



Chapter 9: Racial and Ethnic Relations

Case Study: A Class Divided

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Case Study: A Class Divided

In 1968 third-grade teacher Jane Elliot divided her students into groups of brown-eyed and blue-eyed children. She told the class that the brown-eyed children were superior to the blue-eyed children, and that they would receive special treatment. The two groups of children internalized these rules, and the blue-eyed children appeared to be miserable and defeated. This experiment was one way to help children understand the effects of discrimination.

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Racial and Ethnic Relations



In 1953 teacher Jane Elliott devised an exercise to teach her class what it feels like to be discriminated against.

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Section 1 at a Glance

Race, Ethnicity, and the Social Structure

- Like other scientists and social scientists, sociologists reject the idea that races are biologically distinct.
- Ethnicity is a social category based on a set of cultural characteristics, not physical traits.
- Sociologists acknowledge that a society's dominant groups enjoy a position of power and privilege in comparison to minority groups, or groups who are singled out and treated unequally.

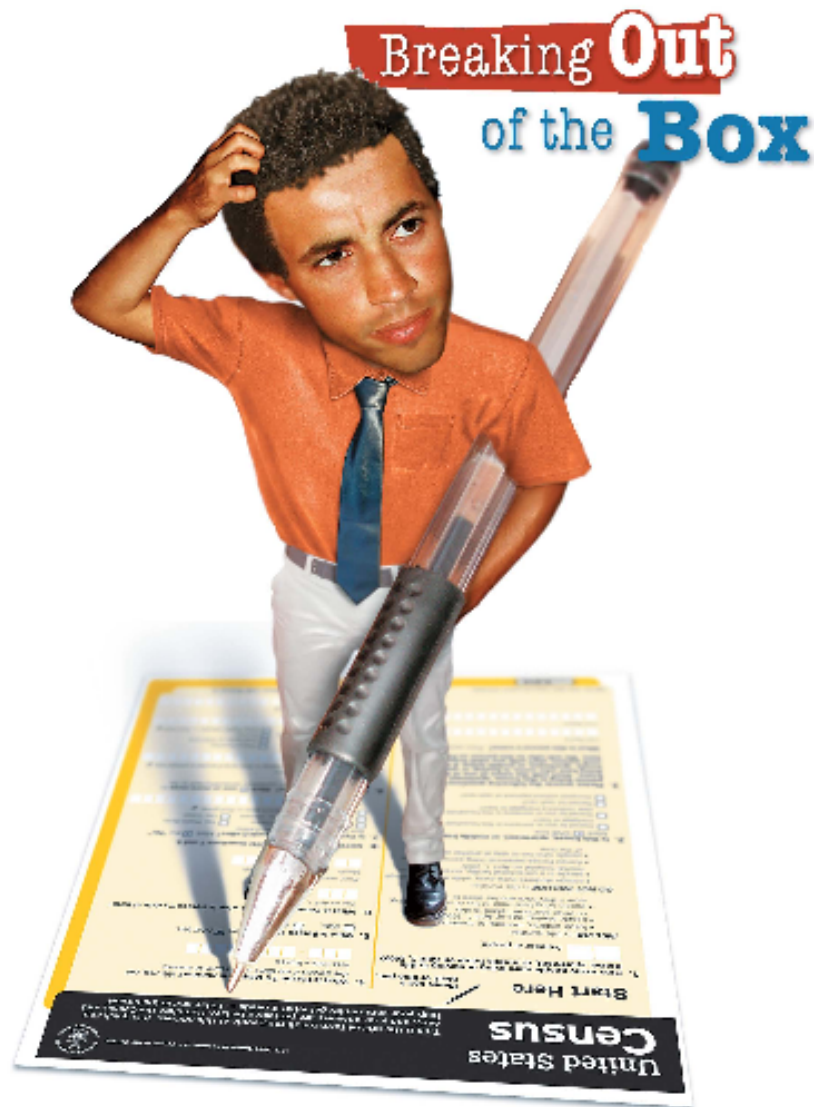
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SOCIOLOGY CLOSE UP



Is race in the eye of the beholder?

