Because skin color is socially constructed, it can also be reconstructed. Thus, when the descendants of the European immigrants began to move up economically and socially, their skins apparently began to look lighter to the whites who had come to America before them. When enough of these descendants became visibly middle class, their skin was seen as fully white. The biological skin color of the second and third generations had not changed, but it was socially blanched or whitened.

—Herbert J. Gans (2005)

At a time when the United States is more diverse than ever, with the minority population topping 100 million (one in every three U.S. residents; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), the notion of race seems to permeate almost every facet of American life. Certainly, one of the more highly charged aspects of the race dialogue relates to crime. Before embarking on an overview of race and crime, we must first set the parameters of the discussion, which include relevant definitions and the scope of our review. When speaking of race, it is always important to remind readers of the history of the concept and some current definitions.

The idea of race originated 5,000 years ago in India, but it was also prevalent among the Chinese, Egyptians, and Jews (Gossett, 1963). Although François Bernier (1625–1688) is usually credited with first classifying humans into distinct races, Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) invented the first system of categorizing plants and humans. It was, however, Johan Frederich Blumenbach (1752–1840) who developed the first taxonomy of race. In his 1795 work, “On the Natural Variety of Mankind,” Blumenbach separated the inhabitants of the earth into five races: Ethiopian (African or Negroid), Mongolian (Asian), American (Native American), and Malaysian (Pacific Islander). When categorizing the fifth group, Whites, Blumenbach coined the term Caucasian (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). Relying on Blumenbach’s work, European scholars created a categorization that led to the belief that the differences among the groups were biological—and from the beginning Europeans placed themselves at the apex of the racial hierarchy (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). It is widely believed, however, that the biological differences among racial groups are attributable to the patterns of their migration out of Africa (Dulaney, 1879; Shane, 1999; see Figure 1.1).
Today, social scientists refer to race as a “social construct.” Gallagher (1997) writes that “race and ethnicity are social constructions because their meanings are derived by focusing on arbitrary characteristics that a given society deems socially important. Race and ethnicity are social products based on cultural values; they are not scientific facts” (p. 2). Another relevant definition has been provided by Flowers (1988): “Race . . . refers to a group of persons characterized by common physical and/or biological traits that are transmitted in descent” (p. xiv). Finally, the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) has added the following:

The concept of race . . . reflects self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. These categories are sociopolitical constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature.

Thus, there is no shortage of definitions that refer to race as a social construct. Increasingly, however, some scholars—relying on scientific discoveries in the natural sciences—are beginning to challenge the notion of race as a social construct (Sesardic, 2010; J. P. Wright, 2009).

**Race, DNA, Criminal Justice Databases, and Civil Rights Concerns**

Recent criminal justice investigations involving the use of DNA evidence have challenged the notion that there are no biological differences between races. These cases have relied on DNA to identify the race of a perpetrator (D. H. Simons, 2003). In one instance, skeptical police investigators had a scientist conduct a sample test to illustrate support for the science behind the use of DNA to identify the race of the suspect. Specifically, the investigators sent a molecular biologist 20 DNA samples to test for racial identity; after conducting his analysis,
the molecular biologist correctly identified the race of all 20 samples. He later helped investigators solve the case by identifying the offender as Black, not White, as had been previously thought (Newsome, 2007).

The general collection and use of DNA has not been without controversy. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has recently articulated three general concerns about forensic DNA databases. First, they believe the use of such databases can result in an invasion of medical privacy. In particular, they believe that DNA data “might be used by employers, insurers, and others for invidious genetic discrimination—against both the individual who supplied the DNA and also their immediate family members, who have similar DNA” (Schwartz, 2011, p. 1). Thus, there is concern about the FBI’s Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). Contrary to the belief of some, the DNA information collected by the FBI does provide information on “medically relevant” genes. Second, the ACLU believes that the use of forensic DNA databases represents an invasion of bodily integrity. To collect the information for the database, officials often place a swab in a person’s mouth; if the person refuses, he or she is often forced to comply. Schwartz (2011) notes that the government can get around forcibly taking the DNA by covertly taking DNA that is shed onto objects citizens have handled (e.g., soda cans). Potentially, the government could secretly seize the DNA of all Americans (p. 3). The ACLU’s third concern related to DNA databases is their racially disparate impact. Here, the ACLU takes the position that because “African Americans and Hispanics are arrested, prosecuted, and convicted—often wrongly—at a far higher rate than Caucasians,” they are likely to be disparately impacted by DNA databases (Schwartz, 2011). In addition to these general concerns, the ACLU is also concerned about familial DNA testing.

Familial DNA testing occurs when the DNA of the suspect is only a partial match. This can result in police questioning the immediate and extended family of the suspect, which has the potential to criminalize entire families—especially families of color (De Gruy, 2010; Schwartz, 2011). Given that people of color are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated, familial DNA testing has the potential to contribute to racial injustice in the administration of justice.

There is clearly a delicate balance that needs to be struck when collecting DNA data. In the United Kingdom, for example, there are now 5 million profiles in their Police National Computer (PNC), which was a 40% increase in just two years. Currently, the United States has nearly double that figure, with 9 million people in the FBI’s CODIS database (Schwartz, 2011). The reality is that the successful use of DNA databases is spurring the increased use of DNA evidence in the criminal justice field—in the United States and abroad. The real challenge ahead is how to balance privacy concerns with public safety concerns (Kazemian, Pease, & Farrington, 2011; Tseloni & Pease, 2011).

Race, Ethnicity, and the 2010 U.S. Census

Even though the debate about the existence of distinct races persists, the U.S. Census Bureau continues to track national data on race/ethnicity. In fact, the 2010 census collected these data, which became the standard practice during the first decennial census in 1790 (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Figure 1.2 shows the form that was used to ask questions pertaining to race and ethnicity on the 2010 census. The form illustrates the separation of race and ethnicity. This practice dates to 1997, when the federal government mandated that “race and Hispanic origin (ethnicity) are separate and distinct concepts and that when collecting these data via self-identification, two different questions must be used” (Humes et al., 2011, p. 2).
Typically, Hispanics/Latinos are referred to as an ethnic group. The term *ethnicity* comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means “nation.” Generally, ethnic groups are defined by their similar genetic inheritances or some identifiable traits visible among most members of a particular group. Ethnic groups are also generally held together by a common language, culture, group spirit (nationalism or group solidarity), or geography (most typically originate from the same region; Marger, 1997). Therefore, most scholars generally see the terms *race* and *ethnicity* as culturally relevant rather than biologically relevant.

We follow the U.S. Census Bureau racial/ethnic categories and separate the American population into five groups: Native Americans, Whites, African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and Asian Americans. We also use the definitions for each of the groups outlined in the 2010 Census. We acknowledge that there are limitations to these categories. First, these categories do not take into account the ethnic variation within each race. For example, Table 1.1 provides a breakdown of the U.S. population by Hispanic/Latino origin and race. As you can see in Table 1.2, there are a number of ethnic groups within the racial classification “Hispanic or Latino Americans.” This is true of other races as well. Another example is the category “African American/Black.” There is also ethnic diversity within this category; it often encompasses people from the Caribbean (e.g., Jamaica, Haiti), African countries, and other parts of the world. Because each of these groups has had a unique experience in America, it is, at times, presumptive for researchers to assume that the experience of one...
## Table 1.1

**Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic or Latino origin and race</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change, 2000 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage of total population</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN AND RACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population ...............</td>
<td>281,421,906</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>308,745,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino ...........</td>
<td>35,305,818</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>50,477,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino ..</td>
<td>246,116,088</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>258,267,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone ................</td>
<td>194,552,774</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>196,817,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population .............</td>
<td>281,421,906</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>308,745,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Race......................</td>
<td>274,595,678</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>299,736,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White ..........................</td>
<td>211,460,626</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>223,553,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American ....</td>
<td>34,658,190</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>38,929,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>2,475,956</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2,932,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian ..........................</td>
<td>10,242,998</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>14,674,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>398,835</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>540,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race ........</td>
<td>15,359,073</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>19,107,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>6,826,228</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9,009,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau. *Census 2000 Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File*. Tables PL1 and PL2; and *2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File*. Tables PI and P2.

1. In Census 2000, an error in data processing resulted in an overstatement of the Two or More Races population by about 1 million people (about 15 percent) nationally, which almost entirely affected race combinations involving Some Other Race. Therefore, data users should assess observed changes in the Two or More Races population and race combinations involving Some Other Race between Census 2000 and Census 2010 with caution. Changes in specific race combinations not involving Some Other Race, such as White and Black or African American or White and Asian, generally should be more comparable.
# Table 1.2

## Hispanic or Latino Origin Population by Type: 2000 and 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin and type</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change, 2000 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281,421,906</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>308,745,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>35,305,818</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>50,477,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>246,116,088</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>258,267,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC OR LATINO BY TYPE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35,305,818</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50,477,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>20,640,711</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>31,798,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>3,406,178</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4,623,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>1,241,685</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1,785,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>10,017,244</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>12,270,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican (Dominican Republic)</td>
<td>764,945</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1,414,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central American (excludes Mexican)</td>
<td>1,686,937</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3,998,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rican</td>
<td>68,588</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>126,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemalan</td>
<td>372,487</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1,044,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduran</td>
<td>217,569</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>633,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaraguan</td>
<td>177,684</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>348,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panamanian</td>
<td>91,723</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>165,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>655,165</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1,648,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Central American (excludes Mexican)</td>
<td>103,721</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>31,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South American</td>
<td>1,353,562</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2,769,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentinean</td>
<td>100,864</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>224,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivian</td>
<td>42,088</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>99,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>68,849</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>126,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>470,684</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>908,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>260,559</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>564,631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
African/Black American is representative of so many diverse groups. Nevertheless, although we are aware of the problems with these classifications, the research and data we review follow this classification approach. Second, and relatedly, with the use of the multiracial category in the 2000 census, the lines between racial groups have become rather blurred. Table 1.1 illustrates that, in 2010, more than 9 million Americans considered themselves multiracial and self-identified with two or more races (up from about 7.8 million in 2000). This increasing trend adds to the considerable limitations of population and crime data (this topic is discussed further in Chapter 2).

### Race, Ethnicity, and Population Trends

The 2010 U.S. Census provides the most recent data on the racial and ethnic dynamics of America. The 2010 census reported more than 308 million residents in the United States. The figures also confirmed earlier estimates that the minority population had topped 100 million. The Hispanic/Latino population, as was observed in population estimates...
earlier in the decade, continues to be the largest minority population and now represents 16\% (50.5 million) of the U.S. population. Interestingly, their rise in population from 2000 to 2010, as outlined in Table 1.2, accounted for more than 50\% of the increase in the U.S. population during the decade (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). This increase in the Hispanic/Latino population has been largely fueled by the increasing number of Mexicans in the United States. Specifically, there were approximately 11 million more persons of Mexican descent in the United States in 2010 than there were a decade earlier. This trend has resulted in concerns not only about immigration in general but also illegal immigration. Border states, including Arizona, Texas, and California, have especially taken notice of this trend and reacted with legislation to stem the rising number of illegal immigrants. These states and others have enacted numerous measures to restrict the benefits (e.g., medical, educational) and rights (e.g., due process) of illegal immigrants in their states (Huntington, 2004; MacDonald, 2004). Other states have followed suit, contributing to a national debate on the best way to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the United States. Ironically, later in the chapter it will become clear that such fears are not new.

