3.1: Race and Ethnicity

Minority Studies: A Brief Text: Part II—Race and Ethnicity

Dimensions, Forms, and Systems of Stratification

Max Weber delineated the major dimensions of stratification, which are wealth, status or prestige, and power. Wealth is a person’s total economic assets, power is the ability to influence over resistance, and status/prestige is the respect and admiration people attach to various social positions. There are three other, different kinds of power: personal power, which is the ability to affect one’s own life (also called autonomy); social power, which is the ability to affect the lives of others; and coercive power, which is the use or threat of force or violence by persons or groups against others—this is the power of the state or the thug with a gun. There are also two forms of stratification: the closed form, in which the boundaries between/among the layers are impermeable, statuses are ascribed, and social mobility is limited by custom, tradition, ideology, and law; and the open form in which the layers between/among the boundaries are permeable, statuses are achieved, and social mobility is aided by custom, tradition, ideology, and law.

Within these two forms of stratification there are four systems of stratification: the slave system the caste system the estate system and the class system. The slave system includes two distinct strata: a category of people who are free and a category of people who are legally the property of others. Slave systems are a closed form of society characterized by differential power, lack of complete social mobility, and few, if any, legal rights. Slavery is maintained by custom, ideology, and law. In a caste system, membership in ranked categories of people is hereditary and permanent and marriage between members of different categories is prohibited. Caste systems are totally closed societies where status is ascribed; there no social mobility, and they are maintained by custom ideology and law. The estate system is a concomitant of feudalism, which is a social hierarchy centered on the monopoly of power and
ownership of land by a group of victorious warriors (lords) who were entitled to labor goods and military service from peasants who were the vast majority of the agrarian population. Feudalism endured from the 11th to the 20th century. Estate systems are relatively closed societies where there is extreme inequality with virtually no middle class—only the very rich and the very poor—and although there was some social mobility, this system was also maintained by custom, ideology, and law. The class system is a product of modern, industrial capitalism.

In a class system, the economic factor is the most important in determining differences, and achieved statuses, (gained by ability and merit), are the principal means of determining a person’s rank. This is a relatively open society and the boundaries between/among the layers are based on master status. There is greater economic equality but greater relative deprivation in the class system and although there is little social mobility at the extremes, there is great mobility at the center. The class system is characterized by a small, very wealthy, upper class, a large diverse middle class, and a mobile working class. Unfortunately, a relatively large and growing underclass has been characteristic in the US for the past 40 years.¹

Race

In 1903, when W.E.B. DuBois wrote, “The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line”, he was writing about race relations in the United States and in the world system.² Racism is woven into the fabric of American society. A race is a population that differs from others in the frequency of certain hereditary traits, which is also the definition of a species. However, all human beings are members of the same species, we all share the same DNA, and we share many physiological characteristics that cross the boundaries of skin color, hair texture, eye shape, and all of the other physical characteristics that we believe to define race. Biologically, there is no such things as race when it comes to human beings with the exception that we all members of the same species: Homo Sapiens Sapiens. Race, as we use the term on a day-to-day basis, is a social construct; it is categories of people who are set apart from others because of socially defined physical characteristics.

For example, in the U.S., people of Chinese and Southern European heritage have been categorized as both black and white, dependent upon the time period.

Since earliest times, for hundreds of thousands of years, human beings have been moving across the face of the planet. From more than 75,000 years ago until the present, people have been meeting others different in physical appearance from themselves. Oftentimes these travelers have interbred with those whom they have encountered, creating a worldwide situation in which there are no pure races among human beings: we are all related, even if distantly, to one another, notwithstanding our superficial physical differences (phenotype)—the differences in phenotype are accounted for by 1/10th of 1% (.1%=.0001) of our genotype (DNA). Sadly, many socially defined racial characteristics have become significant symbols of character and Thomas’s Theorem which states that “things perceived to be real are real in their consequences” explains to us that race and the way we define it matters significantly in American society. When W.E.B. DuBois wrote about “this double consciousness this seeing one’s self through the eyes of the other world” he was emphasizing the idea that race is defined by others, by the dominant group in any given society.³

In about 2001, in a class discussion of race, one of my students who is from Venezuela told the class about her experience emigrating to the US. On her application there was a space for race: she wrote “human.” The immigration officials at the airport where she entered the US were not amused and changed her response to “white.”

https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A_Minority_Studies_(Dunn)/3%3A_Race_and_Ethnicity/3.1%3A_Race_and_Ethnicity.html?updates=Wed%2C+11+Sep+2019+14%3A40%3A51+GMT
Powered by 2
Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a status based on cultural heritage and shared feelings of peoplehood, so that an ethnic group is a category of people that is set apart from others because of its distinctive social and cultural characteristics such as ancestry, language, religion, customs, and lifestyle. And although ethnicity is self-defined, it is more than possible for race and ethnic group membership to be combined in one person. Those who do the defining of race are referred to as the dominant group (the dominant group is always the ultimate in-group in a society).

In the US we consider Hispanic or Latino to be an ethnicity, but it is a problematic designation because the culture of Mexico is not the same as the culture of Venezuela and the culture of El Salvador is not the same as the culture of Argentina. In fact, even though most of Latin America shares a common language and a common history of conquest by the Spanish, their cultures are distinct as are their histories.

Racism and Bigotry

Unfortunately, there has been a long and terrible history of racism in the United States—racism that is woven into the fabric of America. (Racism is the belief that one racial category is inherently inferior to another.) With that racism has come egregious levels of prejudice and discrimination which we learn as part of the socialization process. Bigotry includes racism but also includes hatred and discrimination against people based on sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and socioeconomic status; thus bigotry is more all-encompassing than racism.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination are learned as part of the socialization process; our stereotypes are part of our culture and are omnipresent. Even our language is filled with prejudicial and discriminatory stereotypes concerning others.

Shortly after the end of WWII, James Michener wrote a novel entitled Tales of the South Pacific which was made into a Broadway musical and later a motion picture. There is a scene in the movie where a character sings a song about prejudice and discrimination which is titled “You’ve Got To Be Carefully Taught.” Part of the lyrics to that song are: “You’ve go to be taught, before it’s too late, Before you are six or seven or eight, To hate all the people your relatives hate. You’ve got to be carefully taught.”

Prejudice is an attitude based on irrational attitudes and preconceived judgments (either favorable or unfavorable) toward a category of people. It is based on stereotypes concerning the essential qualities of a group different form our own. (See Thomas’s Theorem.) Discrimination is a behavior which includes such behaviors as: direct personal discrimination which includes slurs social slights threats and even murder; ethnophaulisms which are derogatory expressions jokes folk sayings or generalized negative remarks such as white men can’t jump, black people have rhythm, the Washington Redskins.