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Race as Myth and Reality

Race as a Myth

- Many people think that humankind can be sorted into biologically distinct groups called **races**. This idea suggests that there are “pure” examples of different races and that any person can belong to only one race.
- Biologists, geneticists, and social scientists reject this view of race.
- All people belong to the human species.
- There are greater differences within racial groups than between racial groups.

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Race as Myth and Reality

Race as a Reality

- Racial differences become important because people believe them to be.
- In sociological terms, “race” is a category of people who share observable physical characteristics and whom others see as being a distinct group.

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Imagining a Multiracial Nation



This cover of a 1993 special edition of *Time* magazine featured a computer-generated image of a woman's face to represent what a multiracial United States might look like. *Time*'s "New Eve" blended features from six different racial and ethnic groups.

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Quick Lab

Race and the U.S. Census

What can U.S. Census classifications tell us about changing views of race in the United States?

PROCEDURE

1. Conduct library or Internet research to find the racial classifications used in the U.S. Census across time. Use one census from the 1920s, one from the 1960s, as well as the classifications used in the 2000 census.
2. Create a three-column table comparing the racial categories from each census form. Record the census data for each year in a separate column. Be sure to record the correct census year in the top row of each column.
3. Look at the image of the woman on the *Time* magazine cover on the previous page. Based on her physical appearance, how would you identify her race on each census? Circle your response for each year.
4. How would you categorize yourself? Underline your responses for each census year.

ANALYSIS

1. Before 1960, the census taker was responsible for identifying the race of each person taking the census. What do you think census takers based their classifications on?
2. Did you find it easy or difficult to categorize the woman from the *Time* magazine cover or yourself? Explain.
3. Why do you think these categories have changed over time? What factors might cause the categories to change in the next 50 years?

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Ethnicity

Ethnicity is the set of cultural characteristics that distinguishes one group from another group.

People who share a common cultural background and a common sense of identity are known as an **ethnic group**.

Ethnicity is based on characteristics such as national origin, religion, language, customs, and values.

- Ethnic groups must pass cultural beliefs and practices from generation to generation.
- Ethnic identity can cross racial or national boundaries.
- Ethnicity is based on cultural traits, while race is based on physical traits.

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Minority Groups

Although no particular physical feature or ethnic background is superior or inferior to any other, many sociologists recognize that people may place an arbitrary value on specific characteristics.

Minority Group

- A **minority group** is a group of people who—because of their physical characteristics or cultural practices—are singled out and treated unequally.
- In this sense, the term *minority* has nothing to do with group size, but with the unequal standing in society in relation to a dominant group.

Dominant Group

- The **dominant group** is the group that possesses the ability to discriminate by virtue of its greater power, privilege, and social status in a society.
- The dominant group in American society is white people with northern European ancestry.



Section 2 at a Glance

Patterns of Intergroup Relations

- Discrimination and prejudice are common features of the minority group experience worldwide.
- Discrimination can occur at a societal level, as legal discrimination and institutional discrimination, and at an individual level.
- Prejudice is supported by the use of stereotypes, simplified, exaggerated, and unfavorable generalizations about groups of people.

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FIGHTING for **Social Equality**



Elizabeth Eckford, followed by an angry mob, makes her way to an integrated high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.



Two men drink from segregated water fountains.



Rosa Parks sits on a bus in 1956 in Birmingham, Alabama, one year after she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger.

What does inequality feel like?

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Discrimination and Prejudice

The inequality experienced by minority groups are common across the globe.

Discrimination

- **Discrimination** is the denial of equal treatment to individuals based on their group membership
- Can occur on an individual level or societal level
- **Legal discrimination:** upheld by law
- **Institutionalized discrimination:** outgrowth of the structure of a society

Prejudice

- **Prejudice** is an unsupported generalization about a category of people
- **Stereotype:** over-simplified, exaggerated, or unfavorable generalization about a group
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** a prediction resulting in behavior that fulfills the prophecy
- **Racism:** the belief that one's own race is superior

Merton's Patterns of Prejudice

Robert K. Merton argued that prejudice and discrimination are related, but do not always go hand-in-hand. According to Merton, people could combine discrimination and prejudice in four possible ways.