Given the rapidly changing demographics of the United States, in past years, some have called for the discontinuance of the term \textit{minority} (Texeira, 2005). In place of \textit{minority}, which some believe is a “term of oppression” or a term that seeks to minimize the collective aspirations of a group, the term \textit{people of color} has been suggested (Texeira, 2005). Whatever the term to be used, if current estimates are correct, it is clear that one day racial and ethnic groups now considered to be minorities will become nearly half the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In fact, estimates are that Whites will represent only 50\% of the population in 2050, with Hispanics/Latinos representing nearly a quarter of the population and other racial and ethnic minorities comprising the remainder of the populace (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In addition to the varying population figures, Table 1.3 provides some sociodemographic information on several racial/ethnic groups.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Category} & \textbf{White} & \textbf{Black/African American} & \textbf{Hispanic/ Latino} & \textbf{Asian} \\
\hline
\text{High school or higher 2009} & 87.10\% & 84.10\% & 61.9\% & 88.20\% \\
\hline
\text{4 year or higher 2009} & 29.90\% & 19.30\% & 13.20\% & 52.30\% \\
\hline
\text{Individuals below poverty 2009} & 9.40\% & 25.80\% & 25.30\% & 12.50\% \\
\hline
\text{Median per capita income (dollars) 2009} & 30,941 & 18,135 & 15,063 & 18,653 \\
\hline
\text{Unemployed 2009} & 8.50\% & 14.80\% & 12\% & 7.30\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Sociodemographic Characteristics of Select Racial/Ethnic Groups}
\end{table}
Prejudice and Discrimination

Even with the growth in the minority population, prejudice and discrimination remain a central concern. Prejudice is a negative attitude toward a particular group. This is usually in the form of stereotypes that often result in people making negative generalizations about an entire group. Discrimination is the “unequal treatment of a person or persons based on group membership” (Healey, 2007, p. 20). As you can imagine, having prejudicial attitudes toward a particular group, in many instances, can lead to discriminatory actions in areas such as employment, housing, and the criminal justice system. Thus, determining whether prejudice and discrimination permeate the criminal justice system is critical to understanding the role of race in justice system outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter provides a brief historical overview of each major racial/ethnic group, highlighting the complex history of race in America and how this history is intertwined with race, crime, and the criminal justice system. Readers should keep in mind that our historical review is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, we see our review as illustrating that concerns regarding race and crime are not new and have been the norm since distinctive racial and ethnic groups from across the globe arrived in America.

Historical Antecedents of Race and Crime in America

Native Americans

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, the native people had existed on the continent for thousands of years. It is believed that they originated from eastern Asia. More specifically, it is believed that they have been in North America for the last 30,000 years, having crossed over from Asia into America on glaciers that, due to warming trends, later melted (Polk, 2006, pp. 3–4). Over time, they built complex societies throughout the Americas. Even so, on arrival in the Americas (South America and the West Indies), it is clear from their actions that Christopher Columbus and his followers viewed the native people (then referred to as “Indians,” now referred to as “Native Americans”) as inferior (H. J. Clarke, 1992). The brutality that followed has been painstakingly documented by firsthand observers of the massacres (De Las Casas, 1552/1993). Sale (1990) has suggested that prior to the arrival of Europeans there were about 15 million Native Americans in North America. According to Healey (2003), nearly four centuries later, in 1890, only 250,000 remained. Today, there are nearly 4.5 million American Indians/Alaskan Natives in the United States. Nonetheless, considering the historical decimation of the Native American population, some criminologists have viewed their massacre as genocide (Barak, Flavin, & Leighton, 2010).

Although some have categorized all Native Americans into one group, they represent “a diverse array of nations, with major differences in population, economies, polities, language, and customs” (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012, p. 139). It has been noted that their societies were more advanced than those of the Europeans who colonized them. Consequently, Europeans borrowed much from Native American agriculture and pharmacology. Furthermore, some have noted that “Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and other colonial leaders admired and were influenced by the democratic institutions
of certain indigenous nations such as the Iroquois. Even the symbol of the United States, an eagle clutching arrows, was copied from Iroquois symbols (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012, p. 146).

During their initial contact with Europeans, Native Americans assisted the newcomers with advice on how to survive in their new environment. However, once colonists became comfortable with the surroundings, they began to displace, enslave, and destroy Native American societies. In time, massacres of Native Americans became commonplace throughout the colonies, but once the Constitution was ratified (with little mention of Native Americans), treaties were enacted with the aim of ending massacres and also protecting Native American lands from further pillage. But the government did not honor the treaties. Such actions were sanctioned at the highest levels, with presidents such as Andrew Jackson encouraging the defiance of Supreme Court rulings related to Native Americans. From 1790 to the mid-1800s, there were more than 300 treaties signed between Whites and Native Americans, most of which were not honored. As a result, conflicts persisted, which led to concerns regarding “criminal aggression” and the subsequent enactment of another approach: removal. Healey (2003) wrote,

East of the Mississippi, the period of open conflict was brought to a close by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which dictated a policy of forced emigration to the tribes. The law required all eastern tribes to move to new lands west of the Mississippi. Some of the affected tribes went without resistance, others fought, and still others fled to Canada rather than move to a new territory. (p. 190)

This infamous “Trail of Tears,” as it became known, resulted in the death of thousands of Native Americans. Nearly 40 years later, in 1867, the Doolittle Committee, which was investigating several recent massacres of Native Americans, found that much of the aggression by Native Americans around that time had occurred in response to White aggression (Harjo, 2002).

The same year of this massive removal of Native Americans, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was established to handle matters related to this population. Following the creation of the BIA, the agency had to deal with the competing aims of the federal government. On the one hand, the government created the agency to help Native Americans; on the other hand, the military had a policy of “genocidal extermination.” Nearly 60 years after the creation of the BIA, the 1887 Dawes Act provided that individual families be provided with reservation lands. While well meaning, as Feagin and Booher Feagin (2012) observed, “This policy resulted in a large-scale land sale to Whites. Through means fair and foul, the remaining 140 million acres of Indian lands were further reduced to 50 million acres by the 1930s” (p. 146). In the early part of the 20th century, the government tried to assimilate Native Americans by sending them to Indian boarding schools that were Christian-based and were used to indoctrinate Native Americans into American culture. During this process, Native Americans were forced to abandon their native language and customs. The attempt to assimilate Native Americans culminated during the 1920s with the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which granted all Native Americans citizenship. The end of this period saw Native Americans calling for new policies, one of which came in the form of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. The Act, which essentially ended the Dawes Act, “Was intended to establish Indian civil and cultural rights, allow for semi-autonomous tribal governments, and foster better economic development on reservations” (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012, p. 147).
As with all legislation, there were problems. Most notably, Native Americans saw this Act as giving too much power to the secretary of the interior. In addition, many Native Americans believed the Act violated their sovereignty, or their right to govern themselves, provided by previously enacted treaties.

The second half of the 20th century spurred more attempts by Native Americans to shed governmental control. In the early 1950s, Congress enacted legislation called termination, which “call[ed] for an end to the reservation system and to the special relationships between the tribes and the federal government” (Healey, 2004, p. 134). This process also negated previous treaties, a policy that was vigorously opposed by Native Americans. In addition, based on the specifics of the policy, “Tribes would no longer exist as legally recognized entities, and tribal lands and other resources would be placed in private hands” (Healey, 2004, p. 134). Because of this policy, many Native Americans moved to urban areas.

The decades following the enactment of the termination policy saw increasing opposition from Native Americans. After about 25 years, the policy was repealed. In 1975, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act “increased aid to reservation schools and Native American students and increased the tribes’ control over the administration of the reservations, from police forces to schools and road maintenance” (Healey, 2004, p. 136). This Act provides much of the basis on which many tribes now operate. Recent federal legislation has enabled some tribes to open gambling facilities on reservations, which, according to the National Indian Gaming Commission (n.d.), generated more than $26 billion in revenues in 2009. Other tribes have invested in additional ways to generate revenue (e.g., tax-free cigarette sales). Native Americans’ move to self-determination also has resulted in suits against the federal government seeking reparations for past broken treaties. With 561 recognized tribes, Native Americans remain a notable presence in the United States.

## African Americans

African Americans are another group that has had a long and arduous relationship with the United States. With the Native American population nearly completely decimated because of brutality, enslavement, and diseases that were brought to the Americas by the Spanish, Bartolome De Las Casas, the priest who accompanied Columbus to America, sought a way to stem their extermination.

De Las Casas’ idea centered on not ending the slave system, but instead replacing the Native Americans with another labor force: Africans. Of De Las Casas’ thinking, Finger (1959) wrote,

> Having heard that the Negroes of the Portuguese colonies in Africa were more robust than the natives of the West Indies Islands, he [De Las Casas] recommended that Black slaves be imported to take the place of Indians in server tasks of the plantations and mines. (p. 716)

Finger (1959) also described the results of De Las Casas’ suggestion:

> A terrible traffic in human flesh ensued. Portuguese raiders carried the Africans from their homes, and English sailors conveyed them across the Atlantic. Spanish, Portuguese, and later English slave-owners worked the poor Black men as though they possessed no natural rights as human beings. (pp. 716–717)
As with the decimation of the Native American population, the slave trade involving Africans has been viewed as genocidal and referred to as the “African holocaust” (H. J. Clarke, 1992).

It is disputable as to when Africans initially arrived in the colonies. Some suggest that Africans arrived in America long before their arrival in the 1600s as indentured servants and slaves (Goodwin, 2008; Van Sertima, 1976). But the prevailing historical account describes Africans arriving in America in 1619 as a result of piracy (Higginbotham, 1996). When a slave ship carrying Africans headed to the West Indies was taken over by pirates and ran out of supplies, the pirates landed in Jamestown, Virginia, where they sold the Africans for food and supplies. It is important to note that, prior to their movement into perpetual slavery, Africans had existed much like the other citizens in the colony. Thus, from their arrival in 1619 to the 1660s, Africans were not considered slaves in colonial America; they were able to fulfill indentures and were fairly integrated into the life of the colony. After 1660, however, colonial legislation made it clear that Africans were to be considered slaves.

McIntyre (1992) believes the leaders of the colony came to a juncture where they needed to decide the best way to further the economic fortunes of its citizens, and they came up with several potential options. The first involved the continued use of the indentured servant system for Blacks and Whites. Second, the colonists, like the Spaniards earlier, thought about enslaving the Native Americans. Third, both Native Americans and Blacks could be enslaved. Fourth, the colonists could create a free labor system for Blacks, Whites, Indians, and immigrants. Eventually, they chose the fifth option: the enslavement of Blacks. McIntyre (1992) has suggested that this was the case because Whites had the option to appeal for protection from the British monarchy; in addition, they could appeal to general White public opinion. Enslaving Native Americans did not appeal to the colonists because besides feeling that they would not hold up under slave conditions, they were aware that the natives were familiar with the terrain, which would have permitted easy escape. For the next two centuries, African Americans would serve as the primary labor force keeping the Southern economy afloat.

Although much of the slave system was kept intact by “plantation justice,” there was little interference in these matters from outside developing criminal justice institutions, except when slaves escaped or there was a slave revolt. In times of escapes, slave owners cooperated by enlisting slave patrols to ensure slaves were quickly captured and returned to their owners. Similarly, when slave revolts occurred, slave owners worked together to expeditiously bring a close to the uprisings that threatened the stability of the slave system (H. Aptheker, 1943/1993). Slave owners were so committed to quelling escapes and revolts that they enacted widespread “slave codes” to reduce their likelihood. Describing the slave codes, Russell (1998) wrote,

Slave codes embodied the criminal law and procedure applied against enslaved Africans. The codes, which regulated slave life from cradle to grave, were virtually uniform across states—each with the overriding goal of upholding chattel slavery. The codes not only enumerated the applicable law but also prescribed the social boundaries for slaves—where they could go, what types of activity they could engage in, and what type of contracts they could enter into. Under the codes, the harshest criminal penalties were reserved for those acts that threatened the institution of slavery (e.g., the murder of someone White or a slave insurrection). The slave codes also penalized Whites who opposed slavery. (pp. 14–15)
In addition to the slave codes, Whites used psychology to keep the slave system intact. Claude Anderson (1994) wrote that “this process was designed to instill in Blacks strict discipline, a sense of inferiority, belief in the slave owners’ superior power, acceptance of the owners’ standards and a deep sense of a slave’s helplessness and dependence” (p. 165). Moreover, Anderson noted that “the slave owners strove to cut Blacks off from their own history, culture, language, and community, and to inculcate White society’s value system” (p. 165).