Robert Merton developed a Typology of Prejudice and Discrimination (Bigotry) in which he wrote that, when it comes to bigotry, there are four kinds of people. The All-weather Liberal is not prejudiced does not discriminate and tends to remain firm in her/his convictions over time. The Fair-weather Liberal, although not prejudiced, does engage in discriminatory behavior; perhaps because the sociocultural milieu demands it, perhaps because of fear or cowardice.

https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A_Minority_Studies_(Dunn)/3%3A_Race_and_Ethnicity/3.1%3A...
Since prejudice is an attitude and discrimination is a behavior, the Fair-weather Liberal is dangerous, because in order to overcome the cognitive dissonance which exists due to the incompatibility of behavior and attitude, some change must take place, and this change is almost always in the direction of becoming deeply prejudiced, because our behavior changes our attitudes. The Fair-weather Bigot is prejudiced but does not discriminate, perhaps because it would be considered socioculturally inappropriate or may be illegal, and the All-weather Bigot who is prejudiced, does discriminate, and probably supports or joins hate groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robert Merton’s Typology of Prejudice and Discrimination (Bigotry)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Weather Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Weather Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Weather Bigot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Weather Bigot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

De Jure Discrimination

There are many types of discrimination, two of them are: *de jure*, which is legal discrimination or discrimination by law in which minority group members lawfully are denied access to public institutions, jobs, housing, and social rewards; and *de facto*, which is discrimination in fact even when it is illegal to engage in acts of discrimination. Harrison and Bennett conducted an historical analysis of types of legal discrimination by racial/ethnic group. For African Americans: slavery and Jim Crow laws; Asians: prevention of immigration, denial of citizenship, concentration camps, and seizing of property; American Indians: conquest, usurpation, seizing of property, the Trail of Tears; Mexicans and Hawaiians: conquest, usurpation, and seizing of property.

De Facto Discrimination

*De facto* discrimination is practical factual discrimination. It is a situation in which minority group members are discriminated against as a day-to-day occurrence even when laws exist that prohibit such behavior. Such behaviors include indirect institutional discrimination, which is the differential and unequal treatment of a group that is deeply embedded in social, economic, and political institutions; and structural discrimination, which is built into the very structure of the society. Structural discrimination is the most insidious form because, although racism is not the intent, it is the result.
Overcoming Discrimination

Even with such horrific legal atrocities as those discussed by Harrison and Bennett, the United States, since the early 1950s and particularly in the mid 1960s to mid 1970s, has worked very hard at overcoming, if not our racism, at least our discriminatory behavior toward minorities. Once again we turn to Harrison and Bennett: 1952 the McCarran-Walter Act overturned all of the Asian exclusionary acts and permitted Asians to emigrate to the U.S. and to become US citizens; 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka overturned the Plessy decision and declared that segregation was inherently discriminatory and unconstitutional; the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited any race/ethnicity-based discrimination in hiring and employment practices; the 1965 Voting Rights Act prohibited any race/ethnicity-based discrimination in allowing minorities to vote; in 1965 Congress passed the Immigration Act which removed national quota systems permitting an influx of immigrants from Mexico Latin American and Asia; and in 1968 the Fair Housing Act was passed prohibiting any race/ethnicity-based discrimination in housing. These signaled a change in the way in which the U.S. saw itself, and although this decision and these acts did not overcome all forms of discrimination, they were nonetheless an indication that America would no longer think of itself as a racist society.

There are a great many theories concerning the causes of racism and attempting to explain prejudice and discrimination. In general, they all boil down to a very few concepts: ethnocentrism which is the tendency to evaluate the customs and practices of other groups through the prism of one’s own culture; we tend to like people who are most like us; we judge people based on our own values; and stereotypes, which are exaggerated claims of what are believed to be the essential characteristics of a group. Whatever the causes, Thomas’s Theorem—“that which is perceived to be real is real in its consequences”—is a screaming indictment of letting our belief patterns run away with our critical thinking skills. What stereotypes do you have? What are some of the stereotypes about your own racial/ethnic group? How do you feel about those stereotypes? Why do stereotypes last over time? Why doesn’t reality change our perceptions? America is the most racially and religiously diverse nation in the world. And yet, we tend to build instant stereotypes about new immigrant groups and hold on to those about older groups.

Assimilation

Is America a melting pot or a lumpy stew/tossed salad? America is a nation of immigrants. With the exception of Native Americans, we all have immigrant ancestors or are ourselves immigrants. Assimilation is the process by which a racial or ethnic minority loses its distinctive identity and lifeways and conforms to the cultural patterns of the dominant group. Cultural assimilation is assimilation of values, behaviors, beliefs, language, clothing styles, religious practices, and foods while structural assimilation is about social interaction. Primary structural assimilation occurs when different racial/ethnic groups belong to the same clubs, live in the same neighborhoods, form friendships, and intermarry. Secondary structural assimilation concerns parity in access to and accumulation of the goods of society, (wealth, power, and status), which is measured by SES and political power—it is becoming middle class or above. The traditional American assimilation pattern is that white ethnics, Asians, Cubans, and non-Mexican Hispanics, by the third generation (third generation Americans are those people whose grandparents were foreign-born), have assimilated both culturally and structurally. However, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans do not follow this traditional pattern which differs due to propinquity, coercion, and lack of socioeconomic opportunity.
Push and Pull Factors in Emigration/Immigration

Emigration is the movement of people from one country to another while immigration is the movement of people into a country other than their land of birth. Emigration and immigration are ubiquitous among human beings: we have been moving ever since we were born in Africa tens of thousands of years ago. There are various reasons why people move from one country to another and we call those motivating forces push and pull factors. The table, below, shows some of the push and pull factors for sending and receiving countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push Factors: Leaving Your Homeland</th>
<th>Pull Factors: Coming to America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Strife</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Strife</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>Ethnic Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repressive Government</td>
<td>Religious Repression/Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Individual Rights</td>
<td>Lack of Educational Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of Human Rights</td>
<td>Economic Instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Arrest or Murder</td>
<td>Lack of Economic Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull Factors: Leaving Your Homeland</th>
<th>Push Factors: Coming to America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Factors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Ethnic Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Religious Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Individual Rights</td>
<td>Many Educational Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Human Rights</td>
<td>Economic Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Political Arrests or Murders</td>
<td>Economic Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fear of Torture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.**
Immigration