The Active Bigot

- The *active bigot* is prejudiced and openly discriminatory.

The Timid Bigot

- The *timid bigot* is prejudiced, but is afraid to discriminate because of societal pressures.

The Fair-Weather Liberal

- The *fair-weather liberal* is not prejudiced but discriminates anyway because of societal pressure.

The All-Weather Liberal

- The *all-weather liberal* is not prejudiced and does not discriminate.



Sources of Discrimination and Prejudice

Sociological Explanations

- Prejudices are embedded in social norms.

Psychological Explanations

- Prejudiced people have an authoritarian personality type.
- Prejudice may be the result of frustration and anger.
- **Scapegoating** occurs when an innocent person or group is blamed for one's troubles.

Economic Explanations

- Prejudice arises out of competition for resources.
- Dominant group may encourage competition between minority groups in order to maintain its dominant status.

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Patterns of Minority Group Treatment

Cultural Pluralism

- **Cultural pluralism** is a policy that allows each group within society to keep its unique cultural identity
 - Switzerland is an example with three official languages.

Assimilation

- **Assimilation** is the blending of culturally distinct groups into a single group with a common culture and identity
 - American idea of “melting pot”
 - Can happen informally or by force



Patterns of Minority Group Treatment (cont.)

Legal Protection

- The rights of minorities are protected by law
 - The United States is an example
 - Includes affirmative action laws

Segregation

- **Segregation** is a policy that physically separates a minority group from the dominant group
 - “De jure” segregation is based on laws.
 - “De facto” segregation is based on custom and informal norms.

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Patterns of Minority Group Treatment (cont.)

Subjugation

- Subjugation is a practice whereby dominance is maintained by force
 - Most extreme form is slavery.
 - South Africa's system of apartheid is an example.

Population Transfer

- Separation of groups by transferring the minority population to a new territory
 - “Indirect” transfer occurs when the dominant groups makes life for minorities so miserable that they leave.
 - “Direct” transfer involves using force to move people to new locations.

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Patterns of Minority Group Treatment (cont.)

Extermination

- Most extreme; goal is elimination
 - **Genocide** is the goal of complete destruction of a minority group.
 - Holocaust and Rwanda are examples
 - **Ethnic cleansing** is the combination of extermination and transferral.
 - Serbia and Sudan are examples

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Racial and Ethnic Relations

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

QUICK
FACTS

The patterns of intergroup relations can be seen as a continuum of behavior and treatment that ranges from acceptance to rejection.

Cultural Pluralism	Acceptance	Ethnic, religious, and racial variety encouraged (Example: Switzerland)	
Assimilation		Culturally distinct groups blended into a single group with a common culture (Example: United States)	
Legal Protection		Minority rights protected by law (Example: United States after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)	
Subjugation		Dominant group controls every aspect of minority group life through force (Example: South Africa under apartheid)	
Segregation		Minority group physically separated from the dominant group (Example: United States until the 1960s)	
Population Transfer		Dominant group moves minority group to new locations within or outside of the country (Example: Relocation of Native Americans to reservations)	
Extermination	Rejection	Dominant group attempts to destroy minority group (Example: The Holocaust)	

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Section 3 at a Glance

Minority Groups in the United States

- Minority groups in the United States have achieved varying levels of social and economic success.
- The major minority groups in the United States include African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.
- Other minority groups in the United States include white ethnics and Arab Americans.

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In Search of America

How long does it take to reach the "American Dream"?



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The American Dilemma

- In 1944 a Swedish sociologist described the conflict between races in the United States. He noted a gap between what Americans claim to believe and how they actually behave.
- Americans have not always lived up to the ideals of freedom and equality when dealing with minority groups.
- The conflict dates back to colonial times.
- Minority groups have prospered in relation to how closely they adapt to the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) ideal.