Another telling dynamic during the slave era was the way in which punishment was exacted for crimes committed by African Americans in comparison with Whites. After reviewing nearly every appellate case on antebellum slavery and race relations from 1630 to 1865, A. Leon Higginbotham, the late jurist and scholar, formulated his “Ten Precepts of American Slavery Jurisprudence” (Higginbotham, 1996; see Box 1.1). These precepts describe the foundations on which justice was distributed during this era. Most notably, to maintain the slave system, White supremacy called for little justice to be distributed to African Americans, whereas Whites were indifferent to their own criminal activity. This was most pronounced in the crime of rape. Whites might rape Black women with impunity; however, if Blacks so much as looked at White women in an unacceptable way, they were subjected to severe beatings. Table 1.4 highlights the differential punishments for African American and White crimes during the slave era.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>White Offender</th>
<th>Black Slave Offender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder (White victim)</td>
<td>Maximum penalty: death</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petit treason (murder of slave owner)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder (Black victim)</td>
<td>Rarely prosecuted</td>
<td>If prosecuted, whipping, hard labor, or death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape (White victim)</td>
<td>No crime</td>
<td>No crime, exile, or death (If rape of free Black woman, penalty could be death)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault (White victim)</td>
<td>1–10 years (if done with intent to kill)</td>
<td>Whipping, exile, mutilation, or death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1700s brought similar race and crime concerns. Some Whites, however, continued to show indifference toward their own criminal activity. Although the slave system began to expand under the encouragement of the colonial aristocracy, the slave trade began to be shunned in the international community. Subsequently, there was a movement to stop the trade, although slavery continued for those slaves already in America. Du Bois (1891) wrote about the movement to stop the slave trade as having four periods, and these were tied to large-scale efforts by Whites to circumvent the law. Du Bois wrote that there were varying levels of commitment to this initiative. The compromise of the Constitutional convention allowed the slave trade to continue until 1808; however, Du Bois’s research showed that Whites never took the prohibition seriously, considering the large numbers of persons who were actively involved in trading slaves even with the threat of imprisonment.
Du Bois found that when the U.S. government signed the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, it further committed to ending the international slave trade. As a part of this commitment, participating nations were asked to engage in searches of vessels abroad; however, the U.S. was unwilling to agree to this stipulation. Hence, many ships that flew the American flag were not American; they were slave traders who sought refuge by using the American flag. Du Bois also noted that even after the death penalty was instituted for slave trading, he found
few instances when Whites had been convicted, much less executed, for being connected to the slave trade. In the end, this early form of White crime in America, which was particularly tied to the ruling class of slaveholders in the South, was allowed to persist because Whites were unwilling to give up the financial benefit derived from the slave trade and system (C. Anderson, 1994; E. Williams, 1944).

During the mid-1850s, there was a crisis brewing regarding slavery. Although a civil war seemed imminent, the North and South tried to delay the inevitable. Of particular concern during this period was the acquisition of territories in the southwest portion of the United States. The debate centered on which states should be slave states—if any at all. Predictably, Northerners argued to keep such states free, whereas Southerners wanted to preserve the institution of slavery, so they argued the reverse. Vigorous debate led to the well-known Compromise of 1850, which essentially gave each side a portion of what it wanted. For example, California entered the Union as a Free State, while other territories would enter the Union without mention of slavery (Franklin & Moss, 2000). One of the provisions of the Compromise led to the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

A revision of the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act, the Fugitive Slave Law (or Act) of 1850 was structured to ensure the return of runaway slaves. The Act called for the appointment of numerous commissioners who were authorized to hire deputies who all could “enlist the aid of bystanders or posses to enforce the act” (Kennedy, 1997, p. 83). Furthermore, monetary incentives were tied to this process. For example, “commissioners would be paid a fee of $5 in each case in which he determined that a slave master was not [emphasis added] entitled to an alleged fugitive slave, and would be paid a fee of $10 in each case in which he determined that a master was entitled to the accused person” (Kennedy, 1997, pp. 83–84). Finally, to illustrate the seriousness with which the enforcement of the Act was to be taken, there was a stipulation that if a U.S. Marshall refused or neglected to execute warrants issued by commissioners, he would be fined $1,000 (Kennedy, 1997). The enactment of this Act and other provisions of the Compromise still could not stop the move toward civil war. Thus, not long after the notorious 1857 Dred Scott decision that continued to increase the tensions between North and South, the country headed into the Civil War in 1861.

Following the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which freed the slaves in the Confederate states, and the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which ended slavery throughout the United States, many African Americans chose to remain in the South. Others dreamed of migrating north and starting anew. Unfortunately, Southern landowners were unwilling to part so easily with their former free labor force. Therefore, following emancipation, they enacted the Black codes. These codes were an assortment of laws that targeted poor Whites and African Americans. Some scholars have argued that the laws were specifically created so that a significant number of African Americans could be returned to plantation owners through the convict-lease system (Du Bois, 1901/2002; Myers, 1998; Oshinsky, 1996). The convict-lease system allowed states to lease convict labor to private landowners. Although some poor Whites also were caught up in this legal system, most of those being leased out to Southern landowners were African Americans. Before long, whereas previously they had engaged only in trivial offenses, African Americans began to engage in more bold and brutal offenses, which shocked Southern Whites who had created the system (Du Bois, 1901/2002).

Prior to the Civil War, primarily Whites had been incarcerated in Southern penal institutions, and one product of the massive changes in the South was the increasing number of African Americans found in prisons. Following this period, along with the convict-lease
system, states such as Mississippi ran notorious state prisons that put the prisoners to work. Parchman Farm was one of the most infamous (Oshinsky, 1996). The Reconstruction Era also brought the formal advent of hate groups. Groups such as the Knights of White Camellia, the Constitutional Union Guards, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, the Council of Safety, the ’76 Association, and the infamous Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were all formed to ensure White supremacy ruled in the South following Emancipation and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which officially abolished slavery. These groups wreaked havoc on African American and other citizens, who were targets of their hatred.

Lynching became the means used to intimidate and handle those who challenged the racist White power structure (see Figure 1.3). It is generally accepted that, between 1882 and 1930, “At least three thousand Black men, women, and children were murdered by White gangs during this era of the lynch mob, and this toll does not count other racially motivated murders or Black deaths from race riots” (Beck & Tolnay, 1995, p. 121). These indiscriminate killings of African Americans (and some Native Americans and Spanish-speaking minorities), usually by hanging, were typically carried out to avenge some unsubstantiated crime committed by an African American or other “undesirable” minority against a White person (Zangrando, 1980). In most instances, rape was alleged to justify these horrific actions.

The Ku Klux Klan emerged as the leading hate organization. In an effort to suppress African American economic equality and pride, the Klan beat African Americans for minor things, such as “Black women . . . dressing in brightly-colored clothes, and men for being impolite, talking back to Whites or failing to say ‘Yes Sir’” (Katz, 1986, p. 39). In many jurisdictions, Klan activities were condoned by local law enforcement. As a result, many African Americans lost faith in the justice system and stopped reporting crimes altogether (Katz, 1986).

On the eve of the 20th century, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) “separate but equal” decision was hailed by Southern bigots. This decision was significant in that it gave Whites legal support to enforce some of their ideas concerning White supremacy and the separation of the races. Furthermore, this decision enabled law enforcement officials to take action against African Americans who sought basic services now reserved for Whites. Du Bois (1899) clearly saw the danger of state-sanctioned segregation, writing,

[Another] cause of Negro crime is the exaggerated and unnatural separation in the South of the best classes of Whites and Blacks. A drawing of the color line, that extends to street-cars, elevators, and cemeteries, which leaves no common ground of meeting, no medium for communication, no ties of sympathy between two races who live together, and whose interests are at bottom one—such a discrimination is more than silly, it is dangerous. (p. 1357)

Ten years after the turn of the 20th century, African Americans were primarily Southern. Meier and Rudwick (1970) observed that “approximately three out of four lived in rural areas and nine out of ten lived in the South” (p. 213). The “Great Migration,” however, changed the landscape of the North and South. By the 1950s, “Negroes were mainly an urban population, almost three fourths of them being city-dwellers” (Meier & Rudwick, 1970, p. 213). During this era, African Americans crowded into Northern cities in search of job opportunities; what they found, however, were overcrowded urban areas with assorted European immigrants either seeking similar opportunities or already established in the low-skill, low-wage jobs that African Americans had hoped to receive.
A growing belief among whites in the community that Negroes are getting out of hand in wealth, in racial independence, in attitudes of self-assertion especially as workers, or in reliance upon the law. An economic depression causing some whites to retrograde faster than some Negroes may seem a relative advancement of Negroes in some of the latter respects.

In a more or less short period of time, Negroes begin to smile broadly and ingratiatingly over the merest whim of white men. They are eager to show that they bear no malice for the horrible past. The lynching has accomplished its purpose; social euphoria is restored, and the cycle is again on its way.

Development, by continual critical discussion about Negroes among whites, of a summary attitude of racial antagonism and tension.

There is a new interracial adjustment. Negroes become exceedingly circumspect in their dealing with whites, for they are now thoroughly frightened. Many are obligated to their "white friends" for having saved their lives, and few will dare even to disagree with white persons on any count whatever. The man who does so is not considered a hero by the majority of Negroes; rather, he earns their censure.

The rumored or actual occurrence of some outrage committed by a Negro upon some white person or persons. The ideal act is the rape of a white girl. But if the tension is very high, whites will purposely seek an incident with the Negroes.

Within about two or three days the mob achieves its emotional catharsis. There is a movement for judicial investigation; and some of the "best white people" speak out against lynching. On the following Sunday, one or more ministers of great courage declare that lynching is barbarous and un-Christian; and in time the grand jury returns its findings that "the deceased came to his death by hanging and gun shot wounds at the hands of parties unknown."

The incident having occurred, the white mob comes into action, lays hands upon the Negro, and lynches him. He is burned, hanged, or shot in some public place, preferably before the court house, and his remains dragged about the Negro section of the community. Ordinarily, in the heat of the mob action, other Negroes are killed or flogged, and more or less Negro property is destroyed, houses are burned, places of business pillaged, and so on. There is usually a scramble among the mob for toes, fingers, bits of clothing and the like, which are kept as souvenirs of the lynching occasion.

During the lynching, all Negroes within the area are driven under cover. They are terrified and intimidated. Many put themselves completely at the mercy of their non-militant "white friends" by cowering in the latter's homes, and pleading for protection from the enraged mob. Sometimes they leave the community altogether.

Oliver Cox's Lynching Cycle

Source: Adapted from Cox (1945).
African American women were able to secure employment in domestic service, where, unfortunately, White men often sexually assaulted them. Writing of the dilemma this posed, scholar activist Angela Davis (1981) noted,

From Reconstruction to the present, Black women household workers have considered sexual abuse perpetrated by the “man of the house” as one of their major occupational hazards. Time after time they have been victims of extortion on the job, compelled to choose between sexual submission and absolute poverty for themselves and their families. (p. 91)

African American men who did find work were also relegated to menial jobs and, from 1890 to 1930, were often used as strikebreakers (Massey & Denton, 1993). Their role as strikebreakers often led to racial violence in the North, which repeatedly culminated in race riots. From 1900 to 1919, there was a steady stream of race riots throughout the North. The riots continued into the 1920s, with Whites resisting integration “by any means necessary.” As Massey and Denton (1993) documented,

A wave of bombings followed the expansion of Black residential areas in the cities throughout the north. In Chicago, fifty-eight homes were bombed between 1917 and 1921, one every twenty days; and one Black real estate agent, Jesse Binga, had his home and office bombed seven times in one year. (p. 35)


In the 1930s, the “Scottsboro Boys” drew international attention to the plight of African Americans. The case involved several African American boys who were traveling in a freight train with several White boys and two White girls. After a fight ensued, the White boys were ejected from the train. At the next stop in Scottsboro, Alabama, the girls got off the train and claimed they had been gang-raped by the nine African American boys. Playing on the worst fears of Southern White men, the girls’ accusations resulted in a mob being quickly formed in anticipation of the lynching of the boys (Carter, 1969). With the protection of law enforcement, however, the boys made it to trial. Following several trials, the boys were found guilty and received the death penalty. Although it was later revealed that the claims were a hoax, the boys spent the better part of their youth and early adulthood incarcerated for crimes they didn’t commit.

During the 1930s and 1940s, there was continued interest in the subject of crime among African Americans. In the last edition of his landmark text, Principles of Criminology (1947), pioneering criminologist Edwin Sutherland devoted a chapter to “crime in relation to race and nativity.” He first noted that, much like today, African Americans were “arrested, convicted, and committed to prisons approximately three times as frequently as White persons” (Sutherland, 1947, p. 121). Sutherland also cautioned that some of these statistics “probably reflect a bias against all of the minority races but especially against the Negro” (p. 121).