One’s position in the stratification hierarchy, as stated previously, often depends on one’s master status—a social position which may be influenced by one’s ancestry. The United States is a land of immigrants. Even the American Indians are not truly indigenous to this continent but came as hunters in search of prey across the Bering Strait some 17,000 or more years ago. However, embedded in America’s historic past, immigration and the role of immigrants have played a significant part in determining our national character. Since our earliest history, the North American continent has consisted of indigenous Indians, white Northwestern Europeans, African peoples, and Jews. This continent had its earliest historical beginnings in the journeys of conquest of Europeans. It is to them that the United States owes some of its heritage as a nation; however, the vast influx of an extraordinarily broad array of people from across the globe has given America a uniqueness in the world. America is the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse nation on Planet Earth. In one of the largest and busiest harbors in the world stands the gift of a foreign nation holding aloft a torch and cradling a book in which is written the Bill of Rights. At the base of the Statue of Liberty is a plaque on which is written a poem by Emma Lazarus:

“THE NEW COLOSSUS” “Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,” “With conquering limbs astride from land to land,” “Here at our sea-washed, sunset-gates shall stand” “A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame” “Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name” “Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand” “Glow world-wide welcome, her mild eyes command” “The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.” “Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp! cries she,” “With silent lips, ‘Give me your tired, your poor,’ “Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” “The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;” “Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,” “I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

an invitation to all the peoples of all nations to come to America and to take part in her great promise. Unfortunately, that promise has not materialized for millions of immigrants.

There have been, throughout our history, many times when one’s ancestry, country of origin, method of migration, or religion marked one as being so different from “real” Americans that discrimination, both *de jure* and *de facto*, was the order of the day. How well people fit into whatever the dominant culture values as normative is often a key to their
position in the stratification hierarchy. When immigrant populations are taken into account the dominant culture attempts to force new immigrants to assimilate—become thoroughly Americanized—as quickly as possible. Assimilation is the process by which a racial or ethnic minority loses its distinctive identity and lifeways and conforms to the cultural patterns of the dominant group. It is submerging one’s self into the melting pot of American society. There are two kinds of assimilation cultural and structural. Cultural assimilation concerns values, behaviors, beliefs, language, clothing styles, religious practices, and foods; whereas structural assimilation concerns social interaction in clubs, neighborhoods, friendship, marriage (primary structural assimilation), and parity in access to and accumulation of the goods of society (wealth power and status) measured by SES and political power (secondary structural assimilation).

Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and the Director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University.” Professor Gates is Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford African American Studies Center, the first comprehensive scholarly online resource in the field of African American Studies and Africana Studies, and of The Root, an online news magazine dedicated to coverage of African American news, culture, and genealogy.13 “Dr. Gates is also the producer of Faces of America, a 2010 series about genealogy and the interconnectedness of the American people. In this series Dr. Gates explores the history of immigration and assimilation by following the lives and migration patterns of a handful of celebrities’ families According to the show’s website, the series explores the interaction between the country and its immigrants.

“What made America? What makes us? These two questions are at the heart of the new PBS series Faces of America with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The Harvard scholar turns to the latest tools of genealogy and genetics to explore the family histories of 12 renowned Americans — professor and poet Elizabeth Alexander, chef Mario Batali, comedian Stephen Colbert, novelist Louise Erdrich, journalist Malcolm Gladwell, actress Eva Longoria, musician Yo-Yo Ma, director Mike Nichols, Her Majesty Queen Noor, television host/heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz, actress Meryl Streep, and figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi.14

There are certain patterns of primary and secondary structural assimilation (hereinafter referred to by the term assimilation) into American culture that differ based on race and ethnicity but before discussing those patterns an explanation of terminology is necessary. First generation Americans are those people who are foreign-born; second generation Americans are the children of foreign-born parents; and third generation Americans are the grandchildren of the foreign-born. For white ethnics—primarily Southern and Eastern Europeans, although arguably anyone who is not one of the primary racial or ethnic minority groups such as Arabs, Asians, blacks, Hispanics, American Indians could be considered a white ethnic—Asians, Cubans, South American, and other, non-Mexican Hispanics, assimilation follows a fairly traditional pattern even though some prejudice and discrimination may continue to exist. First generation white ethnic Americans, although the vast majority learn and speak English, tend to maintain their native language in their own homes, to keep many of their traditional religious and holiday customs, retain native styles of dress and food preferences, marry among themselves (endogamous marriage), and live near others from their homeland. Second generation white ethnic Americans generally lose much of the language of their parents, drift away from traditional religious and holiday customs, let go of native styles of dress and food preferences in favor of more American-style clothing and food, marry outside their parents’ ethnic group, and move into neighborhoods that are ethnically mixed. By the third generation, most white ethnics have become thoroughly Americanized and have failed to learn all but a very few words of their grandparents language, found meaningless many of the traditional religious and holiday customs, and have adopted American customs (turkey instead of lasagna for Christmas dinner) instead, wear American-style clothing exclusively, eat fast food, marry outside their ethnic group (in fact third generation white ethnic Americans usually do not
even consider the ethnic background of those they marry) and live in such ethnically-mixed communities that, except for the generalized whiteness, there is no consideration of the ethnic backgrounds of their neighbors. Moreover, by the third generation, most white ethnics enjoy relatively high levels of structural assimilation.\textsuperscript{15}

Some of this ease of both cultural and structural assimilation is based on the migration patterns of white ethnics. Although many white ethnics have come to America because they perceive it to be a land of economic and political freedom and opportunity, many have been driven from their homelands by border wars, internal ethnic conflict, economic uncertainty or collapse, lack of educational opportunities, less political freedom, and myriad other reasons. The primary push factors—those conditions which impel people to emigrate from their native lands and immigrate to a new and unknown country—are political and economic, and, as one might guess, the primary pull factors—those real or perceived conditions in the new country which beckon to those on foreign shores moving people to emigrate from the countries of their birth—are also political and economic. Regardless of the push or pull factors, white ethnics are voluntary migrants to America choosing to migrate, sometimes at great personal risk, because they choose to migrate; a migration pattern that Sociologists call voluntary migration. Although many white ethnic groups—Jews, Irish, and Italians\textsuperscript{16} particularly—have experienced greater or lesser degrees of discrimination, complete assimilation by the third generation is the rule. However, that assimilation was often accomplished with the help of others.

Many white ethnic groups (and as will be shown many nonwhite migrants) formed neighborhoods where first, second, and third generation white ethnics lived and worked together in ethnic enclaves. An ethnic enclave is a neighborhood or an area or region of a larger city in which people of a particular ethnic group: 1) live in close proximity; 2) support the traditional values customs and ways of life of that ethnic group; 3) maintain social services such as employment networks political clubs civic organizations and houses of worship; 4) establish retail stores where traditional foods clothing household goods and utensils are sold; 5) develop and sustain native language newspapers and sometimes radio and TV stations; 6) provide employment and social and sometimes financial support for new immigrants; 7) permit new immigrants to adapt to a new country without experiencing serious levels of culture shock and homesickness. In general, ethnic enclaves provide a safe haven with a variety of social supports for new immigrants that serve to ease their transition into a new and different culture.