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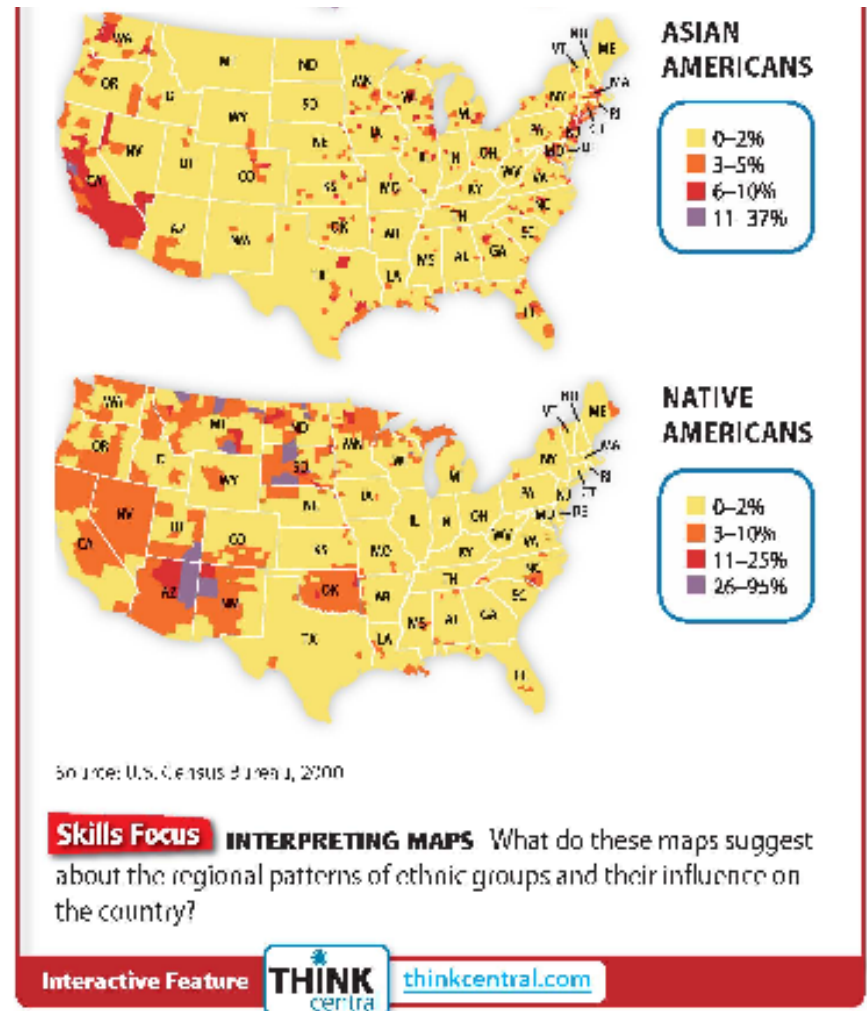
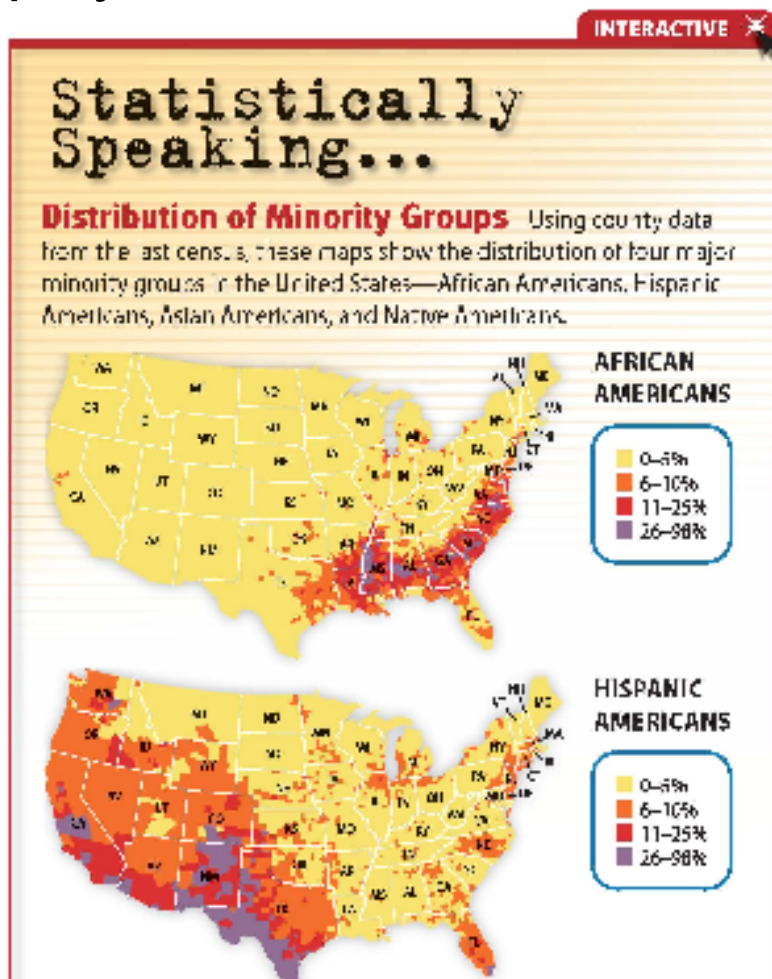
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Racial and Ethnic Relations