By the early 1950s, African Americans and other ethnic groups were still struggling to survive in an increasingly segregated and hostile America. Some turned to crime, whereas others turned to the United Nations for assistance. In 1951, African Americans petitioned the United Nations and charged the U.S. government with genocide against African Americans (Patterson, 1951/1970). Although the United Nations did not respond to the petition, African
Americans had made the commitment to try to change their position within American society. This movement was given a further push by the 1955 kidnapping and slaying of Emmett Till in Mississippi.

The shocking and brutal killing of the 14-year-old boy for “disrespecting” a White woman spurred a movement that picked up steam with the Montgomery boycott, which started on December 5, 1955. The civil rights movement showed the national and international communities the depth of racial hatred and interracial strife in America. The demonstrations that defined the movement were seen by millions on TV, and the brutality of the police toward nonviolent demonstrators spoke to the oppressive role the police played in the African American and other minority communities.

By the 1960s, according to figures from Tuskegee Institute (Zangrando, 1980), lynchings were rare events; however, Whites had successfully used the practice to discourage any serious level of integration. Therefore, although Thurgood Marshall and his colleagues were successful in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case, minority communities did not substantially change for decades. Because of “the White strategy of ghetto containment and tactical retreat before an advancing color line” (Massey & Denton, 1993, p. 45), substantial underclass communities were in existence by the 1970s. This bred a level of poverty and despair that fostered the continuation of the African American criminal classes and organized crime. The riots of the 1960s were a response to the long-standing troublesome conditions in some of these cities (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968).

When African Americans (especially those that comprised a growing middle class) were finally able to take advantage of the opportunities forged by the civil rights movement and desegregation, many of them left inner-city areas (an event known as “Black flight”). Unfortunately, they had brought an important level of stability to those communities. As a result of this exodus, those communities are now composed of what Wilson (1987) describes as “the truly disadvantaged.” They are heavily dependent on the underground economy for survival (see Venkatesh, 2006, 2008), which has likely contributed to the overrepresentation of African Americans throughout the U.S. criminal justice system.

In the mid part of the first decade of the 2000s, the plight of the truly disadvantaged was brought to the forefront of American consciousness with the 2005 Hurricane Katrina fiasco, in which the government—at all levels—failed to provide an adequate response to the needs of poor and mostly Black New Orleans residents (Dyson, 2006; Potter, 2007). Moreover, in the absence of government response, citizens who took matters into their own hands have been portrayed as criminals (Russell-Brown, 2006). Although research has been inconclusive as to whether crime has increased in cities where evacuees were relocated, this truly disadvantaged population continues to be stereotyped and faces few options to survive in the aftermath of the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina.

Even with the many struggles encountered by African Americans and other Black ethnic groups, and the historical fixation on their criminality, they have contributed to every aspect of American life, from the toiling of the soil in the South and factory work in the North to produce the wealth that made America what it is, to the innumerable scientific, musical, and artistic contributions that are now considered staples of American culture.

**White Ethnics**

During the early 1600s, while the slave trade in South America and the West Indies was going on, the British colonized parts of what would later become the American colonies.
This led to many of the same kinds of conflicts with Native Americans that the Spanish had quelled with unimaginable brutality. Although the British saw the colonies as somewhere they could send criminals and other undesirables, they also saw opportunity for monetary gain, so they encouraged immigration to the colonies. Some came freely, whereas others used indentures to get themselves to the New World. These arrangements allowed them to work for a period of time to pay for their travel expenses to the colonies. Once their indentures were completed, immigrants were free to pursue whatever opportunities they desired. In addition to British immigrants, Germans and Italians were among the first to immigrate to America. Many began to arrive in the early 1600s, settling first in New Amsterdam (New York) and later in Pennsylvania (Sowell, 1981). Given this rich history of European immigration to the United States, we briefly review the history of several White ethnic groups. Although our review does not cover every White ethnic group that immigrated to America, we provide discussions of several of the major groups. We begin with an overview of the experience of German Americans. This is followed by a review of the experiences of Italian Americans, Irish Americans, Jewish Americans, and Arab Americans. As you will see, many of these groups have similar stories regarding their reason for making the long journey to America. In addition, many have had nearly identical experiences on their arrival in America.

**German Americans**

Faust (1927) places the first German in America at the time of Leif Eriksson’s pioneering journey that landed him in North America 500 years prior to Columbus’s arrival. Among Eriksson’s crew was a German named Tyrker, who “is credited with discovering grapes in North America and therefore also naming the new land Vineland” (Rippley, 1976, p. 22). Not until the 1500s was there a settlement of Germans in America. Located in Port Royal, South Carolina, the settlement was composed of Huguenots (French Protestants) and Alsatian and Hessian Protestants (both of German origin). The settlement, however, was destroyed by the Spaniards, and thus only lasted four years, from 1562 to 1566. The next wave of German immigrants arrived with the first settlers in Jamestown in 1607. Often referred to as the “Dutch,” which is likely “a linguistic slip that occurred because the word ‘Dutch’ so closely resembles a German’s designation for himself, Deutsch” (Rippley, 1976, p. 24), they were often mistreated during the early colonial period. Consequently, they sympathized with the plight of Native Americans and “chose to remain with the Indians, preferring their friendship to that of the ‘gentlemen’ of Jamestown” (Faust, 1927, p. 8).

In the late 1600s, 13 German families arrived in Philadelphia and represented the beginning of mass German immigration to the United States (Coppa & Curran, 1976). Many of these immigrants came at the urging of William Penn, who told them of the religious freedoms in his colony of Pennsylvania (Sowell, 1981). Others came as a result of the disarray in their homeland. Of this, Coppa and Curran (1976) wrote, “The havoc wrought by the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) devastated Germany for many decades: commerce declined; industry was crippled; and intellectual life sustained a deep if not mortal blow” (p. 45). The German population also increased because of the use of indentures to get them to America. Hence, those who wanted to immigrate to America signed contracts that paid their way. As one might imagine, this was shady business. Sowell (1981) writes that

> the indentured servants were preyed upon by the dishonest. Some ship captains provided inadequate food or sold them into longer periods of bondage than actually
required to work off the cost off their transportation. Germans who could not understand English were particularly vulnerable. (p. 49)

As a consequence of all these events, by the time of the Revolutionary War, there were about 225,000 German Americans in the colonies (Rippley, 1976, p. 29).

Immigration from Germany in the 1800s began slowly, but because of continuing issues in the homeland, Germans continued to hear from other groups of the promise of America. As such, around the 1830s, the number of German immigrants rose again and continued to increase throughout the 19th century. By the 1900 census, there were more than 2.6 million Germans in America (Faust, 1927). These formidable numbers made them a significant force in American culture and politics. They were outstanding farmers and glassmakers and have been credited with setting up the first paper mill. Culturally, they incorporated German chocolate cake, coleslaw, sauerkraut, hotdogs, and hamburgers into American life. Well-known Germans such as Albert Einstein, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Presidents Hoover and Eisenhower, among others, helped shape sports, science, and political life in America.

Given their large numbers in the American colonies following the Revolutionary War, Germans, unlike some other ethnic groups, were accepted early in the development of the country. Consequently, throughout the 1800s and 1900s, there were few bumps along the path toward full assimilation. An exception to this was during World War I, when America went to war with Germany. The anti-German sentiment was strong, but as Sowell (1981) notes, the animus was not restricted to Germans in Germany:

Anti-German feeling among Americans was not confined to Germany, but extended quickly to the whole German culture and to German Americans, many of whom were sympathetic to their former homeland. German books were removed from the shelves of American libraries, German-language courses were canceled from the public schools, readers and advertisers boycotted German-American newspapers. (p. 65)

Anti-German sentiment returned with World War II; however, it never approached the level of World War I. Also, it was Japanese Americans who caught the ire of patriotic Americans. After World War II, German Americans further assimilated by intermarriage and their increasing advancement within key institutions in American society. Today, Germans are no longer a distinct Census category. In fact, looking back at their history, they have long been considered a significant segment of the White American population.

Italian Americans

Centuries after Christopher Columbus “discovered” the New World other Italians would take advantage of his discovery by immigrating to the American colonies. Although few in number, Italians were among the earliest immigrants to arrive in colonial America. The small numbers were not simply because of the disinterest in immigrating to America. Some jurisdictions, such as Maryland, only allowed the settlement of immigrants from Britain (Iorizzo & Mondello, 2006). But as a result of labor shortages, these laws started to disappear in the colonies. By 1648, Maryland had also changed its practice and passed legislation that “encouraged French, Dutch and Italians to come to its shores” (Iorizzo & Mondello, 2006, p. 26). To further encourage immigration to the colonies, in 1649 the Toleration Act was
passed, which ensured religious freedom for Catholics. From the 1600s through the mid-1800s, immigration from Italy was steady but, mirroring the trend of other White ethnic groups, really picked up in the late 1800s. Those Italians who immigrated were trying to escape the turmoil in their homeland or simply looking for better economic opportunities. Among them were not only poor people, but various artists and political dissidents who were middle class and others who were revolutionaries. Settling mostly in northern cities, they contributed to the diversity of cities such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia (Iorizzo & Mondello, 2006).

By 1920, more than 4 million Italians had arrived in the United States. This was not necessarily a welcome development. Leading up to this period, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, heavy anti-Italian sentiment had resulted in numerous killings and hangings (Marger, 1997). Therefore, to stem Italian immigration to the United States, the Immigration Act of 1924 placed a stringent quota on the number of Italians who could immigrate to the country. In 1929, that number “was only 5,802, compared with 65,721 for British Immigrants” (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012, p. 98). Similar to the experience of other ethnic immigrant groups, their religion, Catholicism, also became a point of contention, along with stinging stereotypes, which, as noted in the experience of other ethnic groups, have often been created to demonize new immigrants. Italians were perceived by many to be “dangerous” and “inferior” to other European immigrants. The perception was enhanced by the image of the Italian Mafia (also referred to as the “Black Hand”; Marger, 1997).

The belief that Italians were heavily involved in organized crime likely originated from the fact that many of the immigrants came from Sicily, where the mafia was a social institution. However, in America, Italian organized crime became an obsession. The terms organized crime and mafia became synonymous with Italians. They were considered a lawless race. One congressional report described them as morally deficient, excitable, superstitious, and vengeful (Iorizzo & Mondello, 2006). These negative and racist characterizations were clearly unfair considering that the Irish, German, Jewish, and Polish immigrants had preceded them in organized criminal activity (Iorizzo & Mondello, 2006). In fact, as Sowell (1981) has aptly noted, “Organized crime was an existing American institution, and the Italian Americans had to literally fight their way into it” (p. 125). Despite the prevailing criminal stereotype, in the early part of the 20th century, Italians had “lower [emphasis added] crime rates than other Americans” (Sowell, 1981, p. 125). Although Italians eventually assimilated into American society and are presently subsumed under the White racial category, some of the early stereotypes remain.

**Irish Americans**

According to Meagher (2005), “The first Irishman came to America in 1584 as part of Sir Walter Raleigh’s ill-fated expedition to the Outer Banks of North Carolina” (p. 1). Later, the Irish came in great numbers to America, looking for opportunities to escape extreme poverty in Ireland. Meagher has noted that 60% of those who came in the 17th century did so by way of indentures. Others were given the option of leaving Ireland instead of serving a prison sentence for a criminal conviction. Those who came in the mid-1800s as a result of the potato famine in Ireland, which killed (through starvation and disease) an estimated 1 million people, contributed to the exponential increase of Irish Americans. For example, during the 100-year period from 1820 to 1920, about 5 million Irish arrived in America (Meagher, 2005). They settled in areas throughout the country; however, many landed in northern states such as New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. In addition,
by the early 1860s, one-third of the Irish population could be found in the western and midwestern parts of the United States. Wherever the Irish settled, because of the prevailing nativist views and their predominantly Catholic backgrounds (some were Protestant), they often were ostracized and relegated to the worst areas of cities.