The Little Italys in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia; the Chinatowns of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York; the Little Saigons of Houston, Los Angeles, and Atlanta; the Calle Ocho Little Havana district of Miami and the Little Mexico Barrios in Houston, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Dallas, and Phoenix; the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn New York which is home to nearly 100,000 Lubavitch-sect, ultra-Orthodox Jews; the Amish and other Old Order religious groups of Iowa, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and far Northwestern Minnesota are all primary exemplars of ethnic enclaves.

Sociologist Alejandro Portes has long studied ethnic enclaves and has argued that for an ethnic enclave to survive it requires early immigrants to arrive with business skills and funds or access to funds. Ethnic enclaves survive over more than two generations only when there is a constant migration stream from the country of origin that lasts over more than two generations. Ethnic enclaves, once they have served their purpose of socializing new immigrants into American culture, tend to disappear as later generations follow the traditional assimilation pattern and move further and further out into the wider society.\textsuperscript{17}
Middleman Minorities

Some minority immigrants, most notably Jews and Asians, have found themselves in the unique position of being middleman minorities.

“Certain ethnic groups in multiethnic societies sometimes occupy a middle status between the dominant group at the top of the ethnic hierarchy and subordinate groups in lower positions. These have been referred to as middleman minorities . . . Middleman minorities often act as mediators between dominant and subordinate ethnic groups. They ordinarily occupy an intermediate niche in the economic system being neither capitalists (mainly members of the dominant group) at the top nor working masses (mainly those of the subordinate group) at the bottom. They play such occupational roles as traders, shopkeepers, moneylenders, and independent professionals. . . . They perform economic duties that those at the top find distasteful or lacking in prestige and they frequently supply business and professional services to members of ethnic minorities who lack such skills and resources. . . . In times of stress they are . . . natural scapegoats. . . . Subordinate groups will view middleman minorities with disdain because they often encounter them as providers of necessary business and professional services [that members of their own group do not or cannot provide in sufficient numbers to supply the demand]. Such entrepreneurs therefore come to be seen as exploiters. . . . Because they stand in a kind of social no-man’s-land middleman minorities tend to develop an unusually strong in-group solidarity and are often seen by other groups as clannish. (Marger p. 51)

Assimilation Patterns

While white ethnics, Cubans, Asians, non-Mexican Hispanics, and Middle Easterners follow the traditional assimilation pattern, three significantly large minorities do not: Mexican Americans (about 50%), Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. The assimilation patterns for these groups differ due to propinquity, method of immigration, and let us not mince words, racism. Approximately 50% of all Mexican immigrants to the United States do not follow the traditional assimilation pattern. This is partly due to the propinquity of the mother country, the nearly continuous new migration stream, a relatively high rate of return migration, racism, and in some cases, involuntary immigration in that parts of Mexico have been annexed by the United States so that some people’s native land quite literally changed overnight—they went to bed Mexican and woke up American.

Puerto Ricans, following the treaty that concluded the Spanish American War, became citizens of the United States, albeit citizens without suffrage. Therefore, Puerto Ricans, who are already citizens, have little incentive to assimilate and, like their Mexican counterparts, are physically close to their homeland, maintain a nearly continuous migration stream onto the mainland, and have a relatively high rate of return migration. Puerto Rico is a desperately poor colony of the United States populated primarily by Spanish-speaking, Hispanic-surnamed descendants of African slaves. Thus, entrenched intergenerational poverty, coupled with language difficulties and racism, have prevented assimilation. Most Puerto Ricans who live on the mainland live in poor, inner city neighborhoods in New York and Chicago. Neighborhoods that are not ethnic enclaves but are rather huge concentrations of the poor, poorly educated, and black underclass.

African Americans differ dramatically from all other migrants. Many, probably most, African Americans have been Americans far longer than most whites. Many African Americans can trace their ancestry back more than seven generations. Those ancestors however were involuntary immigrants who were stolen from their homes, thrown into the bellies of slave ships, and brought to these shores as pieces of property—chattel—to work for the rest of their lives and
for the rest of the lives of all their descendants in involuntary servitude as the slaves of white masters. No other people have involuntarily migrated to America in such vast numbers. No other people have been treated as property. No other people have suffered 350 years of slavery. No other people have been so vilely used, abused, maltreated, and battered physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. It was not until the late 1860s that blacks were granted Constitutional rights in the United States and it was not until 1953, and then again in the middle 1960s through the mid 1970s, that real civil rights were finally established for African Americans. Until that time African Americans were second-class people who were often denied their political citizenship by being denied suffrage. Therefore, the opportunity for traditional assimilation for African Americans has not existed until very recently. Given the traditional assimilation pattern, African Americans for all practical purposes, are only second generation Americans regardless of how far back they can trace their actual ancestry in America.  

For many nonwhite minorities in America there has been denial of political citizenship through denial of suffrage, denial of economic citizenship through de jure and de facto discrimination that prevented competition for jobs and small business loans, denial of social citizenship through de jure and de facto residential segregation and educational segregation, denial of human citizenship through racist public policies.

There has often been the assumption that America is the land of opportunity for everyone, and indeed it can be, however, there are those who also make the assumption that America is a melting pot in which immigrants either do or should assimilate quickly and readily. If assimilation is the process by which a racial or ethnic minority loses its distinctive identity and lifeways and conforms to the cultural patterns of the dominant group then submerging one’s self into the melting pot of American society means trying to be as white as possible. The dominant culture in America is white even though it has many aspects of great diversity and even though it has taken many elements from many other cultures and incorporated them into its culture, it has in most cases stamped diversity with the imprimatur of white acceptance. While America is a melting pot for white ethnics, for people of color it has become a kind of tossed salad or lumpy stew where all share the same seasoning, (the sociocultural structure), while each still retains its separate identity. This societal pattern is called pluralism—cooperation among racial and ethnic groups in areas deemed essential to their well being (e.g. the economy the national political arena), while retaining their distinctive identities and lifestyles. In pluralistic societies, citizens share what they can and maintain what they can. With the notable exception of Switzerland with its four distinct ethnic/language groups, most pluralistic societies have destroyed themselves with bloody ethnic strife. Whether America can balance the melting pot with semi-pluralism is yet to be seen. The great experiment that is America may be the only nation on earth where the possibility of unity through diversity may actually come to fruition.