Click on the image below to play the Interactive.



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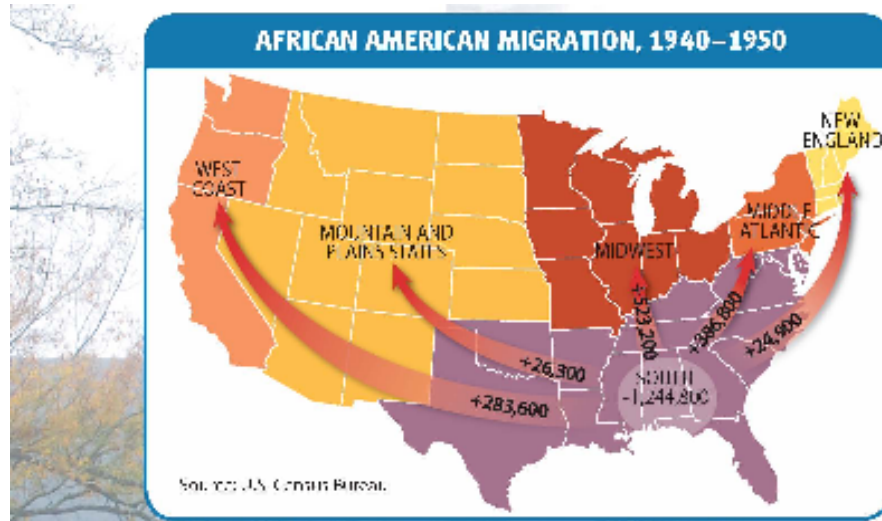
African Americans

12 Percent of Population

- Experiences historically shaped by slavery, discrimination, and segregation
- Civil Rights Movement brought significant gains towards equality
- Some negative trends in education, employment, and income that reveal continuing inequality

- Since 1965 legislation, the number of black representatives in government has grown quickly
- Organizations such as the National Urban League work to empower African Americans
- Group faces **environmental racism**, or racial bias in environmental policies and practices

Racial and Ethnic Relations



Historically, African Americans have used a number of strategies in the struggle for equality, ranging from moving in search of opportunity to the founding of African American colleges and educational institutions.