Historians have generally agreed that few immigrant groups have encountered such harsh conditions as did the Irish in 19th-century America. Many of them brought alcohol and fighting habits to American shores. As a result, they often caught the attention of police officials, who called police vans “paddy wagons” because so many Irish were occupants. In some cities, such as New York, the areas where the Irish dominated were some of the toughest.

The highly acclaimed 2002 movie *Gangs of New York* depicts the immigration of the Irish to New York during a period when there was a strong sense of resentment and hate directed toward immigrants. Largely based on actual events, the movie shows how ethnic antagonism between the native population (English) and newest immigrant group (Irish) resulted in brutal gang wars. The Irish are portrayed as a criminogenic ethnic group who bring their bad habits to an already overcrowded and notorious district of New York. The movie culminates with the “Draft Riots,” which were provoked by ethnic tensions and Whites who objected to being drafted into the Union army to fight for the liberation of African American slaves, while they themselves were struggling to survive. Prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center buildings, the Draft Riot was considered the single event to have caused the largest loss of life in New York City history (more than 1,000 deaths).

Not until the second- and third-generation families did the Irish truly start to become a part of the American social fabric. In fact, during the early and mid-20th century, they became major contributors to the arts and were prominently featured in major motion pictures. Nevertheless, they were still faced with challenges.

Restrictive immigration quotas in the 1920s also hit them hard, and there were still barriers in place that restricted them from reaching their full potential occupationally. For example, Irish women, unlike other White ethnic females, had to take jobs as domestic servants to make ends meet. As noted previously with the experience of Black female domestics, these were dangerous jobs that often resulted in sexual harassment, rape, or, out of desperation, a descent into prostitution (Meagher, 2005). Nevertheless, large numbers of them headed to college, and research shows that in the 1920s and 1940s, they were as successful as the native-born European immigrants. By 1960, “Irish occupational status exceeded national averages and was higher than every other white ethnic group except Jews” (Meagher, 2005, p. 132). In short, after initial resistance to their presence in America, the Irish had fulfilled the promise of the “American Dream.” It is significant that despite the resistance to their presence in America, the Irish were able to swiftly rise out of the doldrums of their early American experience. This is likely attributable to the fact that, as time went on, the Irish became integrated into the fabric of American society and assimilated into the status of White Americans (T. W. Allen, 1994; Ignatiev, 1996).

**Jewish Americans**

Interestingly, the first Jews who arrived in America were of Hispanic origin. In 1654, 23 Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal arrived in New Amsterdam (Finkelstein, 2007). Their arrival in the New World began with controversy. On arrival, they were sued by the captain of the ship that brought them to America because their fares had not been paid. To pay their fares, “The court ordered two of the new arrivals imprisoned and the belongings of all 23 passengers sold at auction” (Finkelstein, 2007, p. 31). Moreover, the governor of New
Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, wanted them to leave. In short, he viewed Jews as repugnant and originating from a “deceitful race” (Finkelstein, 2007, p. 31). Stuyvesant was so anti-Semitic that he banned Jews from building a synagogue and restricted their enlistment in the military. Thus, the first American synagogue was not built until the 1720s. Henceforth, Jews began to branch out and started to become somewhat more accepted within American society. This was fostered by the advent of American Freemasonry, in which Christians and Jews interacted. Although discrimination remained a part of the Jewish American landscape, Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, which banned religious discrimination, provided some respite for Jews who aspired to public office.

The 19th century saw a considerable increase in the Jewish presence in America. Whereas there were only 3,000 Jews in America in 1820, 40 years later there were 200,000 (Finkelstein, 2007). Tied together by religious and cultural traditions, many arrived from Russia, Poland, and other Eastern European countries, where they had long been persecuted for their religious beliefs and customs. To preserve their culture, in 1843, 12 German Jews gathered in a New York café and founded B’nai B’rith, which means “Sons of the Covenant.” The mission of the organization was ambitious, but it laid the grounds for an organization that, by 1861, was “operating in every major Jewish community in America” (Sachar, 1993, p. 71). The mission of the organization was as follows:

Uniting Israelites in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity; of developing and elevating the mental and moral character of the people of our faith; of inculcating the purest principles of philanthropy, honor, and patriotism; of supporting science and art; of alleviating the wants of the victims of persecution; providing for, protecting and assisting the widow and orphan on the broadest principles of humanity. (Finkelstein, 2007, p. 64)

Recounting Jewish history, Feagin and Booher Feagin (2012) write,

From the Egyptian and Roman persecutions in ancient times to massacres in Spain in the 1400s to brutal pogroms in Russia in the 1880s to German Nazi massacres, Jews might be regarded as the most widely oppressed racial or ethnic group in world history. (p. 115)

Seeking relief from persecution in European countries, Jews continued to arrive in America en masse. In the 40 years from 1880 to 1920, 2 million Jews arrived in America. As the persecution continued, many more arrived and eventually assimilated into the American way of life while maintaining their Jewish traditions. However, coinciding with this significant wave of immigration was an increase in anti-Semitism. Describing this turbulent period for Jews, Finkelstein (2007) writes, “Much of this was fueled by the stereotypes brought over from Europe by the large numbers of newly arrived Christian immigrants. Jews faced growing restrictions in housing, employment, and education” (p. 79).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the mass immigration and squalid living conditions of Jews resulted in abundant numbers of Jewish youth hanging out on the streets. This produced rising juvenile delinquency rates, which became the target of a number of Jewish organizations. In a similar vein, whereas the 1920s and 1930s were periods of considerable Jewish progress, Brodkin Sacks (1997) noted that Jewish success in organized crime was also critical to their upward mobility. She specifically mentioned that “Arnold Rothstein
transformed crime from a haphazard, small-scale activity into a well-organized and well-financed business operation. Consider also Detroit’s Purple Gang, Murder Incorporated in New York, and a host of other big-city Jewish gangs in organized crime” (p. 399). These illicit activities were also found among other ethnic groups striving to move up the social ladder, albeit through criminality, in urban areas.

The period also saw quotas established restricting the number of Jews who could attend prestigious universities such as Harvard. Thus, although they were progressing in terms of their status in American society, there remained barriers to full assimilation. Jews, however, continued to be successful in educational pursuits and small businesses. In 1921, Albert Einstein won the Nobel Prize in Physics, and Jews were among the most successful immigrants. Because of their success in education, Finkelstein (2007) notes that “by the end of World War II . . . most Jews had established themselves firmly into the middle class, with large numbers employed in ‘economically secure’ jobs as civil servants: Teachers, accountants, lawyers, and medical professionals” (pp. 129–130). As a result, many moved out of the ghettos and into the suburbs, where they were largely unwelcome. In time, however, Jews assimilated and were also categorized as White Americans (Brodkin, 1999; Brodkin Sacks, 1997).

Each of the aforementioned White ethnic groups came to America seeking prosperity but was immediately thrust into dire socioeconomic conditions. In many instances, crime provided the means to rise above their condition (Bell, 1960; Light, 1977). Initially, each group was labeled criminal, but after a period of decades, most were able to rise out of their situations and assimilate into America—as White Americans (Gans, 2005). In recent years, some Whites have become concerned about their status as White Americans. This has led to a variety of nativist movements. These movements have suggested that Whites are becoming a racially oppressed group. Box 1.2 reviews the concerns being expressed by some Whites. One group that is currently classified by the U.S. Census Bureau as White American that, in the last decade, has had a divergent experience from other White ethnics is Arab Americans. We provide a brief overview of their experience in the next section.

**BOX 1.2**

**Are Whites Racially Oppressed?**

(CNN)—They marched on Washington to reclaim civil rights.
They complained of voter intimidation at the polls.
They called for ethnic studies programs to promote racial pride.
They are, some say, the new face of racial oppression in this nation—and their faces are white.
“We went from being a privileged group to all of a sudden becoming whites, the new victims,” says Charles Gallagher, a sociologist at La Salle University in Pennsylvania who researches white racial attitudes and was baffled to find that whites see themselves as a minority.
“You have this perception out there that whites are no longer in control or the majority. Whites are the new minority group.”
Call it racial jujitsu: A growing number of white Americans are acting like a racially oppressed majority. They are adopting the language and protest tactics of an embattled minority group, scholars and commentators say.

(Continued)
They point to these signs of racial anxiety:

- A recent Public Religion Research Institute poll found 44% of Americans surveyed identify discrimination against whites as being just as big as bigotry aimed at blacks and other minorities. The poll found 61% of those identifying with the Tea Party held that view, as did 56% of Republicans and 57% of white evangelicals.
- More colleges are offering courses in “Whiteness Studies” as white Americans cope with becoming what one commentator calls a “dispossessed majority group.”
- A Texas group recently formed the “Former Majority Association for Equality” to offer college scholarships to needy white men. Colby Bohannan, the group’s president, says white men don’t have scholarship options available to minorities. “White males are definitely not a majority” anymore, he says.
- U.S. Census Bureau projections that whites will become a minority by 2050 are fueling fears that whiteness no longer represents the norm. This fear has been compounded by the recent recession, which hit whites hard.
- Conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh argued in a radio show that Republicans are an “oppressed minority” in need of a “civil rights movement” because its members willingly sit in the “back of the bus” and “are afraid of the fire hoses and the dogs.”
- Fox talk-show host Glenn Beck led a march on Washington (attended primarily by white people) to “restore honor” and once called President Obama a racist with a “deep-seated hatred for white people and white culture.” He later said he regretted making that comment.
- Conservative news outlets ran a number of stories last summer highlighting an incident from the 2008 elections, in which activists from the New Black Panther Party appeared to be intimidating voters at a polling place. Those claims were never proven.

Mass rallies in Washington, voter intimidation at the polls, creating ethnic studies programs at colleges to promote racial self-awareness—it sounds like a script from a civil rights documentary.

But not everyone buys that script. Mona Charen, a conservative columnist for the National Review, challenges that view with this question: If more white Americans feel like an embattled minority, why did they elect President Barack Obama?

“Did they become racist after electing the first black president?” she asks.

Charen says the United States today is “incredibly tolerant and open.”

Sure, she says, there are individuals who nurture racial animosity, but most Americans deserve praise for looking past race.

The proof, she says, isn’t just in the fact that the nation elected its first black president. She cites the rise of more interracial couples.

“When I grew up, it was incredibly rare to see interracial couples,” she says. “People would turn their heads on the streets. Now it’s so common that no one notices it anymore.”

When White Is No Longer the Norm

The notion that many white Americans feel anxious about their race is not new. Today, however, economic anxieties are feeding those racial fears, says Tim Wise, author of “White Like Me.”

Wise says the recession hit blue-collar, white Americans hard, financially and psychologically.

Many white Americans have lived under the assumption that if they worked hard, they would be rewarded. Now more white Americans are sharing unemployment lines with “those people”—black and brown, Wise says.

“For the first time since the Great Depression, white Americans have been confronted with a level of economic insecurity that we’re not used to,” he says. “It’s not so new for black and brown folks, but for white folks, this is something we haven’t seen since the Depression.”
Economic insecurity is what Colby Bohannan says convinced him to form the “Former Majority Association for Equality.” The association is awarding $500 scholarships to five deserving white men because they aren’t eligible for scholarships reserved for women and minorities, he says.

“Living in America, you hear about this minority or that minority, but it’s never been used in the same sense for Caucasian Americans,” Bohannan says. “There was no one for white males until we came around.”

Bohannan says the formation of his group was not motivated by racism, nor will it accept donations from hate groups.

“We’re not trying to promote racial bigotry,” Bohannan says. “All we’re about is helping college students trying to better their lives who happen to be white males.”

Some white Americans not only feel ignored in higher education; they feel excluded by popular culture. The face of America is changing, says Wise, author of “White Like Me.” American culture has become so multicultural that many of the nation’s icons—including celebrities, sports heroes, and other leaders—are people of color.

“The very definition of being an American is going through a profound change,” Wise says. “We can no longer take it for granted that we (whites) are the dictionary definition of an American.”

This racial unease is more pronounced among older white Americans, who grew up in an era where America’s icons were virtually all white, Wise says.

“The idea that we’re losing our country is something that’s not going to have a lot of resonance for someone under 30,” Wise says. “These are white folks who don’t remember the country that their parents are talking about.”

With white no longer the norm, more white Americans are hitting the books to ask a question that few felt a need to ask before: What does it mean to be white?

