

## CHAPTER 3: RACE AND IMMIGRATION

### Overview of Opening

Alan Fram, “‘Mutts Like Me’ - Obama Shows Ease Discussing Race,” *ABC News*, Nov. 8, 2008, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=6211371>, Accessed April 23, 2008.

While President Obama was running for the presidency, it was clear from his comments that he would be at ease discussing the issues of race. While making off hand comments about the type of dog that his family would get, he even referred to himself as a “mutt.” His comments underscore that race is an important issue and one that should not be sidestepped or discussed in hushed tones. Obama was sworn in at a time when society was becoming more racially diverse. There are more blacks in office and projections are that by 2042, whites will make up less than half of the U.S. population.

### Chapter Outline

- I. GET THE TOPIC: Is Racial and Ethnic Inequality a Social Problem?
  - A. Defining Race and Ethnicity
    - 1. Majority and Minority Groups
    - 2. Racism
    - 3. Prejudice vs. Discrimination
    - 4. Institutional Discrimination in the United States
    - 5. Causes for Prejudice and Discrimination
    - 6. Minority Success
    - 7. Racial Stratification in the United States
  - B. Immigration
    - 1. Who Migrates and Why?
    - 2. Is Immigration a Social Problem?
    - 3. Ethnocentrism
    - 4. Ethnic Enclaves
- II. THINK SOCIAL PROBLEMS: Why Does Racial and Ethnic Inequality Still Exist in the United States?
  - A. Symbolic Interactionism: Color-blind Racism
  - B. Functionalism: The Interaction of Culture and Structure
  - C. Conflict Theory
- III. DISCOVER SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS: How Can Society Address Racial and Ethnic Identity?
  - A. Social Problems and Racial Segregation
  - B. Immigration Control and Immigration Issues
    - 1. Multiculturalism and Assimilation

### Chapter Overview

The way in which society interprets racial and ethnic differences leads to the issues of race being classified as a social problem, particularly because race is often used as the excuse for inequality and injustice. Terms relating to this topic are covered, including discussions of the differences between majority groups and minority groups. Majority groups in the U.S. hold significant power and privilege. Minority groups often experience unequal treatment and may be subjected to racism and discrimination. Discrimination can be individual but can occur in social institutions as well.

There are significant differences between racial groups. These gaps can be seen in areas such as poverty levels, income, and education. African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics tend to be overrepresented in poverty statistics. A detailed graphic is provided to illustrate income, poverty, and educational attainment of various racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.

A detailed discussion of immigration follows. A variety of people immigrate to the U.S. for various reasons. The types of immigrants are provided to illustrate to the reader the variety of possible reasons that a person may choose to migrate. There seems to be an anti-immigration sentiment in the U.S., as evidenced by the number of active anti-immigration groups. Some groups have countered this by clustering together in ethnic enclaves. The history of immigration is provided and the reader is led to a deeper understanding of racial/ethnic interrelations in the U.S.

The three theoretical paradigms hold their own views as to why racial and ethnic inequality still exists in the U.S. The issue of color-blind racism is given particular attention in the chapter, while culture and conflict theory are also discussed.

The solutions to issues of segregation, immigration, and migrants are discussed as well. English-only laws are given special attention in the Pro & Con box.

## **Chapter Objectives**

- Explain why racial and ethnic inequality is a social problem.
- Discuss racism and prejudice and causes for discrimination.
- Understand the history of immigration.
- Explain reasons why people immigrate.
- Describe the different types of migrants.
- Differentiate between the three theoretical paradigms and their views on racism.
- Explain some possible solutions to address racial and ethnic inequality, especially in the areas of housing and immigration.
- Explain how race stratifies people in society.

## **In-Classroom Activities**

1. Identify the major racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. Have students identify stereotypes that are commonly held about each group. This can lead into a general discussion of stereotyping and discrimination.
2. Go to the [www.pbs.org/race](http://www.pbs.org/race) site and have students work in groups to complete the sorting activity. Discuss with students the factors they used to sort the 20 pictures into the five major racial/ethnic groups. Explore the site to share information with students about race.
3. Have students choose a racial or ethnic group from the United States. They should find some current and previous information about the group that they chose. Ask them to identify stereotypes that others may have of this group and the challenges that this group currently faces in society. They can also find a symbol or picture that they feel represents this group. They should bring this information to class to share with their classmates.

### **Out-of-Classroom Activities**

1. Students can research current immigration policies and write a paper about both legal and illegal immigration. They can add their own thoughts and opinions as well.
2. Ask students to attend a cultural event during the course of the semester in which they can learn more about another culture. Have them give a brief report to the class about what they learned or found interesting.
3. Students can find a recent news article related to race on the Internet or in a newspaper. They can do a critique of the article and include their thoughts, what they learned, and how one of the theoretical paradigms might relate to the article.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How do you think having Barack Obama as president impacts race relations?
2. Why do you think people call Obama the “first black president”? Is it deserved?
3. What are your thoughts about current immigration into the U.S.? Where did your ancestors come from?
4. Why is race considered to be a social construct?
5. Why do you think institutional discrimination exists?
6. To what extent do you think that racism is a problem in society today?