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Hispanic Americans

Largest minority group

- Trace their heritage to Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin American countries
 - Population of Hispanics growing faster than general population
 - During 1960s Hispanics in the United States were mostly from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico
 - Central and South American immigrants now common
- Came to the United States to seek political freedom and economic opportunity
 - Estimate in 2006 of more than 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States; vast majority are Hispanic
 - Hispanics now hold more than 6,000 appointed and elected positions
 - Poverty rate is double that of white Americans

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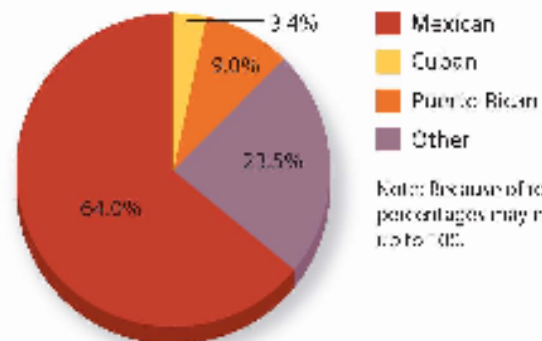
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Racial and Ethnic Relations

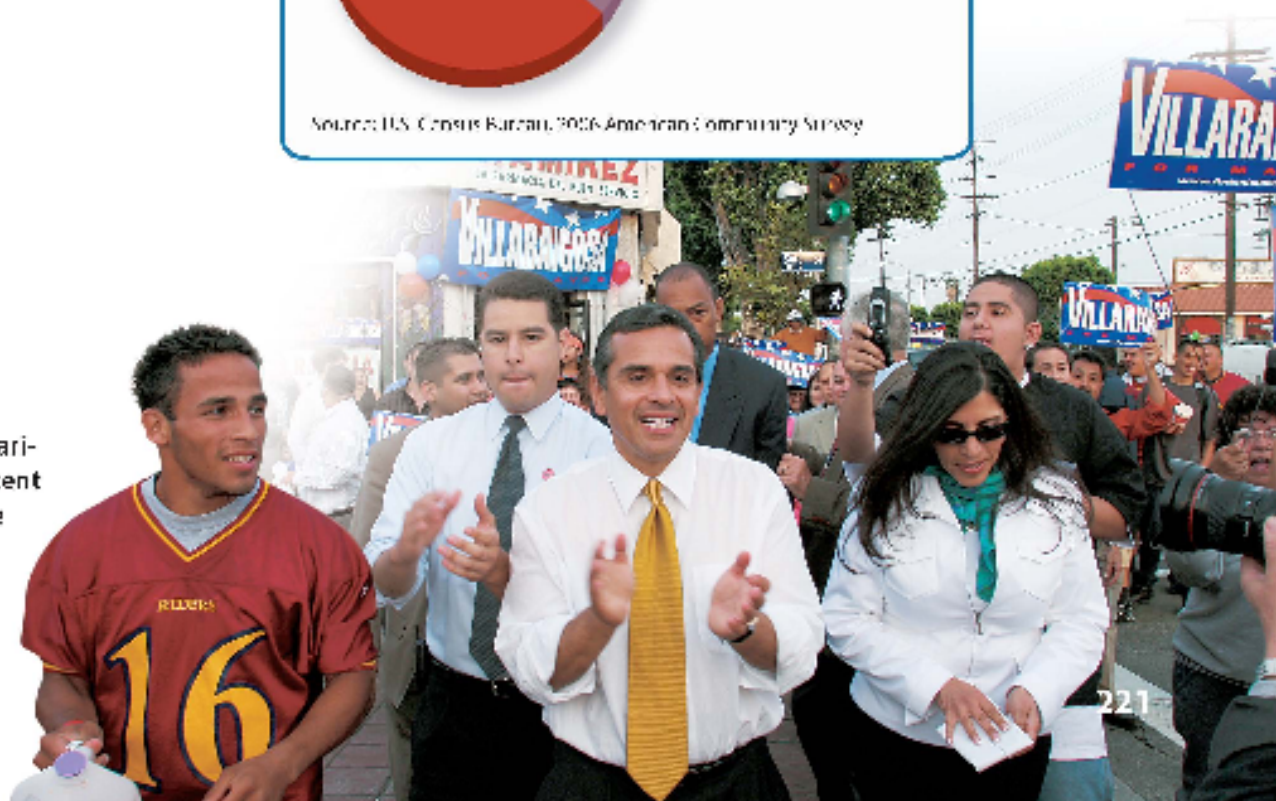
HISPANIC AMERICANS BY ORIGIN



Note: Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Hispanic Americans come from a variety of national backgrounds. In recent years, their growing numbers have led to increased political power.



