

# Beyond the United States: The Comparative Perspective

**S**UBORDINATING PEOPLE BECAUSE OF RACE, NATIONALITY, or religion is not a social phenomenon unique to the United States; it occurs throughout the world. In Mexico, women and the descendants of the Mayans are given second-class status. Despite its being viewed as a homogeneous nation by some, Canada faces racial, linguistic, and tribal issues. Brazil is a large South American nation with a long history of racial inequality. In Israel, Jews and Palestinians struggle over territory and the definition of each other's autonomy. In the Republic of South Africa, the legacy of apartheid dominates the present and the future.

Confrontations along racial or ethnic or religious lines, as Chapter 1 showed, can lead to extermination, expulsion, secession, segregation, fusion, assimilation, or pluralism. At the conclusion of this chapter, we will review how these processes have been illustrated in this chapter as we look beyond the United States.

Mexico: Diversity South of the Border

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**C**onfrontations between racial and ethnic groups have escalated in frequency and intensity in the twentieth century. In surveying these conflicts, we can see two themes emerge: the previously considered world systems theory and ethnonational conflict. **World systems theory** considers the global economic system as divided between nations that control wealth and those that provide natural resources and labor. Historically, the nations we will be considering reflect this competition between “haves” and “have-nots.” Whether the laborers are poor Catholics in Ireland or Black Africans, their contribution to the prosperity of the dominant group created the social inequality that people are trying to address today (Wallerstein 1974; 2004).

**Ethnonational conflict** refers to conflicts among ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic groups within nations. In some areas of the world, ethnonational conflicts are more significant than tension between nations as the source of refugees and even death. As we can see in Figure 16.1, countries in all parts of the world, including the most populous nations, have significant diversity within their borders. These conflicts remind us that the processes operating in the United States to deny racial and ethnic groups rights and opportunities are also at work throughout the world (Connor 1994; Olzak 1998).

The sociological perspective on relations between dominant and subordinate groups treats race and ethnicity as social categories. As social concepts, they can be understood only in the context of the shared meanings attached to them by societies and their members. Although relationships between dominant and subordinate groups vary greatly, there are similarities across societies. Racial and ethnic hostilities arise out of economic needs and demands. These needs and demands may not always be realistic; that is, a group may seek out enemies where none exist or where victory will yield no rewards. Racial and ethnic conflicts are both the results and the precipitators of change in the economic and political sectors (Barclay et al. 1976; Coser 1956).

Relations between dominant and subordinate groups differ from society to society, as this chapter will show. Intergroup relations in Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Israel, and South Africa are striking in their similarities and contrasts.

## Mexico: Diversity South of the Border

Usually in the discussions of racial and ethnic relations, Mexico is considered only as a source of immigrants to the United States. In questions of economic development, Mexico again typically enters the discussion only as it affects our own economy. However, Mexico, a nation of 108 million people (in the Western hemisphere, only Brazil and the United States are larger) is an exceedingly complex nation (see Table 16.1 on the page 380). It is therefore appropriate that we understand Mexico and its issues of inequality better. This understanding will also shed light on the relationship of its people to the United States.

In the 1520s, Spain overthrew the Aztec Indian tribe that ruled Mexico. Mexico remained a Spanish colony until the 1820s. In 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico, and by 1846 Mexico was at war with the United States. As we described in Chapter 9, the Mexican–American War forced Mexico to surrender more than half of its territory. In the 1860s, France sought to turn Mexico into an empire under Austrian prince Maximilian but ultimately withdrew after bitter resistance led by a Mexican Indian, Benito Juárez, who later served as the nation’s president.

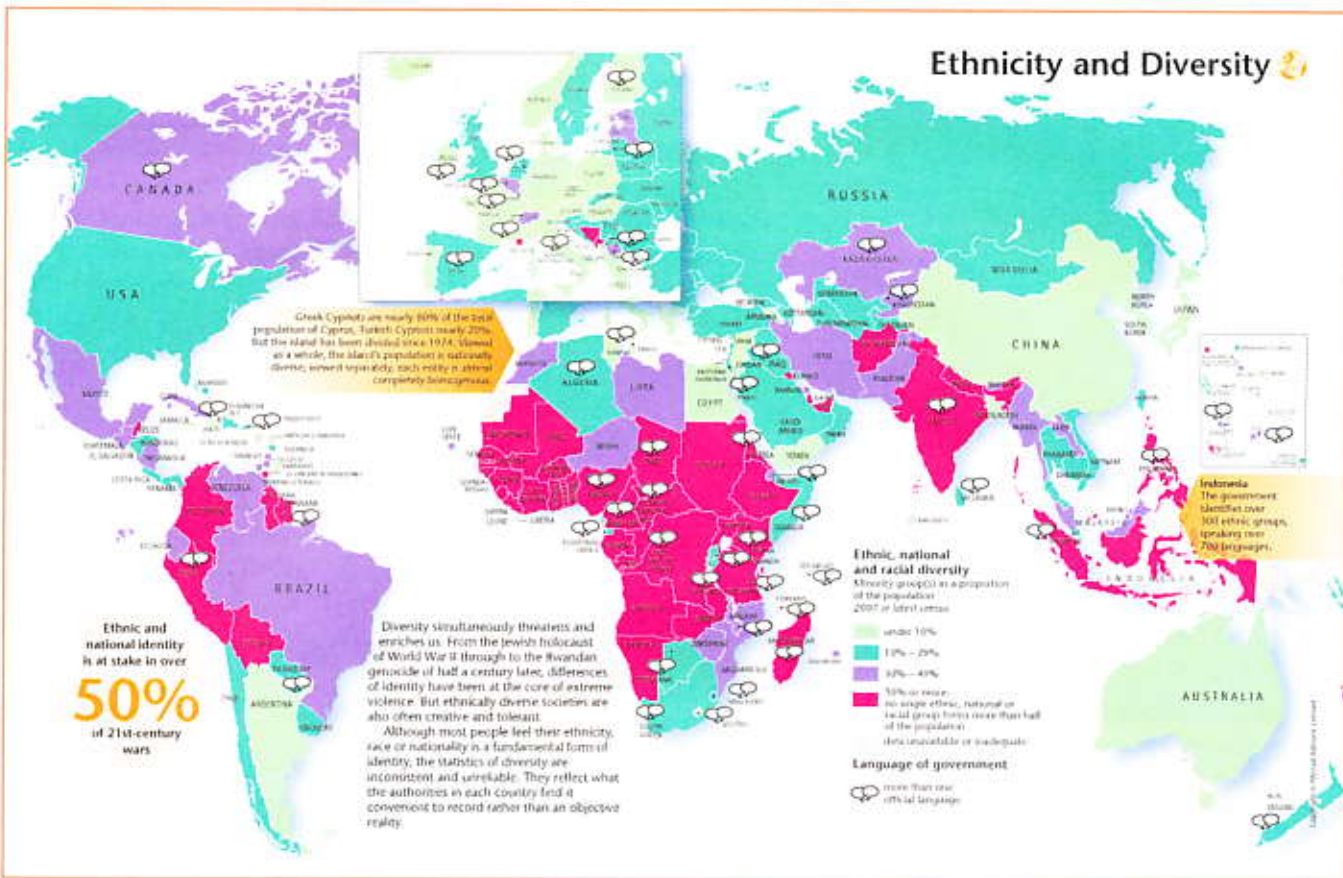
### world systems theory

A view of the global economic system as divided between nations that control wealth and those that provide natural resources and labor.