## Essay Topics

1. Explain what is meant by the term *double consciousness* and why this can be so challenging.
2. According to Ellis Cose, what are the issues that even successful African Americans must contend with?
3. Explain racial stratification according to poverty, income, and educational attainment.
4. Identify and discuss the four factors related to color-blind racism.
5. Explain how the three theoretical perspectives view racial and ethnic inequality in the U.S.
6. Explain what Portes believes is needed for successful assimilation.
7. What are the pros and cons of having English-only laws?

## Links

1. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/chi-immigration-storygallery,0,3573987.storygallery>  
Immigration  
The *Chicago Tribune* examines the debate over illegal immigration and its effects on the economy and our society.
2. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/03/25/black.america.report/index.html>  
Racial inequality  
Examine how the social and economic gaps between blacks and whites persist despite the election of Barack Obama.
3. <http://www.civilrights.org/fairhousing/laws/>  
Housing discrimination  
Examine one form of institutional discrimination and understand its history and fair housing laws.
4. <http://www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/english.htm>  
“English-only” laws  
Examine the history of the English-only movement and its effects on minority children.

## **Key Words and Terms**

color-blind racism  
cycle of poverty  
discrimination  
double consciousness  
entrepreneurial immigrants  
ethnicity  
ethnic enclaves  
ethnocentrism  
genocide  
hate groups  
institutional discrimination  
involuntary immigration  
labor immigrants  
majority group  
minority group  
prejudice  
professional immigrants  
race  
racism  
refugees  
scapegoat  
stereotypes  
voluntary immigration

## **Lecture Suggestions**

1. Invite a panel of multicultural students to talk with the class. They can discuss their perceptions on race, assimilation, prejudice, and discrimination as well as their personal experiences.
2. Show a variety of music videos. Have students identify and discuss the portrayal of various racial groups. Discuss whether the media plays a role in reinforcing stereotypes.
3. Show the movie *Hotel Rwanda*. Describe the ethnic cleansing and the reasons for the genocide of the Tutsis by the Hutus. What criteria were used to determine who was Hutu and who was Tutsis? Describe the roles of a couple of the main characters.

## **Suggested Readings**

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Parrillo, Vincent N. 2009. *Diversity in America*. Newbury Park: Pine Forge Press.

Fine, Gary Allan, and Patricia A. Turner. *Whispers on the Color Line*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Royster, Deidre A. *Race and the Invisible Hand*. 2003. Berkley: University of California Press.

Blackwell, Angela Glover, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor. 2010. *Uncommon Common Ground*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

### **Videos/Films**

*Brick By Brick: A Civil Rights Story*, DVD, 53 minutes, 2007. Segregation has been as persistent in the North as it has been in the South. This program shows that deliberate public policies were instituted that were based in deep-rooted racial prejudice. The struggles over equal housing rights is highlighted. Available from California Newsreel.

*Psychology of Prejudice*, DVD, 21 minutes, 2008. The program examines the psychology of prejudicial thinking. It reviews key experiments, considers challenges to prejudice theory, and highlights the implications of prejudice. Available from Insight Media.

*How Did Race and Racism Get Started?* DVD, 27 minutes, 2002. The evolution of eugenics, social Darwinism, and theories of racial inferiority are examined. The program compares contemporary views based on genetic evidence with historical theories of racial difference. Available for Insight Media.

*Separate and Unequal*, DVD, VHS, 45 minutes, 2006. This *NBC News* documentary examines the problems that persist in Jackson, Mississippi and other cities despite progress decades after the civil rights movement. Additionally, the program shows ways in which whites have or have not helped. Available from Films for the Humanities & Sciences.

### **Review Questions**

1. What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?
2. What are the five pillars of racist thought?
3. What is a minority group?
4. What is color-blind racism?
5. Who is mostly likely to migrate and why?

### **Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Why is race and ethnic inequality considered a social problem?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of ethnic enclaves?
3. How are voluntary and involuntary immigration different from one another and what are examples of each?
4. What social class differences can be seen in different racial groups?
5. Are immigrants to the U.S. more or less likely to live in poverty? Why?

### **Discover Solutions to Social Problems**

Students can meet with an international student on campus whose family immigrated to the United States. They can discuss the extent to which their family had to assimilate into American culture and the degree to which they believe that the United States practices multiculturalism. They can discuss their personal experiences and challenges that they had to face coming to a new country. They can also meet with a staff member from the office or department on campus that helps international students to discuss immigration issues in the United States. The staff person can discuss their role on campus and share the experiences and possible challenges faced by international students.