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Asian Americans

5 Percent of Population

- Earliest to arrive were Chinese and Japanese
- Immigrants from most Asian countries now here, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan
- Projected to be 8 percent of population by 2050
- Have used education to move up economic ladder

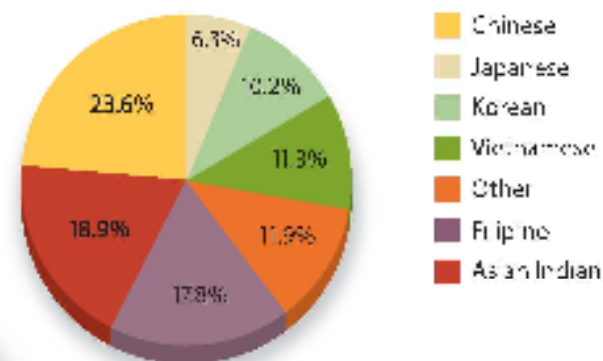
- Median income is higher for Asian Americans than for other groups
- Some call Asian Americans “the model minority” because of their quick assimilation; many resent this label because it ignores the struggles historically faced
- Asian Americans face higher rates of stress, depression, mental illness, and suicide attempts

Racial and Ethnic Relations

The diversity of Asian American communities has influenced American society. In many cities, celebrations like the Chinese New Year parade below, have become widely attended events.



ASIAN AMERICANS BY ORIGIN



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

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Native Americans

2.9 Million Individuals

- Original inhabitants of the United States
 - Disease, warfare, and destruction of traditional ways of life reduced numbers dramatically
 - U.S. government took traditional lands and forced Native Americans onto reservations
- Policies encouraged assimilation into white culture
 - Today 55 percent on reservations
 - Statistics reveal dire challenges for Native American populations
 - **Pan-Indianism:** a social and political movement that united culturally distinct Native American nations to work together on issues that affect all Native Americans

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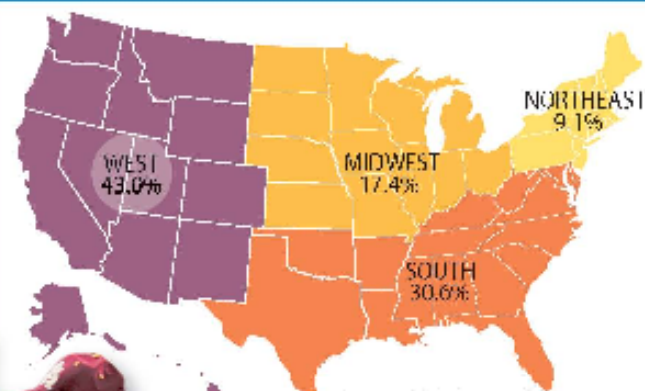
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Racial and Ethnic Relations

DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE AMERICANS BY REGION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000



At the National Powwow, Native Americans from across the country celebrate their cultures with music, dance, and educational programs.

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Other Minorities

White Ethnics

- **White ethnics** were immigrants from the mainly Catholic countries of Ireland, Italy, France, Poland, and Greece
- Faced discrimination by the white Protestant majority

Jewish Americans

- Focus their ethnic identity on their religion
- Faced **anti-Semitism**, discrimination and prejudice against Jews

Arab Americans

- 3.5 million Arab Americans
- Arab Americans face new discrimination after the Arab-led terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

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Current Research in Sociology