### ethnonational conflicts

Conflicts between ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic groups within nations. These conflicts replace conflicts between nations.

## Ethnicity and Diversity 🌍



**FIGURE 16.1**  
**Ethnic Diversity Worldwide**

Source: D. Smith 2008: 22–23.

## The Mexican Indian People and the Color Gradient

In contemporary Mexico, a major need has been to reassess the relations between the indigenous peoples—the Mexican Indians, many descended from the Mayas, and the government of Mexico. In 1900, the majority of the Mexican population still spoke Indian languages and lived in closed, semi-isolated villages or tribal communities according to ancestral customs. Many of these people were not a part of the growing industrialization in Mexico and were not truly represented in the national legislature. Perhaps the major change for them in the twentieth century was that many intermarried with the descendants of the Europeans, forming a **mestizo** class of people of mixed ancestry. The term *mestizo* is used throughout the Americas to refer to people of mixed European (usually Spanish) and local indigenous ancestry. Mestizos have become increasingly identified with Mexico's growing middle class. They have developed their own distinct culture and, as the descendants of the European settlers are reduced in number and influence, have become the true bearers of the national Mexican sentiment.

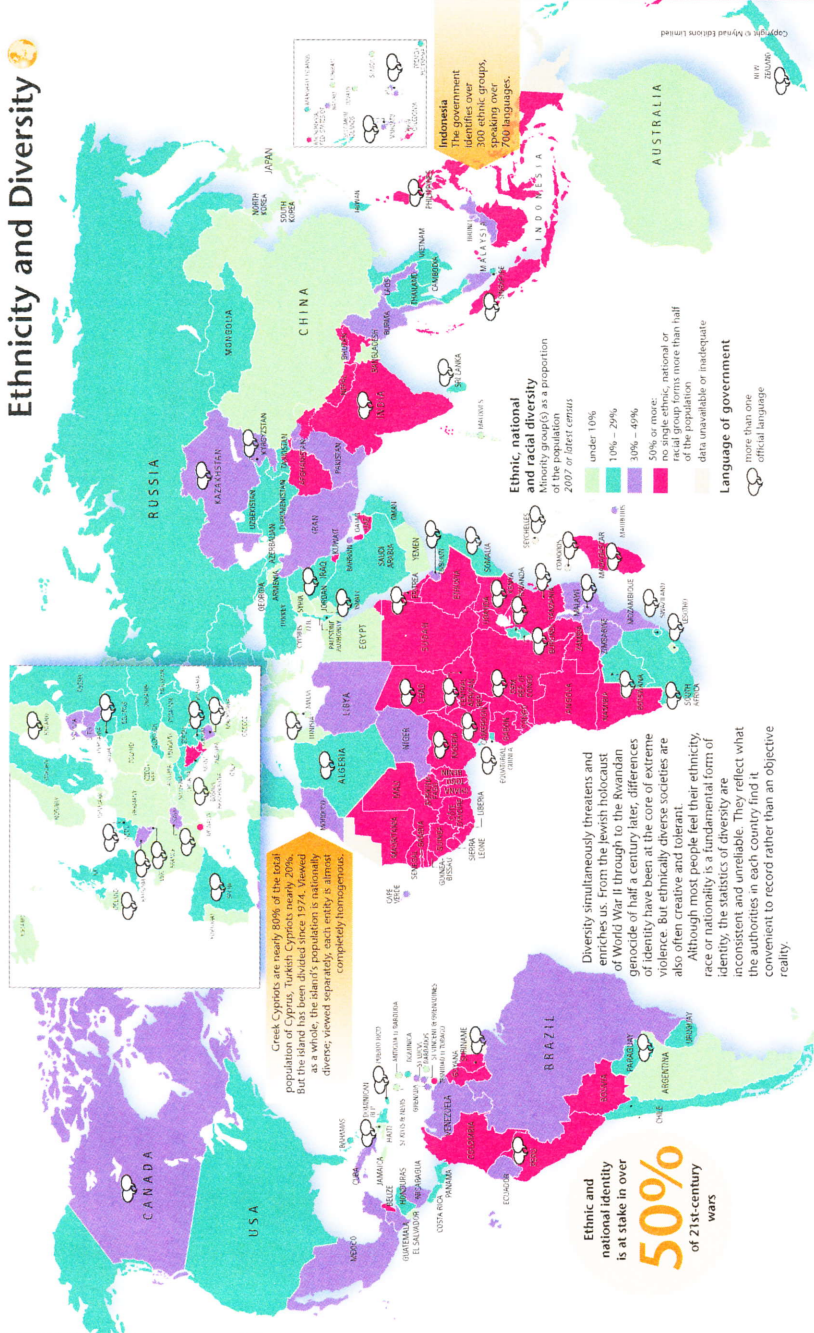
Meanwhile, however, these social changes have left the Mexican Indian people even further behind the rest of the population economically. Indian cultures have been stereotyped as backward and resistant to progress and modern ways of living. Indeed, the existence of the many (at least 56) Indian cultures was seen in much of the twentieth century as an impediment to the development of a national culture in Mexico.

### **mestizo**

People in the Americas of mixed European (usually Spanish) and local indigenous ancestry



# Ethnicity and Diversity



**FIGURE 16.1**  
**Ethnic Diversity Worldwide**  
Source: D. Smith 2008: 22–23.

**TABLE 16.1****Five-Nation Comparison, 2008**

Country	Population (in millions)	GNI per capita (\$) (USA = \$45,8500)	Groups Represented	Current Nation's Formation
Mexico	107.7	12,580	Mexican Indians, 9%	1823: Republic of Mexico declared independence from Spain
Canada	33.3	35,310	French speaking, 24% Aboriginal peoples, 4% "Visible" minorities, 16%	1867: Unified as a colony of England 1948: Independence
Brazil	195.1	9,3700	White, 53% Brown (moreno, mulatto), 39% Afro-Brazilians, 6% Asian and indigenous Indians, 1%	1889: Became independent of Portugal
Israel	7.5	25,930	Jews, 80%	1948: Independence from British mandate under United Nations
Palestinian Territories	4.2	4,247	Others (citizens), 1% Muslims, Christians, Palestinians (noncitizens), 19%	
South Africa	8.3	9,560	Black Africans, 76% Whites, 13% Coloureds, 9% Asians, 3%	1948: Independence from Great Britain

Sources: Author estimates, based on Canak and Swanson 1998; Dahlburg 1998; Houh 2008; South African Institute of Race Relations 2007; Statistics Canada 2007a, 2008a, 2008b.