For more information about immigration, please visit the following websites: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services; History of Migration and Immigration Laws in the United States from ACLAnet; A History of Immigration Law Regarding People of Color by Diana Vellos; United States Citizenship and Immigration Services: Laws; An Immigration Law Timeline and Links

Racial/Ethnic Discrimination In America 1776-1998

1776—Sally Hemings—was the slave and mistress of Thomas Jefferson. DNA evidence indicates that most of Hemings’s children were sired by Jefferson; however, the white descendants of Jefferson dispute this. On February 28, 2010, the New York Times ran several articles about this issue.
1845—Native American Party—An anti-immigration group held convention in Philadelphia; attempted to stop immigration to U.S.

1852—Know-Nothings formed the American Party—Gained control of some legislature. Wanted to: Ban Catholics and other immigrants (mostly Southern Europeans) from holding offices; Create literacy tests; Restrict immigration based on national origin. For more about the Know-Nothings click here.

1854—Commodore Matthew Perry opens trade between US and Japan—this led to the explosive modernization of Japan which went from a feudal society to an industrial society in less than fifty years.

1857—Dred Scott Decision—established the legal doctrine of slaves as property.

1864-1877—Reconstruction—a time of martial law in the South. Reconstruction ended due to a political deal made to settle the disputed election of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877.

1877—Jim Crow Laws established—the Jim Crow laws were laws that segregated white and non-white people and denied the civil rights of non-white people. This led to the “separate but equal” doctrine which was later amended to “separate and unequal.” For more information about the Jim Crow laws, see: Jim Crow History Org; Remembering Jim Crow; The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia

1882—First Chinese Exclusionary Act passed—this legislation prevented the families of railroad construction workers and agricultural laborers from entering the United States. It created a deviant community of bachelor men on the west coast. For more information about the Asian Exclusion Act see: The Chinese Exclusion Act: A Black Legacy; An act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese; Chinese Exclusion Act (1882).

1887—American Protective Association founded to stop immigration.

1887—The Dawes Act eliminated tribal ownership of Indian lands.

1894—Immigration Restriction League founded; proposed literacy tests and special standards for immigrants

1896—Plessy v. Ferguson decided by the Supreme Court; established separate but equal; affirmed the constitutionality of the Jim Crow laws. For more information see: Plessy v. Ferguson; The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow; Landmark Cases; Plessy v. Ferguson.

1899—Cumming v. County Board of Education established separate but unequal status; progeny of Plessy; upheld constitutionality of Jim Crow laws.

1911—Chinese Exclusionary Act expanded to include other East Asians and Japanese.

1924—National Origins Act passed by Congress—Banned all east Asians, strictly limited immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe

1924—Ku Klux Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in D.C.; the KKK had 4 million members out of a national population of about 114 million. See also: “1924: Hatred Wore a Hood in Jersey”

1942—Korematsu Decision determined that denying the civil rights of a certain group of citizens in times of war is
constitutional. See also: *Korematsu v. United States*: The U.S. Supreme Court Upholds Internment; Landmark Cases: *Korematsu*.

1943—The “Zoot Suit Riots” in LA; 200 Navy personnel rioted for 4 days over the July 4th Holiday in East L.A.; many Hispanics killed; no arrests; newspapers anti-Hispanic articles exacerbated the situation.

1953—Emmett Till murdered. For more information, see: *The History of Jim Crow: The Lynching of Emmett Till*; *The Lynching of Emmett Till*; *A Timeline of the Emmett Till Case*.

1962—South Carolina begins to fly Confederate Flag over capitol dome


1998—Matthew Shephard murdered because he was gay. Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act; Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

---

**W.E.B. (William Edward Burghardt) DuBois**

W.E.B. (William Edward Burghardt) DuBois (pronounced dooboyz) lived from 1868 to 1963. He was the first African American to get a PhD in Sociology from Harvard. He wrote *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903. He edited *The Crisis* during the Harlem Renaissance, and was an early member of the Niagara Movement which later became the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). DuBois was the first African American president of the American Sociological Society. As a young man, he believed in the promise of the United States as a country where all people could be equal and free. He spent his life as a sociologist, social critic, and civil rights activist. His 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk* was about the socioeconomic and sociopolitical circumstances of African Americans following the Civil War and in the first years of the 20th century. He wrote:

“The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line.”

“How does it feel to be a problem?”

“... the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and gifted with second sight in this American world—a world that yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed in his face.”
**Sally Hemings**

Thomas Jefferson, slave owner, primary author of the *Declaration of Independence*, third President of the United States, founder of the University of Virginia, polymath, rapist, and father of Sally Hemings’s children, wrote about his social conflict over the issue of slavery: “… I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice ‘cannot sleep forever’.” In other words, white America has a great deal to answer for.

Sally Hemings was a slave who was originally owned by a Virginia planter named John Wayles. Wayles owned Sally Hemings’s mother, raped her, and the result of that rape was Sally Hemings. John Wayles’s legitimate, white daughter Martha married Thomas Jefferson, the author of the *Declaration of Independence* and later, the third President of the United States. Upon her marriage to Jefferson, Martha was given Sally Hemings as her personal-maid/slave; Hemings was between 12 and 14 at the time. The marriage between Martha Wayles Jefferson and Thomas Jefferson was relatively short and ended with her death after which, Jefferson began a life-long relationship with Sally Hemings, siring several children, all of whom remained slaves for the duration of Jefferson’s life. The relationship between Jefferson and Hemings was undoubtedly complicated, but one thing is clear: Hemings could not prevent Jefferson from coming into her bed and having sex with her because she was his property! Slaves had no personal rights and slave women were often the repeated victims of their owner’s rapine behavior. Jefferson never acknowledged his children and they (and Sally Hemings, herself) remained slaves until after Jefferson’s death.

**Anti-Immigrant Groups**

The Statue of Liberty notwithstanding, (“give me your tired, your poor”), the United States has a long history of preventing immigration and attempting to block persons based on national origin and/or religion. There have been many anti-immigration groups and political parties in the United States beginning in the early 19th century and continuing until the present day. Many of our immigration laws have been discriminatory and have stultified migration rather than encouraging it. The Native American Party, the American Party, the American Protective Association, the Immigration Restriction League, and the Ku Klux Klan, among many other groups, were all founded based on their opposition to the immigration of anyone they considered unworthy—Italians, Jews, Greeks, Poles, Irish Catholics, Catholics or non-Protestants in general, and all non-whites which included, among people traditionally classified as non-white, Italians, Greeks, Turks, and other residents of the southern European, Mediterranean coast, and eastern European, mostly Catholic or Muslim, peoples. Congress vacillates between restricting and encouraging migration from various regions of the planet. Nevertheless, we were a nation of immigrants at our inception and remain a nation of immigrants to this day.