“Whiteness Studies” began popping up in a few isolated academic institutions in the 1990s. Now such programs can be found in places such as the University of Wisconsin and the University of Utah. These courses examine what whiteness has meant during different periods of American history.

For many decades, white people saw themselves as individuals, not as members of a race, says Matt Wray, a sociologist at Temple University in Pennsylvania, who writes books about white studies.

“We are often offended if someone calls attention to our race as shaping how we view the world,” says Wray, author of “Not Quite White.” “We don’t like to be pigeon-holed that way. Non-white Americans are seldom afforded this luxury of seeing themselves as individuals, disconnected from any race.”

Still, Wray says anxiety among whites over their place in America is nothing new. Some 19th century whites worried about slave revolts. During segregation, some worried about blacks they labeled as “uppity Negroes.”

“Whites have never really felt terribly secure in their majority status,” he says. “It’s often said that it is lonely at the top, but it’s also an anxious place to be, because you live in constant fear of falling.”

“Diversity Is Not Strength”

Some white commentators are unapologetic about this racial anxiety.

Peter Brimelow, author of “Alien Nation: Common Sense About America’s Immigration Disaster,” asserts that much of white America’s anxiety derives from living under a black president and changing demographics.

Diversity, he says, “is not strength.”

Brimelow’s website, VDARE.COM, has been described as a hate site by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a group that tracks extremist groups in the U.S.

Some may see him as extreme, but Brimelow argues in his columns that more white Americans are moving toward his stance on immigration and other issues.

He cites as proof the rise of the Tea Party movement and the racial makeup of Beck’s march on Washington. He says more whites recognize, even if it’s only on a subliminal level, that they have common interests to defend.

“Of course, they would deny this, quite sincerely, if you put it to them because the idea of whites defending their interests as whites is quite new,” he says. “Americans are trained to think that any explicit defense of white interests is ‘racist.’”

(Continued)
(Continued)

James Edwards, host of the “Political Cesspool” radio show, isn’t shy about naming those interests. He says white Americans have become the “dispossessed majority” and that coming demographic changes may turn the United States into a “Third-World flophouse.”

Edwards, who is considered a white nationalist by the Southern Poverty Law Center, says whites must organize like other stigmatized groups.

“There is nothing wrong for Jewish organizations to promote the self-interest of Jews or black organizations to promote the interest of blacks,” he says. “There is no organization to stand up to advance the interests of the dispossessed majority.”

Those white interests have been compromised by what he sees as the “preferential treatment” blacks have received in the job market to compensate for slavery, Edwards says.

“Whatever mistakes might have been made in our pasts, they have not only been corrected, but they’ve been overcompensated for,” he says.

Now whites are victims of pervasive racism, Edwards says.

“They’re the victims of it every day. Anything a white conservative does that a liberal doesn’t like is called racism.”

Both Brimelow and Edwards reject outright the Southern Poverty Law Center’s description of their organizations as extremist.

“It’s Not a Race Issue, It’s a Principle”

Ginger Howard is a white Southerner who doesn’t feel dispossessed. She attended Beck’s rally last summer and described it as a religious event, not a political one.

“It was such an amazing event to be with such like-minded people,” she says.

Beck says he held the rally to reclaim the civil rights movement “from politics.” He held the rally on the anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream Speech.”

Howard says she attended because she wanted to raise money for U.S. troops and protest against government dependency.

“It’s not a race issue, it’s a principle issue,” says Howard, owner of the Ginger Howard Selections clothing store in Atlanta, Georgia.

Chris Plante, a conservative talk show host, says white racial anxiety isn’t a race issue but a smokescreen by leftists. Plante says they yell racism to avoid talking about Obama’s “unpopular liberal expansion” of the federal government.

Plante, who says he grew up in a Chicago home with a picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the wall, attended both Beck’s rally and a follow-up rally by Jon Stewart, host of the Daily Show.

Stewart and fellow Comedy Central host Stephen Colbert held their “March to Keep Fear Alive” on the National Mall two months after Beck’s rally. Stewart said he held the rally for people tired of the media portraying America as a divided country.

“The Beck crowd was no more white than the Jon Stewart rally, but nobody in the news media described the Stewart crowd as overwhelmingly white,” Plante says.

“Hunkering Down”

One prominent observer of American culture suggests all Americans—white, black and every other minority—should be concerned about the future.

Robert Putnam, author of the celebrated book “Bowling Alone,” says his studies of multiracial neighborhoods in America suggest that more diversity doesn’t initially create more tolerance. It can erode community.

In his 2007 book, “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century,” Putnam says his studies of diverse communities show that in the short run, its members tend to expect the worst, distrust neighbors and withdraw.
“Residents of all races tend to ‘hunker down,’ “ Putnam writes. “Trust (even of one’s own race) is lower, altruism and community cooperation rarer, friends fewer.”

Is this America’s future?

Dueling mass rallies in Washington? Dueling complaints of racial persecution? Dueling versions of ethnic history?

It doesn’t have to be, says Gallagher, the La Salle University sociologist.

Gallagher points out that the United States has accommodated massive change before. Women were once thought too emotional to vote, interracial couples were outlawed, blacks enslaved.

He says his children won’t see race the same way that he or other generations did. They won’t see diversity as a weakness.

It’ll just be a way of life.

“Like it or not, the country is going to look more like it should—more brown folks, more yellow folks, more gay folks, more mixed folks,” he says.

It’s easy to be pessimistic, he says, but his profession teaches him to look past the headlines.

“When you take the long view of human history, change is slow, but change happens.”

Do you believe that whites are a racially oppressed group in America? Provide arguments in support of your position.

Arab Americans

Arab Americans have a long history in the United States. Before reviewing their experience, it is important that readers understand that the terms Arab Americans and Muslim Americans are not synonymous. In other words, not all Muslims are Arab. And similarly, not all Arab Americans are Muslims. Arab Americans are a cultural group in the United States, and Muslim Americans are those persons from all races and ethnic backgrounds who follow the Islamic religious tradition. Our focus here is on Arab Americans, who are people from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and a host of other Middle Eastern countries. Orfalea (2006) separates the Arab American experience into three significant waves of immigration. The first wave commenced in 1878 and continued through 1924. There are multiple reasons given for why Arabs immigrated to the United States in the late 19th century. It has been suggested that economics, political conflict, religious strife, and the pursuit of fortune contributed to Arab immigration to America. Not unlike other white immigrants, Arab Americans viewed the United States as having “streets of gold” (p. 51). These varying motivations resulted in approximately 200,000—mostly Christian—Arab Americans in the country during the 1920s (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012; Kayyali, 2006).

Just as the immigration of other ethnic groups was reduced by legislation, Arab Americans were also affected by the notorious 1924 Immigration Act that severely restricted the total immigration to the United States to fewer than 160,000 (Federal Reserve Archival System for Economic Research, n.d.). The second wave of Arab American immigration followed World War II and spanned the years 1947 to 1966. With the relaxing of immigration policies, Arabs fled war-torn areas in the Middle East. Some came as political refugees in the 1950s and 1960s when the United States passed the Refugee Relief Act that was targeted at Palestinian refugees. In total, 6,000 Palestinians made use of this Act (Kayyali, 2006). The late 1960s saw the third wave of Arab immigration to the United States. Following the Arab defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War against Israel, Arabs became “disillusioned and pessimistic
about the future of the Arab world and chose to move to the United States and other non-Arab countries” (p. 33). This resulted in more than 400,000 Arab immigrants arriving in the United States between the 1960s and the 1990s (p. 33).

On the surface, the Arab American story mirrors that of other White ethnics, as they also had to endure negative stereotypes leveled at them by other more established immigrant groups. The Arab American story was considerably altered following the events of September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11). While other groups quietly assimilated into whiteness, the 9/11 terrorist attacks returned Arab Americans to the status of a recognizable minority (Jamal & Naber, 2008). The racial animus that had previously targeted minority groups such as Blacks and Latinos also targeted Arab Americans (and Muslim Americans) because of the Middle Eastern backgrounds of the 9/11 terrorists. In particular, Arab Americans were perceived to be the group most likely to engage in terrorist activities; therefore, citizens and policing officials alike were supportive of racial profiling of people of Middle Eastern descent. This led to the harassment of Arab Americans and to the term *flying while Arab*, which refers to the additional scrutiny Arab Americans are perceived to receive when traveling by airplane (Baker, 2002; Schildkraut, 2009). Despite this recent harassment directed at them, the approximately 3.5 million Arab Americans remain a vital force in the United States.

**Latino Americans**

Prior to the 2000 census, the term *Hispanic* was used to refer to persons from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Central and South America. Feagin and Booher Feagin (2012) noted that the term *Latino* emerged because it “recognizes the complex Latin American origins of these groups. It is a Spanish-language word preferred by many Spanish-speaking scholars, activists, and others” (p. 209). Our review of their history focuses on the two largest ethnic groups under the Latino category: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. The data presented earlier in Table 1.2 clearly illuminate the diversity of the American Latino population.

**Mexicans**

Between 1500 and 1853, the Spanish conquered and ruled Mexico. For much of this period, Mexicans were exploited for their labor by the Spanish. Many Mexicans became Americans with the annexation of Texas. Following the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Mexicans had the option to stay in the United States or return to Mexico. According to Feagin and Booher Feagin (2012), although many returned, others stayed in America.

Sowell (1981) wrote that Mexicans immigrated to America in three great waves. The first wave of Mexicans came to America by railroad—and ironically, over the years, railroads became one of the largest employers of Mexicans. Specifically, they were employed “as construction workers, as watchmen, or as laborers maintaining the tracks. Many lived in boxcars or in shacks near the railroads—primitive settlements that were the beginning of many Mexican-American communities today” (p. 249). Before World War I, other industries
employing Mexicans were agriculture and mining. Mexican workers in America were paid considerably more than they were in Mexico. As a result, there was a steady flow of seasonal workers crossing the Mexican border to earn money to take back home to Mexico. Labor shortages caused by World War I resulted in formalized programs to encourage such practices. About 500,000 Mexicans came to America to work during this period (Tarver, Walker, & Wallace, 2002). Beginning in this period, Mexicans also were subject to negative stereotypes, such as being considered “dirty,” “ignorant,” and lacking standards of appropriate behavior (Sowell, 1981). Even so, they were tolerated because of the dire need for their labor. With the arrival of the Depression, “Fears of the unemployed created an anti-immigrant movement, and immigration laws were modified to deport the ‘undesirables’ and restrict the numbers of foreign-contract laborers” (Tarver et al., 2002, p. 54).

About the same time of the notorious Scottsboro cases, the federal government, under the direction of President Herbert Hoover, commissioned the first national crime commission. Commonly referred to as the “Wickersham Report,” for its director, George Wickersham, the commission’s report, published in 1931, covered almost every aspect of American criminal justice. The report included a review of the state of Mexicans and crime; it found that there were varying levels of crime among Mexicans in California and Texas. In general, however, the report noted that, like African Americans, Mexicans were treated with considerable prejudice by the justice system (Abbott, 1931). The report suggested that the criminality of the Mexicans was overstated. There was also brief mention of Filipinos, who were overrepresented in offenses related to gambling, and Japanese, who were “among the most law abiding of all population groups” (p. 415).

The second wave of Mexican immigrants came to the United States during World War II. Another war had resulted in another labor shortage, which produced the Bracero Program, which brought in thousands of agricultural workers. Bracero is a Spanish term that was used to describe guest workers coming from Mexico to the United States. By the end of the Bracero Program in 1964, 5 million Mexican workers had been imported into this country (Tarver et al., 2002, p. 54).

