mainstream U.S. society.



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