As noted in Chapter 9, a **color gradient** is the placement of people on a continuum from light to dark skin color rather than in distinct racial groupings by skin color. This is another example of the social construction of race, in which social class is linked to the social reality (or at least the appearance) of racial purity. At the top of this gradient or hierarchy are the *criollos*, the 10 percent of the population who are typically White, well-educated members of the business and intellectual elites with familial roots in Spain. In the middle is the large impoverished mestizo majority, most of whom have brown skin and a mixed racial lineage as a result of intermarriage. At the bottom of the color gradient are the destitute Mexican Indians and a small number of Blacks, some of them the descendants of 200,000 African slaves brought to Mexico. The relatively small Black Mexican community received national attention in 2005 and 2006 following a series of racist events that received media attention. Ironically, although this color gradient is an important part of day-to-day life—enough so that some Mexicans use hair dyes, skin lighteners, and blue or green contact lenses to appear more European—nearly all Mexicans are considered part Mexican Indian because of centuries of intermarriage (Castañeda 1995; Escárcega 2008; Thompson 2005).

On January 1, 1994, rebels from an armed insurgent group called the Zapatista National Liberation Army seized four towns in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico. Two thousand lightly armed Mayan Indians and peasants backed the rebels—who had named their organization after Emiliano Zapata, a farmer and leader of the 1910 revolution against a corrupt dictatorship. Zapatista leaders declared that they had turned to armed insurrection to protest economic injustices and discrimination against the region's Indian population. The Mexican government mobilized the army to crush the revolt but was forced to retreat as news organizations broadcast pictures of the confrontation around the world. A cease-fire was declared after only 12 days of

**color gradient**

The placement of people on a continuum from light to dark skin color rather than in distinct racial groupings by skin color.



fighting, but 196 people had already died. Negotiations collapsed between the Mexican government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army, and there has been sporadic violence ever since.

In response to the crisis, the Mexican legislature enacted the Law on Indian Rights and Culture, which went into effect in 2001. The act allows 62 recognized Indian groups to apply their own customs in resolving conflicts and electing leaders. Unfortunately, state legislatures must give final approval to these arrangements, a requirement that severely limits the rights of large Indian groups whose territories span several states. Tired of waiting for state approval, many indigenous communities in Chiapas have declared self-rule without obtaining official recognition.

Although many factors contributed to the Zapatista revolt, the subordinate status of Mexico's Indian citizens, who account for an estimated 14 percent of the nation's population, was surely important. More than 90 percent of the indigenous population lives in houses without access to sewers, compared with 21 percent of the population as a whole. And whereas just 10 percent of Mexican adults are illiterate, the proportion for Mexican Indians is 44 percent (Boudreaux 2002; *Economist* 2004c; J. Smith 2001; Stahler-Sholk 2008; Thompson 2001).

## The Status of Women

Often in the United States we consider our own problems to be so significant that we fail to recognize that many of these social issues exist elsewhere. Gender stratification is an example of an issue we share with almost all other countries, and Mexico is no exception.

In 1975, Mexico City was the site of the first United Nations conference on the status of women. Much of the focus was on the situation of women in developing countries; in that regard, Mexico remains typical.

Women in Mexico did not receive the right to vote until 1953. They have made significant progress in that short period in being elected into office, but they have a long way to go. As of 2008, women accounted for 23 percent of Mexico's national assembly (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2008).

Even when Mexican women work outside the home, they are often denied recognition as active and productive household members, and men are typically viewed as heads of the household in every respect. As one consequence, women find it difficult to obtain credit and technical assistance in many parts of Mexico and to inherit land in rural areas.

In the larger economy in Mexico, women often are viewed as the "ideal workers." This appears to be particularly true of the foreign-owned factories, or maquiladoras, of the borderlands (discussed in Chapter 9) that rely heavily on women. For example, in a Tijuana electronics plant, women receive elementary training and work in the least-skilled and least-automated jobs because there is little expectation of advancement, organizing for better working conditions, or developing unions.

Men are preferred over women in the more skilled jobs, and women lose out entirely as factories, even in developing nations such as Mexico, require more complex skills. In 2005, only 45 percent of women were in the paid labor force, compared with about 73 percent in Canada and 70 percent in the United States (Bureau of the Census 2007a, 884).

In recent decades, Mexican women have begun to address an array of economic, political, and health issues. Often this organizing occurs at the grassroots level and outside traditional government forums. Because women continue to serve as household managers for their families, even when they work outside the home, they have been aware of the



The poverty of Mexican Indians is well documented and in some instances has led to violent protests for social change.



consequences of the inadequate public services in low-income urban neighborhoods. As far back as 1973, women in Monterrey, the nation's sixth-largest city, began protesting the continuing disruptions of the city's water supply. At first, individual women made complaints to city officials and the water authority, but subsequently, groups of female activists emerged. They sent delegations to confront politicians, organized protest rallies, and blocked traffic as a means of getting media attention. As a result of their efforts, there have been improvements in Monterrey's water service, although the issue of reliable and safe water remains a concern in Mexico and many developing countries (V. Bennett 1995, 2005).

Mexico is beginning to recognize that the issue of social inequality extends beyond poverty. A 2005 survey found that eight out of 10 Mexicans felt it was as important to eliminate discrimination as poverty, yet 40 percent said that they did not want to live next to an Indian community, and one-third considered it "normal" for women not to earn as much as men (Thompson 2005).

## Canada: Multiculturalism Up North

*Multiculturalism* is a fairly recent term in the United States; it is used to refer to diversity. In Canada, it has been adopted as a state policy for more than two decades. Still, many people in the United States, when they think of Canada, see it as a homogeneous nation with a smattering of Arctic-type people—merely a cross between the northern mainland United States and Alaska. This is not the social reality.

One of the continuing discussions among Canadians is the need for a cohesive national identity or a sense of common peoplehood. The immense size of the country, much of which is sparsely populated, and the diversity of its people have complicated this need.

In 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau presented to the House of Commons a policy of multiculturalism that sought to permit cultural groups to retain and foster their identity. Specifically, he declared that there should continue to be two official languages, French and English, but no official culture, no single ethnic group with power over any other, just Canadians all. Yet it is not always possible to legislate a pluralistic society, as the case of Canada demonstrates (Schertzer 2008).

### The First Nation

Canada, like the United States, has had an adversarial relationship with its native peoples. However, the Canadian experience has not been as violent. During all three stages of Canadian history—French colonialism, British colonialism, and Canadian nationhood—there has been, compared with the United States, little warfare between Canadian Whites and Canadian Native Americans. Yet the legacy today is similar. Prodded by settlers, colonial governments (and later Canadian governments) drove the Native Americans from their lands. Already by the 1830s, Indian reserves were being established that were similar to the reservations in the United States. Tribal members were encouraged to renounce their status and become Canadian citizens. Assimilation was the explicit policy until recently (Champagne 1994; Waldman 1985).