The third wave of Mexican immigration is tied to the various immigration laws from the 1970s to the present, which have sought to protect, defend, or curtail Mexican immigration to the United States. One such law, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, provided temporary residency for some illegal aliens. Furthermore, those who had come to America before 1982 were given permanent resident status. According to Tarver et al. (2002), this Act had an enormous impact on Mexican immigration, with 1,655,842 people entering the United States during the decade of the 1980s. Since the first decade of the twentieth century, this was the largest number of immigrants from a single country. (p. 55)

Another law aimed at Mexican illegal immigration is the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. In addition to shoring up the borders in California and Texas, the Act “increased the number of investigators monitoring workplace employment of aliens, passport fraud, and alien smuggling” (Tarver et al., 2002, p. 55). Today, because of the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants in America (Hsu, 2010), the fears concerning illegal immigration continue with the passage of Arizona’s Immigration Bill SB 1070 in 2010. Most notably, the bill requires immigrants to carry their alien registration information and provides law enforcement officials with the discretion to question persons who they believe are illegal immigrants.
After the law was passed, there were suits challenging its constitutionality. In particular, immediately before the law was to take effect, a judge issued an injunction against the enforcement of the section of the Act allowing law enforcement to question citizens about their residency status. In addition,

U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton also blocked provisions of the law making it a crime to fail to apply for or carry alien registration papers or “for an unauthorized alien to solicit, apply for, or perform work,” and a provision “authorizing the warrantless arrest of a person” if there is reason to believe that person might be subject to deportation. (“Legal battle looms,” 2010)

It is apparent from this type of legislation that some Americans believe the heavy influx of Mexicans is changing the fabric of the country. Box 1.3 discusses recent legislation in Alabama targeting illegal immigrants. Besides concerns about job competition and the strain on social services caused by considerable illegal immigration, Americans have continued their fascination with the perceived connection between immigration and crime (Hickman & Suttrop, 2008; Higgins, Gabbidon, & Martin, 2010; Martinez & Valenzuela, 2006; Stowell, 2007). As you should know by now, this fear-based fascination is not new—it is the American way (Martinez, 2006).

**BOX 1.3**

**Alabama Sets Nation’s Toughest Immigration Law**

*By Peggy Gargis*

Birmingham, Ala (Reuters)—Republican Governor Robert Bentley on Thursday signed into law a crackdown on illegal immigration in Alabama that both supporters and critics consider the toughest in the nation.

The measure will require public schools to determine the citizenship status of students—a provision not included in an Arizona law that has been at the forefront of actions by several states to curb illegal immigration.

Under the Alabama law, police must detain someone they suspect of being in the country illegally if the person cannot produce proper documentation when stopped for any reason.

It also will be a crime to knowingly transport or harbor someone who is in the country illegally. The law imposes penalties on businesses that knowingly employ someone without legal resident status. A company’s business license could be suspended or revoked.

The law, which is scheduled to take effect September 1, requires businesses to use a database called E-Verify to confirm the immigration status of new employees.

“We have a real problem with illegal immigration in this country,” Bentley said after signing the law. “I campaigned for the toughest immigration laws, and I’m proud of the Legislature for working tirelessly to create the strongest immigration bill in the country.”

Several states have enacted immigration restrictions, even though the U.S. government considers it to be a federal issue.

Immigration rights advocates called the new law “draconian” and vowed to challenge it in court. Rights organizations have sued to block similar measures in Arizona, Utah, Indiana and Georgia. The U.S. Justice Department also sued over Arizona’s law.

“This law is an outrageous throw-back to the pre-Civil Rights era,” said Cecillia Wang, director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Immigrants’ Rights Project. Alabama was at the center of some of the bitter struggles over the civil rights of African Americans during the 1960s.
After Arizona passed its controversial measure last year, the courts blocked implementation of a provision allowing police to check the immigration status of people there. But the U.S. Supreme Court recently endorsed a separate Arizona law requiring employers to use E-Verify. The court also ruled that Arizona could suspend or revoke business licenses of those companies that knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

**Will Students Be Afraid?**

Alabama’s law is unique in requiring public schools to determine, by review of birth certificates or sworn affidavits, the legal residency status of students.

“We fear that it will, in effect, ban the student through fear and harassment,” said Shay Farley, legal director of Alabama Appleseed, a nonprofit policy and legal advocacy organization.

Farley said there is also concern about the increased financial burden on schools to collect the information.

The Alabama bill passed the state House of Representatives and Senate by large margins before landing on Bentley’s desk. Republicans took over majority control of both chambers of the Alabama legislature last year for the first time in 136 years.

Some farmers in the U.S. South are worried that new immigration restrictions could limit access to farm workers. But Gene Armstrong, mayor of Allgood, Alabama, a small community where the Hispanic population has grown to almost 50 percent, is not worried.

“We managed in the past without illegal immigrants to pick the tomatoes here, and I haven’t heard anyone say that if we sent them all home nobody would be left to do that work,” Armstrong said.

“When you have 9 percent unemployment, I think that some people who might not have wanted those jobs previously might reconsider.”

Do you support Alabama’s new immigration law? If not, how would you modify the law?

**Puerto Ricans**

The island of Puerto Rico was colonized by the Spanish in the late 1400s. Not until 1897, however, did Puerto Ricans gain their independence. However, the Spanish-American War resulted in the U.S. taking over the island in 1898. In the 1950s, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth of the United States, granting Puerto Ricans more independence in their governance. From 1945 to the 1970s, the high unemployment rate resulted in one in three Puerto Ricans leaving the island (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). Significant numbers of Puerto Ricans headed to New York and other states, such as New Jersey and Delaware. Thus, after having only 2,000 Puerto Ricans in New York in 1900, there was significant Puerto Rican immigration to the United States, which resulted in an increase to 70,000 in 1940 and 887,000 by 1960 (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). Upon their arrival, as with other immigrants who headed to the “promised land,” they were faced with high levels of unemployment and poverty. In fact, these dire circumstances resulted in what has been referred to as “circular migration.” That is, after the opportunities they were seeking did not materialize, Puerto Ricans would head home, but then return because of the lack of opportunities in Puerto Rico. Mirroring the experience of other racial and ethnic groups, over time, Puerto Ricans were also saddled with negative stereotypes, such as “lazy,” “submissive,” “violent,” and “criminal.” Moreover, because they cannot always “pass” as White, they have been unable to assimilate like some other ethnic groups. As a result of their varying skin tones and backgrounds, they often are categorized as either White or Black.
A Brief Note on Other Latino Americans

Cubans are also a notable segment of the Latino population. With much of their immigration coming after Fidel Castro’s takeover of the government in 1959, they currently number about 1.7 million. Combined, South Americans from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Colombia also represent another substantial portion of the Latino population. Given these figures, it is no wonder that Latinos have become the largest minority group in the United States. They have also, however, suffered from some of the same crime-related concerns as other ethnic groups before them. Notably, however, they have not experienced the same levels of crime and violence as African Americans (Martinez, 2002; Martinez, Stowell, & Lee, 2010). This may reflect the fact that many Latinos have come to the United States specifically seeking opportunities for employment, with a willingness to take the most undesirable jobs in the labor market. For many, these jobs provide much more financial compensation than the available employment in the various Latin American countries from which a substantial portion of Latino immigrants originate. Nevertheless, some Latinos have drifted into gangs and other criminal activities as a way to survive in America. Unfortunately, their criminal activities have been exaggerated by the news media and Hollywood, which has resulted in continuing stereotypes (Martinez, Lee, & Nielsen, 2001; see Box 1.4).

BOX 1.4

Nation’s First Multilingual Poll Uncovers Tensions Among the Largest Ethnic Groups in America

Washington—The nation’s first multilingual poll of Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans has uncovered serious tensions among these ethnic groups, including mistrust and significant stereotyping, but a majority of each group also said they should put aside differences and work together to better their communities.

The poll, which was released today during a news conference at the National Press Club, was sponsored by New America Media (NAM) and nine ethnic media outlets who are founding members of the organization.

“This extraordinary poll reveals some unflattering realities that exist in America today,” said Sandy Close, Executive Editor and Director of NAM, the nation’s first and largest collaboration of ethnic news media. “The sponsors of the poll strongly believe the best way to move forward is by identifying the problems and initiating a dialogue that can bring ethnic groups closer together in their fight for equality and against discrimination.”

Broadly, the poll of 1,105 African American, Asian American, and Hispanic adults found that the predominantly immigrant populations—Hispanics and Asians—expressed far greater optimism about their lives in America, concluding that hard work is rewarded in this society. By contrast, more than 60% of the African Americans polled do not believe the American Dream works for them. Blacks also described themselves as more segregated from the rest of America than the other groups.

The poll found that friction between ethnic and racial groups, which at times has erupted into highly publicized incidents around the country, is clearly rooted in the mistrust that the groups harbor towards each other, as well as the sentiment that other groups are mistreating them or are detrimental to their own future. For instance, 44% of Hispanics and 47% of Asians are “generally afraid of African Americans because they are responsible for most of the crime.” Meanwhile, 46% of Hispanics and 52% of African Americans believe “most Asian business owners do not treat them with respect.” And half of African
Americans feel threatened by Latin American immigrants because “they are taking jobs, housing, and political power away from the Black community.”

Moreover, the three groups seem more trusting of Whites than of each other. The poll found that 61% of Hispanics, 54% of Asians, and 47% of African Americans would rather do business with Whites than members of the other two groups.

“The poll reaffirms that while race relations between ethnic groups and Whites grab the headlines, there are also serious racial problems between minority groups in America,” said Sergio Bendixen, who is an expert on Hispanic and multilingual polling. “Blacks feel they are left out of the American Dream and are being displaced by newcomers, and each group buys into the negative stereotypes about the other two. What’s clear is the need to dissolve this friction. The poll results show that the overwhelming majority of ethnic Americans want that positive outcome.”

Specifically, the poll also found that:

- A majority of Hispanics and a significant percentage of Asians believe in the concept that every American has an equal opportunity to succeed. By contrast, the majority of Black respondents—66%—disagreed with that notion.
- Blacks overwhelmingly believe the criminal justice system favors the rich and powerful; most Hispanics and an even larger majority of Asians disagree.
- A large majority of each group believes that they should put aside their differences and work together on issues affecting their communities; they also say the country would be better if more from all three groups were in positions of authority at universities, businesses, media, and government.
- All three groups are optimistic about the future. Strong majorities of each group believe that racial tensions will ease over the next 10 years.

Further, Ms. Close said the poll found “a shared appreciation” for each group’s cultural and political contributions. “Hispanics and Asians recognize that African Americans led the fight for civil rights and against discrimination, forging a better future for the other groups,” she said. “Asian Americans and African Americans say Hispanic culture has enriched the quality of their lives. African Americans and Hispanics perceive Asian Americans as role models when it comes to family and educational values.”

Poll respondents sent mixed messages to the ethnic media, which many depend on for news about their community. While criticizing the ethnic media’s coverage of race relations, particularly other groups outside their own community, all three groups maintained that the ethnic media must play a vital role by strengthening intergroup communication and helping to break negative stereotypes.

The ethnic media is embracing their challenge to do better. “The poll is part of our campaign to address mutual misunderstandings, of which there are many,” said Sok Jeong, editor of the Korea Times. “The poll is a call to action for ethnic media to expand coverage of our mutual communities and help our readers gain a better understanding of the other ethnic groups.”

About the Poll

The poll of 1,105 African American, Asian American, and Hispanic adults was conducted by telephone during the months of August and September, 2007. The sample was designed to be representative of the adult population of the three major racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Hispanic respondents were interviewed in English or Spanish, and Asian American respondents were interviewed in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, or Tagalog. RDD (Random Digit Dialing) methodology was employed in areas of the country that have significant (10% or more) African American, Asian American, and Hispanic populations.

Why do Hispanics and Asians perceive Blacks to be responsible for most of the crime? Why are Whites perceived to be the most trustworthy racial/ethnic group?
Asian Americans

Asian Americans provide another interesting case study of ethnic group acculturation in America. Like Latinos, they belong to a number of ethnic groups, such as Filipino, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese. Table 1.5 provides an overview of the population of the various Asian American groups. We begin our review with a brief discussion of the Chinese American experience.

### Chinese Americans

According to Daniels (1988), there were Chinese in America as early as the late 1700s. Not until the California gold rush of the mid-1850s was there any significant Chinese immigration to America: Between 1849 and 1882, nearly 300,000 Chinese came to America (Daniels, 1988). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 limited immigration until the 1940s. Most of the early Chinese immigrants were male (90%) and came to work in America temporarily. However, they came in significant enough numbers to represent nearly 10% of California’s population between 1860 and 1880 (Daniels, 1988). Those who did stay were subjected to considerable violence due to anti-Chinese sentiment. Chinatowns had existed since the arrival of the Chinese in America; they embraced these areas because there they were free to maintain their culture without fear of hostility—although some areas occupied exclusively by Chinese inhabitants were “shabby looking, vice-infested, and violence prone” (Sowell, 1981, p. 141).