In 2010 there are still anti-immigration groups. PublicEye.org publishes a list of about a dozen anti-immigrant groups that ranges from think tanks to the Christian right as does the Southern Poverty Law Center. In February 2010, former US House of Representatives member Tom Tancredo (R-CO), gave the keynote address to the first Tea Party convention arguing that we need “a civics literacy test” before anyone in this country can vote. He also stated that if John McCain had been elected president in 2009, “President Calderon and President McCain would be toasting the elimination of those pesky things called borders and major steps taken toward creation of a North American Union.” In other words, there are those today who would block all immigration into this country legal and illegal because they are afraid of the changes that immigrants make to the culture of the United States. The question then becomes, how have other immigrants changed America and has America changed them more than they have changed it? Most of the literature on...
this question would suggest that it is a reciprocal process but that the American ideology and the American constitution remain strong.

The Dred Scott Decision

In 1857, a slave named Dred Scott was owned by a physician (Dr. Scott) who was a civilian contractor to the United States Army. Dr. Scott accepted a contract in territory that would enter the union as a free, non-slave state. The abolitionist movement filed suit on behalf of Dred Scott claiming that, because he was residing in free territory, he should no longer be a slave. The Supreme Court of the United States determined that slaves are not human, but are property and thus may be treated like property, meaning that ownership existed regardless of the location of the property.

After the Civil War, a period of marital law existed in the South in the states that had seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. There were approximately ten million slaves who were freed by the Civil War, most of whom were illiterate—it was illegal to teach a slave to read or write, and a slave caught reading or writing could be killed at once—trained only for work in the fields, had never been more than ten miles from where they were born, and had no concept of money management. Ten million in a nation of 35 million! Ten million people, one-third of the population of the country without the most basic economic skills! Reconstruction was a political process meant to bring the freed slaves up to the same socioeconomic condition of poor whites in order to make them economically self-sufficient. However, Reconstruction became a way to crush the South, grind it down, and pillage what remained after the war. The government did very little to help the newly freed blacks, but Northern abolitionists and religious organizations began to send people into the South to provide an academic education, (reading, writing, arithmetic), and job skill training. A series of schools were established across the South and when the “white, Quaker, school mams,” as W.E.B. DuBois called them, left, they had trained young African Americans to teach the basic skills so that the schools continued long after Reconstruction ended. Unfortunately, the death of Reconstruction gave birth to the segregation laws that later came to be called Jim Crow laws. These segregation laws remained in effect until the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s. In fact, in 1896, the Supreme Court of the United States, in a ground-breaking case titled Plessy v. Ferguson, declared that segregation was Constitutional establishing the legal separation and unequal treatment of people based on race! It wasn't until 1955, nearly sixty years later and ninety years after the end of the Civil War, in another ground-breaking case titled Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas that the Supreme Court decided, unanimously, that segregation was inherently discriminatory and thus unconstitutional.

Chinese/Asian Exclusion

Many Chinese men had been recruited by the railroad companies to work on the Transcontinental Railroad—a vast, complex, engineering feat to span the continent and link the entire expanse of the middle of North America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. By 1887, the project was complete and many of the Chinese workers, having saved the majority of their pay, returned home, or, conversely, began to send for their families—parents, siblings, wives and children, sweethearts, cousins—beginning a steady migration stream from China to the United States. Many of these former railroad workers settled along the West Coast and began to compete, economically, with the white population of the region. Feeling serious economic pressure from the Chinese immigrants, whites on the West Coast petitioned Congress to stop migration from China. Congress complied and passed a bill titled the “Asian Exclusionary Act.”
The Dawes Act

That same year, Congress also passed the “Dawes Act” which deprived American Indians of the ownership of their ancestral land and established the reservation system that exists even now. As an aside, Congress has never, in its entire history, kept any treaty it has made with any American Indian tribe. The current treaties are so bent that they are about to break and there is a law suit in federal court concerning the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which is part of the Department of the Interior, and is responsible for the management of reservation land and the people living on reservations. The suit alleges that the BIA has misallocated, misappropriated, or simply lost, over ten million dollars that was earmarked for social services on a reservation. This suit has been languishing in the federal court system since 1995! 30

It is also important to know that, in the mid 1970s, medical doctors from the United States Public Health Service’s Indian Health Services branch, whose mandate is to provide health care on Indian reservations, often forcibly, sterilized, without their knowledge or consent, more than 25,000 American Indian women on several reservations. 31 This practice of forced sterilizations continued into the 1990s. The rationale was that the women were too poor to manage children and that the doctors and nurses were providing indispensable help to these women by limiting their child bearing. A further argument was that sterilization is a preventative for fetal alcohol syndrome in alcoholic American Indian women. How far should government go in protecting us from ourselves? Does the government have a legitimate concern regarding what we do with our bodies? Should the poor be prevented from having children? Should alcoholic or drug addicted women be allowed to get pregnant?

Expansion of Asian Exclusion

From the 15th century through the 19th century, Japan was a xenophobic, feudal society, ostensibly governed by a God-Emperor, but in reality ruled by ruthless, powerful Shoguns. Japan’s society changed little during the four centuries of samurai culture, and it was cut off from the rest of the world in self-imposed isolation, trading only with the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and Chinese, and then not with all of them at once, often using one group as middlemen to another group. In the mid-19th century, (1854), the United States government became interested in trading directly with Japan in order to open up new export markets and to import Japanese goods at low prices uninflated by middleman add-ons. Commodore Matthew Perry was assigned to open trade between the United States and Japan. With a flotilla of war ships, Perry crossed the Pacific and berthed his ships off the coast of the Japanese capital. Perry sent letters to the emperor that were diplomatic but insistent. Perry had been ordered not to take no for an answer, and when the emperor sent Perry a negative response to the letters, Perry maneuvered his warships into positions that would allow them to fire upon the major cities of Japan. The Japanese had no armaments or ships that could compete with the Americans, and so, capitulated to Perry. Within thirty years, Japan was almost as modernized as its European counterparts. They went from feudalism to industrialism almost over night.

Within a few years of the trade treaty between the United States and Japan, a small but steady trickle of Japanese immigrants flowed across the Pacific Ocean. This migration to the West Coast of the United States meant that Japanese immigrants were in economic competition with the resident population, most of whom were white. Fears of economic loss led the whites to petition Congress to stop the flow of immigrants from Japan, and in 1911 Congress expanded the Asian Exclusionary Act to include Japanese thereby stopping all migration from Japan into the United States. In 1914,
Congress passed the National Origins Act which cut off all migration from East Asia.