The 1.2 million native peoples of Canada are collectively referred to by the government as the *First Nation* or *Aboriginal Peoples* and represent about 4 percent of the population. This population is classified into the following groups:

*status Indians*—The more than 600 tribes or bands officially recognized by the government, numbering about 680,000 in 2006, of whom 40 percent live on Indian reserves (or reservations);

*Inuit*—The 50,485 people living in the northern part of the country, who in the past were called Eskimos; and



*Métis* (pronounced “may-TEE”)—Canadians of mixed Aboriginal ancestry, officially numbering 390,000 and many of whom still speak French *Métis*, a mixed language combining Aboriginal and European words.

Another 35,000 Canadians of mixed native ancestry are counted by the government as First Nation people, but there are perhaps another 600,000 non-status Indians who self-identify themselves as having some Aboriginal ancestry but who are not so considered by the Canadian government (Huteson 2008; Statistics Canada 2008a).

The *Métis* and non-status Indians have historically enjoyed no separate legal recognition, but efforts continue to secure them special rights under the law, such as designated health, education, and welfare programs. The general public does not understand these legal distinctions, so if a *Métis* or non-status Indian “looks like an Indian,” she or he is subjected to the same treatment, discriminatory or otherwise (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Canadian Polar Commission 2000, 4).

The new Canadian federal constitution of 1982 included a charter of rights that “recognized and affirmed . . . the existing aboriginal and treaty rights” of the Canadian Native American, Inuit, and *Métis* peoples. This recognition received the most visibility through the efforts of the Mohawk, one of the tribes of status Indians. At issue were land rights involving some property areas in Quebec that had spiritual significance for the Mohawk. Their protests and militant confrontations reawakened the Canadian people to the concerns of their diverse native peoples (Amnesty International 1993).

Some of the contemporary issues facing the First Nation of Canada are very similar to those faced by Native Americans in the United States. Contemporary Canadians are shocked to learn of past mistreatment leading to belated remedies. Exposure of past sexual and physical abuse of tens of thousands in boarding schools led to compensation to former students. Tribal people document that environmental justice must be addressed because of the disproportionate pollution they experience. Seeking better opportunities, First Nation people move to urban areas in Canada where social services are slowly meeting the needs.

The social and economic fate of contemporary Aboriginal Peoples reflects many challenges. Only 40 percent even graduate from high school compared to more than 70 percent for the country as a whole. The native peoples of Canada have unemployment rates twice as high and an average income one-third lower (Birchard 2006; Crenson 2005; Silver 2006; Statistics Canada 2001, 2008a).

In a positive step, in 1999 Canada created a new territory in response to a native land claim in which the resident Inuit (formerly called *Eskimos*) dominated. Nunavut (“NOO-nah-voot”), meaning “our land,” recognizes the territorial rights of the Inuit. Admirable as this event is, observers noted it was easier to grant such economic rights and autonomy to 29,000 people in the isolated expanse of northern Canada than to the Aboriginal Peoples of the more populated southern provinces of Canada (Krauss 2006b).

A lingering embarrassment in Canadian history was finally acknowledged in 2008. The Canadian government formally apologized to the First Nation people for having forced 150,000 native children to attend government residential schools from 1920s through the early 1970s. Many suffered physical and sexual abuse. Long sought for by First Nation people, the apology seemed long overdue. Earlier in 2006, as a part of a legal settlement, the government set aside \$2 billion for payments to surviving students and to document their experiences (M. Farley 2008).

## The Québécois

Assimilation and domination have been the plight of most minority groups. The French-speaking people of the province of Quebec—the **Québécois**, as they are known—represent a contrasting case. Since the mid-1960s, they have reasserted their identity and captured the attention of the entire nation.

Quebec accounts for about one-fourth of the nation’s population and wealth. Reflecting its early settlement by the French, fully 80 percent of the province’s population claims French as its first language, compared with only 24 percent in the nation as a whole (Statistics Canada 2002).

### Québécois

The French-speaking people of the province of Quebec in Canada.





Supporters of a Quebec separatist movement participate in a rally. In 1995, a referendum calling for separation from the rest of Canada was narrowly defeated; today support for such a drastic step appears to have declined.

The Québécois have sought to put French Canadian culture on an equal footing with English Canadian culture in the country as a whole and to dominate in the province. At the very least, this effort has been seen as an irritant outside Quebec and has been viewed with great concern by the English-speaking minority in Quebec.

In the 1960s, the Québécois expressed the feeling that bilingual status was not enough. Even to have French recognized as one of two official languages in a nation dominated by the English-speaking population gave the Québécois second-class status in their view. With some leaders threatening to break completely with Canada and make Quebec an independent nation, Canada made French the official language of the province and the only acceptable language for commercial signs and public transactions. New residents are now required to send their children to French schools. The English-speaking residents felt as if

they had been made aliens, even though many of them had roots extending back to the 1700s. These changes spurred residents to migrate from Quebec and some corporate headquarters to relocate to the neighboring English-speaking province of Ontario (Salée 1994).

In 1995, the people of Quebec were given a referendum that they would vote on alone: whether they wanted to separate from Canada and form a new nation. In a very close vote, 50.5 percent of the voters indicated a preference to remain united with Canada. The vote was particularly striking, given the confusion over how separation would be accomplished and its significance economically. Separatists vowed to keep working for secession and called for another referendum in the future, although surveys show the support for independence had dropped to 40 percent of the province by 2002. Independence for Quebec would not be easy, because the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1998 that Quebec cannot secede without seeking the consent of the central government. Canadians opposed to separation spoke of reconciliation after the bitter election debate, but it was unclear what further concessions they were prepared to make to the separatists. Many French-speaking residents now seem to accept the steps that have been taken, but a minority still seeks full control of financial and political policies (C. Mason 2007).

Canada is characterized by the presence of two linguistic communities: the Anglophone and the Francophone, with the latter occurring largely in the one province of Quebec. Outside Quebec, Canadians are opposed to separatism; within Quebec, they are divided. Language and cultural issues, therefore, both unify and divide a nation of 33 million people.

## Immigration and Race

Immigration has also been a significant social force contributing to Canadian multiculturalism. Toronto and Vancouver both have a higher proportion of foreign-born residents than either Los Angeles or New York City. Canada, proportionately to its population, receives consistently the most immigrants of any nation. About 20 percent of its population is foreign-born, with an increasing proportion being of Asian background rather than European (Statistics Canada 2007b).

Canada also speaks of its **visible minorities**—persons other than Aboriginal or First Nation people who are non-White in racial background. This would include much of the immigrant population as well as the Black population. In the 2006 census, the visible minority population accounted for 16 percent of the population, compared to less than 5 percent 25 years earlier. The largest visible minority are the Chinese, followed by South Asians collectively, Black Canadians, and Filipinos (Statistics Canada 2008b).

### visible minorities

In Canada, persons other than Aboriginal or First Nation people who are non-White in racial background.



People in the United States tend to view Canada's race relations in favorable terms. In part, this view reflects Canada's role as the "promised land" for slaves escaping the U.S. South and crossing the free North to Canada, where they were unlikely to be recaptured. The view of Canada as a land of positive intergroup relations is also fostered by Canadians' comparing themselves with the United States. They have long been willing to compare their best social institutions to the worst examples of racism in the United States and to pride themselves on being more virtuous and high-minded (McClain 1979).