Being Arab American after the 9-11 Attacks

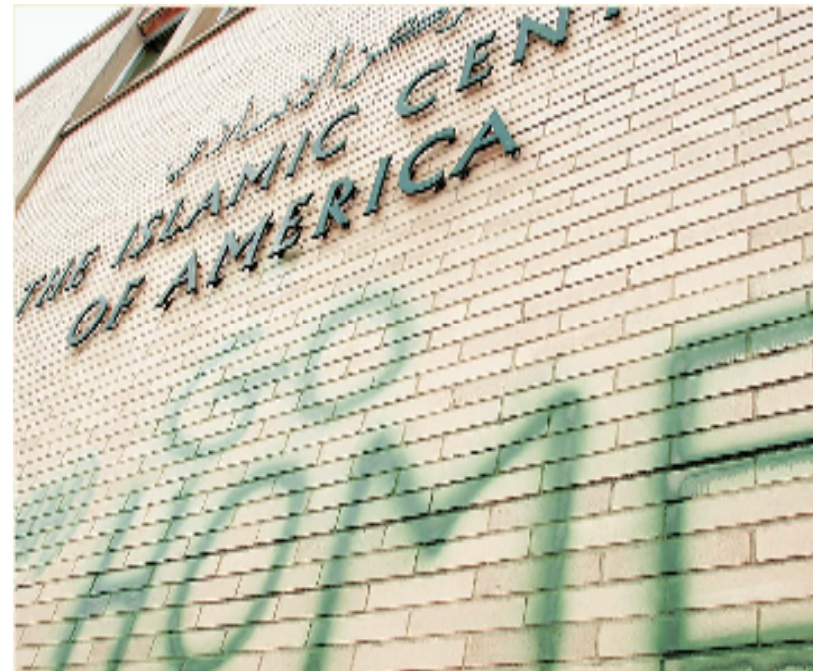
Within hours of the terrorist attacks on September 11, Arab American communities and individuals were faced with violent attacks and other discrimination. These acts revealed that non-Arab Americans knew very little about Arab Americans.

- The Detroit Arab American Study asked Arab Americans how September 11 had changed their lives.
- Researchers completed face-to-face interviews with 1,016 Arab Americans and Iraqi Christians and 508 members of the general population.
- Fifteen percent had experienced discrimination, verbal insults being most common.
- Three percent reported acts of violence against them or their family.

Racial and Ethnic Relations



Many Arab Americans have united to educate their fellow citizens about Arab American culture and to dispel stereotypes of Arab Americans as terrorists.



On January 23, 2007, vandals defaced a mosque at the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan, with graffiti.

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Thinking Critically

- Which of the study's findings do you find most interesting? Explain.
- How do you think the study's findings could be used to fight stereotypes or misinformation?

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Lab: Applying What You've Learned

Introducing the Americans

Who are the Americans, and how did we get here?

1. Introduction

- In this lab you will study the concepts of race and ethnicity in the United States.
- Work in small groups to research the history of an assigned ethnic or racial group.
- Create a display to show the history of your group.

2. Illustrating Your Time Line

- Illustrate major dates, groups of people, and events of the immigration history of your assigned group.
- Use drawings, photographs, and maps.

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Lab (cont.)

3. Creating an Immigration Poster

- Choose one group from the time line and create a poster that shows this group's arrival in the United States.
- What factors brought them here?

Sample Immigration Poster Worksheet

Who came?

Where did they come from?

Why did they come?

Did they come by their own choice or were they forced to immigrate?

When did they first arrive?

How many came?

Where did they settle?

What challenges did they face when they arrived?

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Lab (cont.)

4. Creating a Culture Poster

- **How has your group changed American culture? Choose four of the areas below to include on your poster:**
- Art
- Music
- Food
- Language
- Politics
- Science
- Religion



5. Presenting Your Exhibit

- Display your time line and posters for the class.
- Present your work to the class. Make sure each person in your group has a part of the presentation.

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Lab (cont.)

5. Discussion

- **What did you learn from this lab? As a group, discuss the following:**
- What are some similarities and differences among the immigration histories?
- What push and pull factors do you see at work?
- Did you know about the cultural contributions of different groups?
- Do you know where your ancestors arrived from?

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