In 1924, anti-minority sentiment in the United States was so strong that the Ku Klux Klan had four million, proud, openly racist members thousands of whom were involved in a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, that was watched by thousands of Klan supporters, and other Americans.

On December 7, 1941, at 7:55 A.M. local time the Japanese fleet in the South Pacific launched 600 hundred aircraft in a surprise attack against U.S. Naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Within four hours, 2,400 people, mostly military personnel had been killed, including the 1,100 men who will be entombed forever in the wreckage of the U.S.S. Arizona when it capsized during the attack. Although this was a military target, the United States was not at war when the attack occurred. In less than six months after the attack, Congress passed the Japanese Relocation Act. Below, is reproduced the order that was posted in San Francisco.

THE JAPANESE AMERICAN RELOCATION ORDER

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY

WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION

Presidio of San Francisco, California

May 3, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

All of that portion of the City of Los Angeles, State of California, within that boundary beginning at the point at which North Figueroa Street meets a line following the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence southerly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence southerly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence northwesterly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northerly on Main Street to First Street; thence north-westerly on First Street to Figueroa Street; thence northeasterly on Figueroa Street to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 33, this Headquarters, dated May 3, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Saturday, May 9, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Southern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at

Japanese Union Church,
SEE CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER NO. 33

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.

2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.

3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.

4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday, May 4, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday, May 5, 1942.

2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:

   (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;

   (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;

   (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;

   (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;

   (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

   All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.

4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.

5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture.
utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.

6. Each family, and individual living alone will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Monday, May 4, 1942, or between the hours of

8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M.,

Tuesday, May 5, 1942, to receive further instructions.

Lieutenant General, U. S. Army

Commanding

This map shows the location of the American concentration camps where Japanese Americans were interned during WWII.

![Map of American concentration camps](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A_Minority_Studies_(Dunn)/3%3A_Race_and_Ethnicity/3.1%3A...)

In 1943, Fred Korematsu, with the assistance of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit in federal court arguing that it was unconstitutional to deprive American citizens of the their civil rights without due process of law. The Supreme Court of the United States decided that, in times of great national strife, it was Constitutional to deprive one specific segment of the population of their civil rights because of the potential for harm by that specific group. You might be interested to know that this decision has never been overturned, which means that it is still the law of the land.

The Zoot Suit Riots

During the “Zoot Suit Riots,” 200 United States Navy personnel rioted for four days over the July 4th, 1943 holiday in
East L.A.; many Hispanics killed; no military personnel were arrested. The Los Angeles newspapers had published a series of anti-Hispanic articles which exacerbated the situation. (For more information, please visit the following websites: The "Zoot Suit" Riots; Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots; World War Two and the Zoot Suit Riots.)

The Murder of Emmett Till

In 1953, a fourteen year old boy from Chicago convinced his reluctant mother to send him to Mississippi during his summer vacation to visit his uncle and cousins; the boy’s name was Emmett Till. His uncle had a farm a few miles from a very small town, population 300-500. One day Emmett and his cousins decided to go into the town where they visited a small grocery store/meat market. While in the store, Emmett told his cousins that the woman behind the counter was pretty, and then he whistled at her. Emmett Till was black, the woman was white, and this was the American South of Jim Crow segregation.

The woman reached for a shotgun as Till’s cousins grabbed him and ran home as fast as their legs could move. Late that night, three adult, white men came to Till’s uncle’s house and demanded that the boy be brought out, Till’s uncle refused. The men went into the house, found Till, still asleep, picked him up and dragged him, kicking and screaming, out the house. The men took Till to a remote, semi-abandoned barn where perhaps twenty white, adult men, took turns, for the next seven days, beating and torturing the fourteen year old, whose crime was whistling at a white woman.

When Till’s mother was asked to identify her son’s body, she couldn’t recognize her son whose face looked more like a large piece of hamburger meat than a human being. The three men who took Till from his uncle’s house were arrested, tried by an all-white, all-male jury, and acquitted. In 2005, the FBI exhumed Emmett Till’s body, looking for evidence that would allow them to bring federal charges of civil rights abuses against the handful of living men who were involved in the torture and murder of Till. Unfortunately, they failed to find sufficient evidence to present to a grand jury. Thus, the case is closed, and the guilty have either died or gone free since 1953! (For more information, please visit the following websites: The Murder of Emmett Till; The History of Jim Crow: The Lynching of Emmett Till; The Lynching of Emmett Till; A Timeline of the Emmett Till Case.)

The Murder of James Byrd, Jr.

James Byrd, Jr. was murdered by being dragged to death, down an asphalt road, late at night, in the small East Texas town of Jasper. Byrd was black, his killers are white. Two of them have been sentenced to death and one to life imprisonment. (For more information, please visit the following websites: The Murder of James Byrd Jr. Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act; Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.)

Hate kills, and the United States, born in racism, is a nation where hate has been nurtured. Unfortunately, racism is part of the fabric of American society. It is part of our social structure. Thus, we must learn to deal with both the legacy and the ongoing problems of racism. A difficult, but necessary task. In order to fully overcome the racism inherent in American society, we must heed the words of W.E.B. DuBois and remember, that for minorities “One ever feels his twoness—an American, a [minority]; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one . . . body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” The promise of this country is great, but the reality has not yet met the promise even though there have been movements to overcome our inherent racism.
Overcoming Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

1808—Importation of slaves banned in the U.S.

1863—Emancipation Proclamation signed.

1865—13th Amendment ratified; abolished slavery.

1868—14th Amendment ratified; established due process and equal protection to all citizens including former slaves.

1870—15th Amendment ratified; voting rights for former slaves established.

1905—The Niagara Movement the beginnings of the NAACP.


1954—Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka declared that segregation was inherently discriminatory and unconstitutional.


1964—24th Amendment ratified; outlawed poll taxes.


1965—Immigration Act removed national quota systems permitting an influx of immigrants from Mexico Latin American and Asia.


1980s—Congress issues an apology and grants reparations to those effected by Korematsu.

1990s—President Clinton offers apologies and reparations to victims of the Tuskegee experiment. (For more information, please see the following websites: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment; U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee; TUSKEGEE SYPHILIS STUDY; Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study; Remembering Tuskegee; TUSKEGEE EXPERIMENT ON BLACK MALES!)