The social reality, past and present, is quite different. Africans came in 1689 as involuntary immigrants to be enslaved by French colonists. Slavery officially continued until 1833. It never flourished because the Canadian economy did not need a large labor force, so most slaves worked as domestic servants. Blacks from the United States did flee to Canada before slavery ended, but some fugitive slaves returned after Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The early Black arrivals in Canada were greeted in a variety of ways. Often they were warmly received as fugitives from slavery, but as their numbers grew in some areas, Canadians became concerned that they would overwhelm the White population (Winks 1971).

The contemporary Black Canadian population, about 2.5 percent of the nation's population, consists of indigenous Afro-Canadians with several generations of roots in Canada, West Indian immigrants and their descendants, and a number of post-World War II immigrants from the United States. Slightly more than half of Canada's Blacks are foreign born. Racial issues are barely below the surface, as evidenced by rioting in 2008 in a Montreal neighborhood that is predominantly Black and Hispanic. Rioting was precipitated by the police shooting of a Honduran teenager. After a weekend of looting, peace was restored amid promises to improve police-community relations (Gosselin 2008; Statistics Canada 2007b; 2008b).

Before 1966, Canada's immigration policy alternated between restrictive and more open to assist the economy as needed. As in the United States, there were some very exclusionary phases based on race. From 1884 to 1923, Canada levied a Chinese "head tax" that virtually brought Chinese immigration to a halt, although earlier it had been encouraged. Subsequent policies through 1947 were not much better. Current immigration policy favors those with specific skills that make an economic contribution to the country. Yet immigrants as a group are more likely to experience persistent poverty than their Canadian-born counterparts (Picot, Hou, and Cooke 2008).

In 1541, Frenchman Jacques Cartier established the first European settlement along the St. Lawrence River, but within a year he withdrew because of confrontations with the Iroquois. Almost 500 years later, the descendants of the Europeans and Aboriginal Peoples are still trying to resolve Canada's identity as it is shaped by issues of ethnicity, race, and language.

## Brazil: Not a Racial Paradise

To someone who is knowledgeable about race and ethnic relations in the United States, Brazil seems familiar in several respects. Like the United States, Brazil was colonized by Europeans who overwhelmed the native people. Like the United States, Brazil imported Black Africans as slaves to meet the demand for laborers. Even today, Brazil is second only to the United States in the number of people of African descent, excluding nations on the African continent. Another similarity is the treatment of indigenous people. Although the focus here is on Black and White people in Brazil, another continuing concern is the treatment of Brazil's native peoples as this developing nation continues to industrialize.

### Legacy of Slavery

The current nature of Brazilian race relations is influenced by the legacy of slavery, as is true of Black-White relations in the United States. It is not necessary to repeat here a discussion of the brutality of the slave trade and slavery itself or of the influence of



Increasingly, people of Brazil are coming to terms with the significant social inequality evident along color lines.



slavery on the survival of African cultures and family life. Scholars agree that slavery was not the same in Brazil as it was in the United States, but they disagree on how different it was and how significant these differences were (Elkins 1959; Tannenbaum 1946).

Brazil depended much more than the United States on the slave trade. Estimates place the total number of slaves imported to Brazil at 4 million, eight times the number brought to the United States. At the height of slavery, however, both nations had approximately the same slave population: 4 million to 4.5 million. Brazil's reliance on African-born slaves meant that typical Brazilian slaves had closer ties to Africa than did their U.S. counterparts. Revolts and escapes were more common among slaves in Brazil. The most dramatic example was the slave **quilombo** (or hideaway) of Palmares, whose 20,000 inhabitants repeatedly fought off Portuguese assaults until 1698. Interestingly, these quilombos have reappeared in the news as Black Brazilians have sought to recognize their claims related to these settlements.

The most significant difference between slavery in the southern United States and in Brazil was the amount of *manumission*—the freeing of slaves. For every 1,000 slaves, 100 were freed annually in Brazil, compared to four per year in the U.S. South. It would be hasty to assume, however, as some people have, that Brazilian masters were more benevolent. Quite the contrary. Brazil's slave economy was poorer than that of the U.S. South, and so slave owners in Brazil freed slaves into poverty whenever they became crippled, sick, or old. But this custom does not completely explain the presence of the many freed slaves in Brazil. Again unlike in the United States, the majority of Brazil's population was composed of Africans and their descendants throughout the nineteenth century. Africans were needed as craft workers, shopkeepers, and boatmen, not just as agricultural workers. Freed slaves filled these needs.

In Brazil, race was not seen as a measure of innate inferiority, as it was in the United States. Rather, even during the period of slavery, Brazilians saw free Blacks as contributing to society, which was not the view of White U.S. Southerners. In Brazil, you were inferior if you were a slave. In the United States, you were inferior if you were Black. Not that Brazilians were more enlightened than Americans. Quite the contrary, Brazil belonged to the European tradition of a hierarchical society that did not conceive of all people as equal. Unlike the English, who emphasized individual freedom, however, the Brazilian slave owner had no need to develop a racist defense of slavery. These distinctions help explain why Whites in the United States felt compelled to dominate and simultaneously fear both the slave and the Black man and woman. Brazilians did not have these fears of



free Blacks and, thus, felt it unnecessary to restrict manumission (Davis 1966; Degler 1971; Harris 1964; Patterson 1982; Skidmore 1972; Sundiata 1987).

**mulatto escape hatch**  
Notion that Brazilians of mixed ancestry can move into high-status positions.

## The “Racial Democracy” Illusion

For some time in the twentieth century, Brazil was seen by some as a “racial democracy” and even a “racial paradise.” Indeed, historically the term *raça* is rare in Brazil; the term *cor* or *color* is far more common. Historian Carl Degler (1971) identified the **mulatto escape hatch** as the key to the differences in Brazilian and American race relations. In Brazil, the mulatto or *moreno* (brown) is recognized as a group separate from either *brancos* (Whites) or *pretos* (Blacks), whereas in the United States, mulattos are classed with Blacks. Yet this escape hatch is an illusion because mulattoes fare only marginally better economically than Black Brazilians or *Afro Brazilians* or *Afro-descendant*, the term used there to refer to the dark end of the Brazilian color gradient and increasingly used by college-educated persons and activists in Brazil. In addition, mulattoes do not escape through mobility into the income and status enjoyed by White Brazilians. Labor market analyses demonstrate that Blacks with the highest levels of education and occupation experience the most discrimination in terms of jobs, mobility, and income. In addition, they face a *glass ceiling* that limits their upward mobility (Fiola 2008; Daniel 2006; Schwartzman 2007).

Today, the use of dozens of terms to describe oneself along the color gradient (see Chapter 12) is obvious in Brazil because, unlike in the United States, people of mixed ancestry are viewed as an identifiable social group. The 2000 census in Brazil classified 53 percent White, 39 percent brown or mulatto, 6 percent Afro-Brazilian, and 1 percent Asian and indigenous Brazilian Indian. Over the past 50 years, the mulatto group has grown, and the proportions of both Whites and Blacks have declined.