The Chinese were quite successful as laborers as well as in independent businesses such as restaurants and laundries (Daniels, 1988; Sowell, 1981). Yet, as with other immigrant groups, the Chinese were not immune to engaging in illegal activities. Daniels (1988) wrote

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### Table 1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Origin</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Total U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>2,843,391</td>
<td>19.38</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3,347,229</td>
<td>22.81</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>2,555,923</td>
<td>17.42</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>763,325</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1,423,784</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>1,548,449</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>2,192,151</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Asian Population</td>
<td>14,674,252</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total U.S. Population</td>
<td>308,745,538</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that prostitution and gambling flourished in the “bachelor society” created by the dearth of Asian women in America. In 1870, “More than 75% of the nearly 3,000 Chinese women workers in the United States identified themselves as prostitutes” (Perry, 2000, p. 104). Brothels and opium-smoking establishments became popular among both Asians and Whites. Regarding opium use among early Chinese immigrants, Mann (1993) suggested that 35% of the Chinese immigrants smoked opium regularly, which “led to the first national campaign against narcotics” (p. 59), and the subsequent legislation was aimed at “excluding Chinese participation in American society” (p. 59). On the participation of the Chinese in these illegal activities, Daniels (1988) noted, “Since all of these activities were both lucrative and illegal, it seems clear that police and politicians in the White community were involved in sanctioning and profiting from them” (p. 22).

Eventually, following the pattern of other immigrants, Asian organized crime emerged, and secret societies such as “tongs” were formed. Describing these organizations, Perry (2000) indicated that such societies were originally created to assist Asian men in adjusting to America. But, as Perry notes, over time, many evolved into criminal organizations or developed links with Chinese “triads.” Consequently, the tongs came to dominate prostitution, along with gambling, drugs, and other vice crimes. So, in addition to providing sexual outlets, they also created other opportunities for recreation and escapist behavior. Despite the profits reaped by Whites from the legal and illicit activities of the Chinese, heavy anti-Chinese sentiment persisted in California, which led to numerous negative campaigns against the population. Pointing to the roots of this negative sentiment, Sowell (1981) wrote, “The Chinese were both non-White and non-Christian, at a time when either trait alone was a serious handicap. They looked different, dressed differently, ate differently, and followed customs wholly unfamiliar to Americans” (pp. 136–137). Once they began to receive jobs in competition with Whites, they became targets of increasing violence and, in several instances, were massacred. By and large, the Chinese were generally relegated to the most menial and “dirty” occupations, such as mining, laying railroad tracks, and agricultural work. As a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, unlike other ethnic minorities, the Chinese population decreased from the late 1880s through the mid-1940s. Since then, their numbers have increased, and they have remained the largest segment of the Asian American population. Until the last 30 years of the 20th century, Japanese Americans represented the second-largest group among Asians in the United States. Several other Asian groups have now surpassed them in population (most notably, Filipinos). We briefly review the Japanese American experience below.

**Japanese Americans**

Before arriving on the shores of North America in the last quarter of the 19th century, a considerable contingent of Japanese workers (30,000) arrived in Hawaii. They were contract workers who came to the island to provide much-needed labor for sugar plantations and “to serve as a counterweight to the relatively large number of Chinese in the islands” (Daniels, 1988, pp. 100–101). Like the Chinese before them, the Japanese also arrived on North American shores as a result of labor needs, and the relatively small number of Japanese men who made it to America (about 2,200 by 1890) filled the continuing need for laborers on California farms (Daniels, 1988). Like the Chinese and other groups, some Japanese immigrants turned to illicit activities, such as prostitution and other petty crimes, to survive.

Over time, the number of Japanese in America began to increase, with 24,326 in 1900, 72,157 in 1910, and nearly 127,000 by 1940. Mirroring the experience of the
Chinese, anti-Japanese sentiment arose in the United States, culminating with the arrival of World War II. During World War II, negative sentiment toward the Japanese reached new heights; they were hated and mistrusted by many Americans. Once the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, in December, 1941, life for Japanese Americans would never be the same. In February, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1982). The order, which was upheld by the Supreme Court, required that all Japanese from the West Coast be rounded up and placed in camps called relocation centers. In all, about 110,000 were rounded up on five days’ notice and were told they could take only what they could carry. The camps were nothing more than prison facilities with armed military police on patrol watching for escapes.

Photo 1.1
Japanese American internees await processing in 1942.

Following the war, the Japanese population remained low in the United States due to immigration restrictions that were not lifted until the 1960s. At that time, Japanese Americans represented 52% of the Asian American population. However, over the next 20 years, the number of Japanese who immigrated to America declined. This trend was largely a result of the increased need for labor in Japan, which stunted the immigration of the Japanese to America (Takaki, 1989). The Japanese who were already here or among those who came after stringent quotas were lifted in the 1960s would go on to become some of the most successful immigrants. Today, economic indicators related to income and unemployment levels all reveal a positive trend for Japanese Americans. Nonetheless, Japanese Americans are still targets of discrimination. Two other Asian groups whose numbers have increased over the last few decades are Filipinos and Koreans. We provide brief overviews of their American experiences in the next section.

**Filipinos and Koreans**

Filipinos have been in the United States since the 1700s. But, as you might expect, much of their most significant immigration to the United States occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many headed to plantations in Hawaii due to labor shortages. Unfortunately, when they arrived in America, they encountered violent attacks from Whites. In California, they competed with White farm workers; besides receiving lower wages than their counterparts,
they were the target of continuing violence. In fact, in 1929 and 1930, there were brutal riots that were brought on by anti-Filipino sentiment (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). During this same time, the 1924 immigration law restricted the number of Filipinos who could enter the country to 50 (Kim, 2001). Since this early period, although their population has increased precipitously, they remain the targets of violence, and in post-9/11 America, some have been targeted as potential terrorists.

Like Filipino Americans, Korean Americans headed to Hawaii in the early part of the 20th century to fill labor shortages. Koreans also followed other Asian groups to California. In the case of Koreans, the place of choice was San Francisco. Limited by immigration restrictions, much of Korean immigration followed World War II. Not until 1965 were the stringent immigration restrictions lifted. This policy change coincided with more Koreans (mostly from South Korea) arriving in America. Looking for opportunities, Koreans headed to inner-city communities, where they set up dry cleaners and convenience stores. Unfortunately, the relations between Koreans and urban residents are tenuous at best: Koreans are resented for entering largely African American communities and “setting up shop,” as some have noted. Therefore, besides feeling that they were mistreated by clerks in Korean establishments, some have felt that such businesses should be owned by community members. This sentiment spilled over in the Los Angeles riot of 1992 (Kim, 1999). There, tensions remain between the two communities, but the dialogue continues. In 2007, Korean Americans again received negative attention because the perpetrator of the Virginia Tech massacre was an immigrant from South Korea.

**Asian Indians**

Asian Indians are the second most populous Asian group in America. They began to arrive from India and other South Asian countries in the United States in the early 1800s, but only 17,000 made it to American shores between 1820 and 1965 (Schaefer, 2011). Many of these early immigrants were employed in railroad and agricultural industries on the West Coast (Feagin & Booher Feagin, 2012). Following the easing of immigration restrictions, the number of Asian Indian immigrants began to rise. In particular, the need for skilled workers resulted in the immigration of highly educated and skilled Asian Indians. Many initially headed to northeastern states such as New York; however, after the rise of Silicon Valley, California quickly became the destination of choice for many of the more technologically savvy Asian Indians. In addition to the highly skilled and educated immigrants from India, there is also a contingent of Asian Indians who are heavily engaged in the service sector occupations including driving taxi cabs, managing motels, and operating convenience stores (Schaefer, 2011). Their success in the professions has resulted in many Asian Indians moving directly to suburban areas, as opposed to urban areas where most immigrants normally begin their ascension up the rungs of American society (Feagin & Boohler Feagin, 2012). Asian Indians clearly represent one of the true immigrant success stories.

In closing, the difference between Asians and ethnic groups who came to be classified as White is that, although they have attained high levels of achievement, Asians have never fully assimilated. This leaves them, as one author put it, “as perpetual outsiders” (Perry, 2000). Like African Americans, Native Americans, and some Latinos, Asian Americans have maintained a distinct racial categorization in the Census. L. A. Gould (2000) has suggested that physical characteristics unique to their race (e.g., skin color, facial characteristics, size) have barred them from full assimilation and acceptance in America.
Despite not being able to fully assimilate, Asian Americans have been labeled the *model minority* because of their success in education. Some see their success as proof that all groups can succeed if they “put their best foot forward.” Others see this label as problematic (Wu, 2002), noting that all Asians are not equally successful. For example, as Perry (2000) noted, “Koreans and Vietnamese consistently lag behind Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Indians on most indicators of socioeconomic status” (p. 100). Furthermore, the continuing discrimination in employment, income, and education is masked by the model minority label. Nevertheless, over the last century, Asian Americans have been a productive force in the United States.

### Conclusion

Since the categorization of races in the late 1700s, societies have, unfortunately, used the social construct to divide populations. In America, the notion of race was not of considerable use until the 1660s, when color was one of the deciding factors in the creation of the slave system. It was at this time in history that the category “White” began to take on increased importance.

Along with “Whiteness” came racism, which justified the system from the point of view of the dominant population. For the next two and a half centuries, as more White ethnic immigrants came to the United States looking for opportunities, they were looked down on as well. However, at some point, each group was allowed to fully assimilate and truly “become White,” and over time, the stereotypes with which they had been identified eventually dissipated (see Table 1.6). In the case of Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos, however, this process has been more difficult because of distinct physical traits that have limited their ability to fully assimilate. Recent years have also seen an increasing intolerance of Arab Americans following 9/11.

<table>
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**Early Stereotypes of Racial and Ethnic Minorities* (1600s–1900s)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Mexican American</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Chinese/ Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>childlike</td>
<td>temperamental</td>
<td>too intelligent</td>
<td>bad odor</td>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>devious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cruel</td>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>crafty</td>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>backward</td>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>corrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thieves</td>
<td>quarrelsome</td>
<td>clumsy</td>
<td>criminal</td>
<td>lawless</td>
<td>criminal</td>
<td>dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wild beasts</td>
<td>idle</td>
<td>apelike</td>
<td>violent</td>
<td>shiftless</td>
<td>docile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exotic</td>
<td>apelike</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>powerful</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All groups were thought to be “biologically inferior” to the native White population.*
Chapter 1  Overview of Race and Crime

Our review of the historical antecedents of race and crime in America has revealed that, over the past few centuries, although the level of crime in each group has varied over time, most racial/ethnic groups have committed the same kinds of offenses and have had similar offenses perpetrated against them by the dominant culture. Initially, Whites criminally brutalized Native Americans and African Americans. As time went on, ethnic immigrants such as the Germans, Italians, and Irish, also were subjected to harsh treatment and sometimes violence. As these “White ethnic” groups assimilated into the populace, they, in turn, became part of the oppressive White population, continuing at times to engage in racial violence against other minority groups.

In short, the history of race and crime in America is a story of exploitation, violence, and, in the case of most racial/ethnic groups, the common use of crime as a way to ascend from the lower rungs of American society. The next chapter examines official crime and victimization data for the various races.

Discussion Questions

1. Explain the origin of race and its implications for race and crime.
2. Do you believe there are distinct races?
3. What role has the law played in the experiences of the groups portrayed in the chapter? Provide some examples using specific laws.
4. How does slavery intersect with the study of race and crime?
5. What role does “Whiteness” play in understanding race and crime?

Internet Exercises

1. Visit the U.S. Bureau of the Census Web site (http://www.census.gov) and provide another logical way of categorizing the various groups in American society.
2. Visit The DNA Initiative website (http://www.dna.gov/) and view some of the advances in DNA identification in crime solving.
3. Visit the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (http://www.archives.gov/) website and view some of the tools people use to investigate their racial/ethnic heritage.

Internet Sites

The DNA Initiative: http://www.dna.gov/
U.S. Bureau of the Census: http://www.census.gov
Ellis Island: http://www.nps.gov/elis/index.htm