1995—Mississippi ratifies constitutional amendment abolishing slavery

2000—South Carolina removes the Confederate Flag from flying over the capitol dome

See also: Civil Rights: A Chronology; Slavery Timeline; Slavery and our Founding Fathers; Statutes of the United States Concerning Slavery.
Historical Race/Ethnic Population Demographics in America: A Brief Statistical Overview

- 1790—Population 4 million
  - 1 person in 30 urban=3.33
- 1820—Population 10 million
  - 1 black to 4 whites=25% Black population
  - 14000 immigrants per year for decade
  - Almost all from England and N. Ireland (Protestants)
  - 1 in 20 urban=5%
- 1830—Population 13 million
  - 1 black to 5 whites=20 Black population
  - 60,000 immigrants in 1832
  - 80,000 immigrants in 1837
  - Irish Catholics added to mix
- 1840—Population 17 million
  - 1 in 12 urban=8.33
  - 84,000 immigrants
- 1840-1850—immigration 1.5 million Europeans
- 1850—Population 23 million
  - Irish 45% of foreign-born
  - Germans 20% of foreign-born
- 1850s—immigration 2.5 million Europeans
  - 2% of the population of NYC were immigrants
  - In St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee the foreign-born outnumbered the native-born
- 1860—Population 31.5 million
  - 26% of the population of free states were urban
  - 10 of the population in the South were urban
  - Irish immigrant population in America=1.5 million
  - German immigrant population in America=1 million
- 1900—Population=76.1 million
- 2002—Population=280 million
- 2010—Population=309 million

Although Europe has been the traditional sending region for immigrants to the U.S., the post WWII era (after 1946) shows a significant increase in migration from Mexico, South and Central America, and Asia. The latest migration trend involves people from Africa. Please visit the following websites for more information: The Statistical Abstract of the United States: Population: Migration; The Statistical Abstract of the United States: Population: Ancestry, Language Spoken At Home; The Statistical Abstract of the United States Population: Native and Foreign-born Populations.
Footnotes

1. The United States is inarguably the richest nation in the world with an economy in 2002 over $12 trillion (12,000,000,000,000). England (population 59.6 million, economy $1.36 trillion); France (population 56 million, economy $1.45 trillion); Germany (population 83 million, economy $1.94 trillion); Italy (population 58 million, economy $1.3 trillion); Spain (population 40 million, economy $720 billion); Sweden (population 9 million, economy $197 billion); Austria (population 8 million, economy $203 billion), Switzerland (72. million, $207 billion), Denmark (population 5 million, $136 billion); Norway (4.5 million, $124 billion); Netherlands (16 million, $308 billion); Belgium (population 10 million, $259 billion). England France Italy and Spain have a combined population of about 300 million (approximately 20 million fewer people than the United States, their combined economies are valued at slightly less than $7 trillion or about 23% of the United States! In other words, the United States is richer than the 4 largest countries in Western Europe combined! CIA World Factbook On-Line, January 2, 2002. HYPERLINK http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook. And yet, even with this vast ability to generate wealth, at the end of 2000, eighteen percent of all American children lived in poverty and nearly 35 of children in Houston in 2000 lived in poverty. The government-determined poverty line is set so that an individual who makes less than $8,000 and a family four making less than $17,000 is considered poor. Poverty levels are based on subsistence levels for food, clothing, and shelter. The feminization of poverty is a social condition that has existed since WWII, in which women, particularly teenage mothers, elderly widows, divorced women, and female heads of single-parent households constitute a disproportionate share of the poor. In fact, single women with children are many times more likely to be poor than any other group in American society.


3. Ibid. p. 45.

4. This source for this line from *South Pacific* is my own memory.

5. According to Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, an individual cannot hold two incompatible ideas in their mind at one time without suffering extreme psychic distress. In order to relieve such distress or dissonance, it is necessary for the individual to remove in some way the cause of the dissonance. This is sometimes accomplished by rationalizing the ideas so that they become compatible. The Fair-weather Liberal must attempt to make sense out of his/her behavior which is at odds with his/her attitude by rationalizing that behavior which eventually will result in the cognitive dissonance being relieved by making the attitude compatible with the behavior—in other words, the Fair-weather Liberal becomes an All-weather Bigot because he/she has accommodated the incompatibility between attitude and behavior by excusing the behavior and changing the attitude.

6. The following is the actual text of the original order that forced 110,000-120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, more than 75% of them American citizens, to relocate into concentration camps in the United States for the duration of World War II. *The Korematsu Decision* by the United States Supreme Court held that the relocation was Constitutional. The Japanese American Relocation OrderWESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMYWARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATIONPresidio of San Francisco CaliforniaMay 3 1942INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRYLiving in the Following Area: All of that portion of the City of Los Angeles State of California within that boundary beginning at the point at which North Figueroa Street meets a line following the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence southerly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence southerly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence westerly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northerly on Main Street to First Street; thence northerly on First Street to Figueroa Street; thence northeasterly on Figueroa Street to the point of beginning. Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 33 this Headquarters dated May 3 1942 all persons of Japanese ancestry both alien and non-akaner will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon P. W. T. Saturday May 9 1942. No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon P. W. T. Sunday May 3 1942 without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General Southern California Sector at the Civil Control Station located at Japanese Union Church120 North San Pedro StreetLos Angeles CaliforniaSEE CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER NO. 33Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family or in cases of grave emergency. The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways: 1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation. 2. Provide services with respect to the
management leasing sale storage or other disposition of most kinds of property such as real estate business and professional equipment household goods boats automobiles and livestock.3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence. The Following Instructions Must Be Observed

1. A responsible member of each family preferably the head of the family or the person in whose name most of the property is held and each individual living alone will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday May 4 1942 or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday May 5 1942. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center the following property:(a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;(b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;(c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;(d) Sufficient knives forks spoons plates bowls and cups for each member of the family;(e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family. All items carried will be securely packaged tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage at the sole risk of the owner of the more substantial household items such as iceboxes washing machines pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.6. Each family and individual living alone will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station. Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. Monday May 4 1942 or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. Tuesday May 5 1942 to receive further instructions. Lieutenant General U. S. Army Commanding
Parts of Mexico have been annexed through war—Texas, Arizona, New Mexico—and parts through treaty—most of California and the Southernmost borders of Arizona and New Mexico through the Gadsden Purchase. The history of Mexico since the coming of the European conqueror/explorers has been fraught with internal strife and external pressure.

DNA evidence, oral tradition in the Hemings family, and written documents maintained by the Hemings family solidly confirm that Jefferson was the father of all but the first of Sally Hemings’s children. The white descendants of Thomas Jefferson refuse to accept the evidence and argue that it was Jefferson’s brother who was responsible for siring Hemings’s children.

Migration from Philippines in limited numbers was still permitted largely because the United States owned Philippines.