In Brazil, today as in the past, light skin color enhances status, but the impact is often exaggerated. When Degler advanced the idea of the mulatto escape hatch, he implied that it was a means to success. The most recent income data controlling for gender, education, and age indicate that people of mixed ancestry earn 12 percent more than Blacks. Yet Whites earn another 26 percent more than the *moreno*. Clearly, the major distinction is between Whites and all “people of color” rather than between people of mixed ancestry and Afro-Brazilians (Brazil 1981; Dzidzienyo 1987; Silva 1985; Telles, 1992, 2004).

## Brazilian Dilemma

Gradually in Brazil there has been the recognition that racial prejudice and discrimination do exist. A 2000 survey in Rio de Janeiro found that 93 percent of those surveyed believe that racism exists in Brazil and 74 percent said there was a lot of bias. Yet 87 percent of the respondents said they themselves were not racist (Buckley 2000).

During the twentieth century, Brazil changed from a nation that prided itself on its freedom from racial intolerance to a country legally attacking discrimination against people of color. One of the first measures was in 1951 when the Afonso Arinos law was unanimously adopted, prohibiting racial discrimination in public places. Opinion is divided over the effectiveness of the law, which has been of no use in overturning subtle forms of discrimination. Even from the start, certain civilian careers, such as the diplomatic and military officer ranks, were virtually closed to Blacks. Curiously, the push for the law came from the United States, after a Black American dancer, Katherine Dunham, was denied a room at a São Paulo luxury hotel.

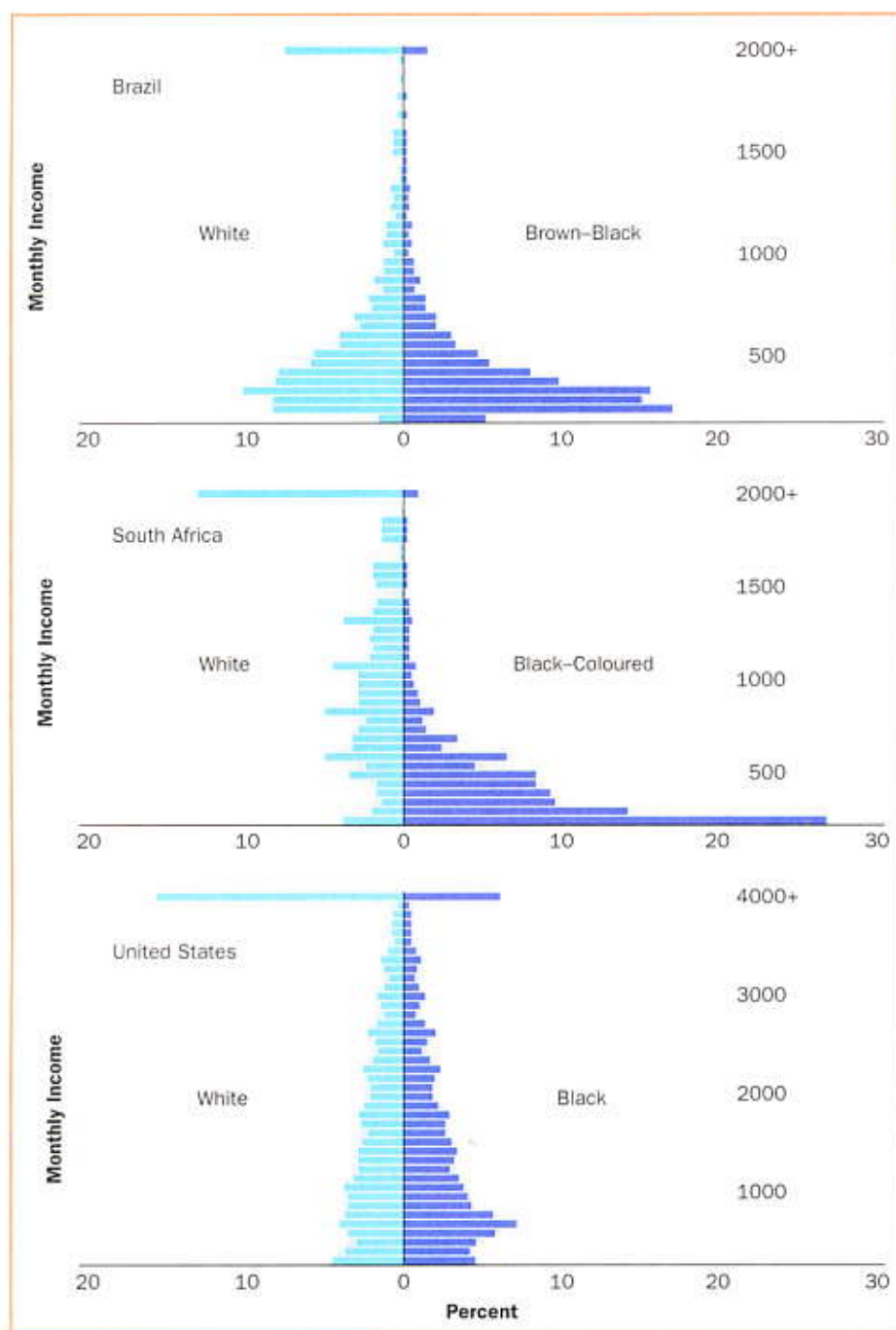
Today, the income disparity is significant in Brazil. As shown in Figure 16.2, people of color are disproportionately clustered in the lowest income levels of society. Although not as disadvantaged as Blacks in South Africa, which we will take up later in this chapter, the degree of inequality between Whites and people of color is much greater in Brazil than in the United States.

As in other multiracial societies, women of color fare particularly poorly in Brazil. White men, of course, have the highest income, whereas Black men have earning levels comparable to those of White women, and Afro-Brazilian women are the furthest behind (Fiola 2008; Telles 2004).

**FIGURE 16.2****Income Distribution by Race**

Note: Monthly income for Brazil and United States in 1996; for South Africa, 1998.

Source: Government agencies as reported in Telles 2004, 108.



There is a long history of activism among Afro-Americans overcoming the challenge of a society that thinks distinctions are based on social class. After all, if problems are based on poverty, they are easier to overcome than if problems are based on color. However, activism is also understandable because societal wealth is so unequal—the concentration of income and assets in the hands of a few is much greater than even in the United States. For Afro-Brazilians, even professional status can achieve only so much in one’s social standing. An individual’s blackness does not suddenly become invisible simply because he or she has acquired some social standing. The fame achieved by the Black Brazilian soccer player Pelé is a token exception and does not mean that Blacks have it easy or even have a readily available “escape hatch” through professional sports.

A dramatic step was taken to explicitly acknowledge the role of race when affirmative action measures were introduced. Quotas were begun in 2007, by which students could indicate their race with their college-entrance applications. Reflecting the color gradient



and the lack of clear-cut racial categories, committees were actually created to examine photographs of prospective students for the purpose of determining race. In its initial implementation, charges of reverse racism and specific cases of inexplicable classifications being made were common. Coming up with solutions in Brazil will be just as intractable as the problems themselves (Ash 2007; Daniel 2006; Dzidzienyo 1987; Fiola 2008).

### Diaspora

The exile of Jews from Palestine.

### Zionism

Traditional Jewish religious yearning to return to the biblical homeland, now used to refer to support for the state of Israel.

## Israel and the Palestinians

In 1991, when the Gulf War ended, hopes were high in many parts of the world that a comprehensive Middle East peace plan could be hammered out. Just a decade later, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the expectations for a lasting peace were much dimmer. The key elements in any peace plan were to resolve the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors and to resolve the challenge of the Palestinian refugees. Although the issues are debated in the political arena, the origins of the conflict can be found in race, ethnicity, and religion.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Jews were exiled from Palestine in the **Diaspora**. The exiled Jews settled throughout Europe and elsewhere in the Middle East, where they often encountered hostility and the anti-Semitism described in Chapter 14. With the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity, Palestine became the site of many Christian pilgrimages. Beginning in the seventh century, Palestine gradually fell under the Muslim influence of the Arabs. By the beginning of the twentieth century, tourism had become established. In addition, some Jews had migrated from Russia and established settlements that were tolerated by the Ottoman Empire, which then controlled Palestine.

Great Britain expanded its colonial control from Egypt into Palestine during World War I, driving out the Turks. Britain ruled the land but endorsed the eventual establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. The spirit of **Zionism**, the yearning to establish a Jewish state in the biblical homeland, was well under way. From the Arab perspective, Zionism meant the subjugation, if not the elimination, of the Palestinians.

Thousands of Jews came to settle from throughout the world; even so, in the 1920s, Palestine was only about 15 percent Jewish. Ethnic tension grew as the Arabs of Palestine were threatened by the Zionist fervor. Rioting grew to such a point that in 1939, Britain yielded to Palestinian demands that Jewish immigration be stopped. This occurred at the same time as large numbers of Jews were fleeing Nazism in Europe. After World War II, Jews resumed their demand for a homeland, despite Arab objections. Britain turned to the newly formed United Nations to settle the dispute. In May 1948, the British mandate over Palestine ended, and the state of Israel was founded (Masci 2001).

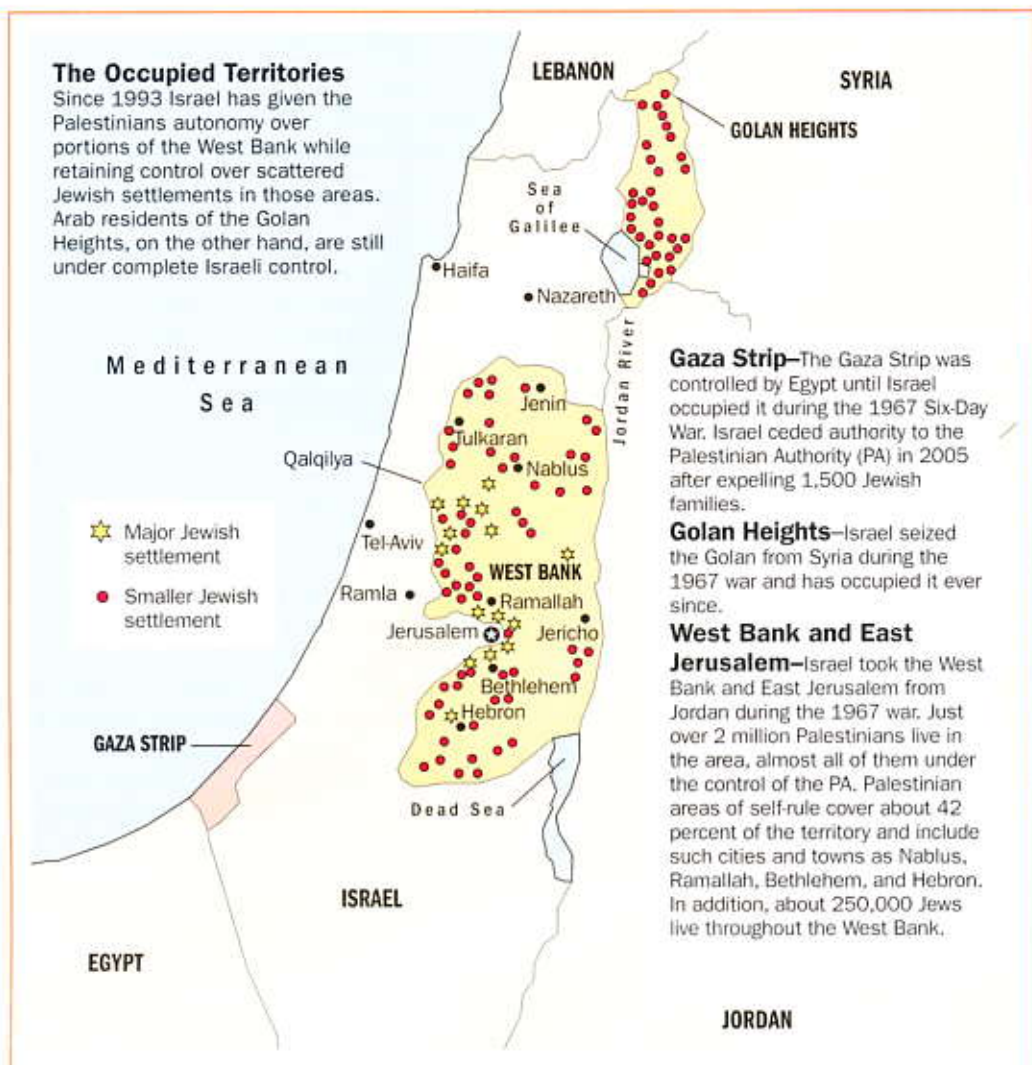
The Palestinian people define themselves as the people who lived in this former British mandate, along with their descendants on their fathers' side. They are viewed as an ethnic group within the larger group of Arabs. They generally speak Arabic, and most of them (97 percent) are Muslim (mostly Sunni). With a rapid rate of natural increase, the Palestinians have grown in number from 1.4 million at the end of World War II to about 7 million worldwide: 700,000 in Israel, 1.5 million in the West Bank, and 800,000 in the Gaza Strip (Third World Institute 2007, 419).

## Arab–Israeli Conflicts

No sooner had Israel been created than the Arab nations—particularly Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon—announced their intention to restore control to the Palestinian Arabs, by force if necessary. As hostilities broke out, the Israeli military stepped in to preserve the borders, which no Arab nation agreed to recognize. Some 60 percent of the 1.4 million Arabs fled or were expelled from Israeli territory, becoming refugees in neighboring countries. An uneasy peace followed as Israel attempted to encourage new Jewish immigration. Israel also extended the same services that were available to the Jews, such as education and health care, to the non-Jewish Israelis. The new Jewish population continued to grow under the country's Law of Return, which gave every Jew in

**FIGURE 16.3**  
**Israeli and Palestinian**  
**Lands**

Sources: Author, based on Mascl 2001; *Economist* 2005b, 2005c; Tse 2005, 2006.



the world the right to settle permanently as a citizen. The question of Jerusalem remained unsettled, and the city was divided into two separate sections—Israeli Jewish and Jordanian Arab—a division both sides refused to regard as permanent.

In 1967, Egypt, followed by Syria, responded to Israel's military actions to take surrounding territory in what came to be called the Six-Day War. In the course of defeating the Arab states' military, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Figure 16.3). The defeat was all the more bitter for the Arabs as Israeli-held territory expanded.

Although our primary attention here is on the Palestinians and the Jews, another significant ethnic issue is present in Israel. Among Israel's Jews, about 21 percent are Israeli-born, 32 percent are European or American, 21 percent are African American, and 13 percent are Asian. The Law of Return has brought to Israel Jews of varying cultural backgrounds. European Jews have been the dominant force, but a significant migration of the more religiously observant Jews from North Africa and other parts of the Middle East has created what sociologist Ernest Krausz (1973) called "the two nations." Not only are the various Jewish groups culturally diverse but also there are significant socioeconomic differences: the Europeans generally are more prosperous, better represented in the Knesset (Israel's parliament), and better educated. The secular Jews feel pressure from the more traditional and ultraorthodox Jews, who push for a nation more reflective of Jewish customs and law (Sela-Sheffy 2004; Third World Institute 2007, 291).



## The Intifada

The occupied territories were regarded initially by Israel as a security zone between it and its belligerent neighbors. By the 1980s, however, it was clear that the territories were also serving as the location of new settlements for Jews migrating to Israel, especially from Russia. Palestinians, though enjoying some political and monetary support of Arab nations, saw little likelihood of a successful military effort to eliminate Israel. Therefore, in December 1987, they began the first **Intifada**, the uprising against Israel by the Palestinians in the occupied territories through attacks against soldiers, the boycott of Israeli goods, general strikes, resistance, and noncooperation with Israeli authorities. The target of this first Intifada, lasting five years, was the Israelis.

The Intifada was a grassroots, popular movement whose growth in support was as much a surprise to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Arab nations as it was to Israel and its supporters. The broad range of participants in the Intifada—students, workers, union members, professionals, and business leaders—showed the unambiguous Palestinian opposition to occupation. The Intifada began out of the frustration of the Palestinians within Israeli, but the confrontations were later encouraged by the PLO, an umbrella organization for several Palestinian factions of varying militancy.

With television news footage of Israel soldiers appearing to attack defenseless youths, the Intifada transformed world opinion, especially in the United States. Palestinians came to be viewed as people struggling for self-determination rather than as terrorists out to destroy Israel. Instead of Israel being viewed as the “David” and its Arab neighbors “Goliath,” Israel came to take on the bully role and the Palestinians the sympathetic underdog role (Hubbard 1993; Third World Institute 2007).

## The Search for Solutions amid Violence

The 1993 Oslo Accords between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and subsequent agreements ended the state of war and appeared to set in motion the creation of the first-ever self-governing Palestinian territory in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Hard-liners on both sides, however, grew resistant to the move toward separate recognized Palestinian and Israeli states. Rabin was assassinated at a peace rally by an Israeli who felt the government had given up too much. Succeeding governments in Israel took stronger stands against relinquishing control of the occupied territories. Meanwhile, the anti-Israel Hamas party was elected to power following the death of Arafat in 2004.

Despite the assurances at Oslo, Israel did not end its occupation of the Palestinian territories by 1999, justifying its actions as necessary to stop anti-Israel violence originating in Palestinian settlements. Complicating the picture was the continued growth of 125 officially recognized Israeli settlements in the West Bank, bringing the total population to 230,000 by 2007. Palestinians, assisted by Arabs in other countries, mounted a second Intifada from 2000 through 2004, which was precipitated by the Israeli killing of several Palestinians at a Jerusalem mosque. This time, militant Palestinians went outside the occupied territories and bombed civilian sites in Israel through a series of suicide bombings. Each violent episode brought calls for retaliation by the other side and desperate calls for a cease-fire from outside the region. Israel, despite worldwide denunciation, created a “security barrier” of 30-foot-high concrete walls, ditches, and barbed wire to try to protect its Jewish settlers, which served to limit the mobility of peaceful Palestinians trying to access crops, schools, hospitals, and jobs.

### Intifada

The Palestinian uprising against Israeli authorities in the occupied territories.







Beginning in 2005, Israel started constructing a 30-foot-high barrier for security purposes, but the wall also served to keep Palestinians from schools and jobs.

The immediate problem is to end the violence, but any lasting peace must face a series of difficult issues, including the following:

- the status of Jerusalem, Israel's capital, which is also viewed by Muslims as the third-most-holy city in the world;
- the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank of the Palestinian Authority territories;
- the future of Palestinians and other Arabs with Israeli citizenship;
- the creation of a truly independent Palestinian national state with strong leadership;
- Israel–Palestinian Authority relations, with the latter's government under control of Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction; and
- the future of Palestinian refugees elsewhere.

Added worries are the uneasy peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors and the sometimes interrelated events in Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran (Shafir 2007; Bronner 2008; Third World Institute 2007).

The last 60 years have witnessed significant changes: Israel has gone from a land under siege to a nation whose borders are recognized by almost everyone. Israel has come to terms with the various factions of religious and secular Jews trying to coexist. The Palestinian people have gone from disfranchisement to having territory. The current solution is fragile and very temporary, as is any form of secession with a foundation for accommodation amid continuing violence.

## Republic of South Africa

In every nation in the world, some racial, ethnic, or religious groups enjoy advantages denied to other groups. Nations differ in the extent of this denial and in whether it is supported by law or by custom. In no other industrial society has the denial been so entrenched in recent law as in the Republic of South Africa.

The Republic of South Africa is different from the rest of Africa because the original African peoples of the area are no longer present. Today, the country is multiracial, as shown in Table 16.2.

The largest group is the Black Africans who migrated from the north in the eighteenth century as well as more recent migrations from neighboring African countries over the last 20 years. The Coloured (or Cape Coloureds), the product of mixed race, and Asians (or Indians) make up the remaining non-Whites. The small White community consists of the English and the Afrikaners, the latter descended from Dutch and other European

**TABLE 16.2**

**Racial Groups in the Republic of South Africa**

	Whites (%)	All Non-Whites (%)	Black Africans (%)	Coloureds (%)	Asian Indians (%)
1904	22	78	67	9	2
1936	21	79	69	8	2
1951	21	79	68	9	3
2007	9	91	80	9	2
2021 (projected)	8	90	80	8	2

Note: "All Non-Whites" totals subject to rounding error.

Sources: Author's estimates, based on Statistics South Africa and Bureau of Market Research in MacFarlane 2006a, 8–9; South African Institute of Race Relations 2007, 6, 12; MacFarlane 2008, 2; van den Berghe 1978, 102.



settlers. As in all other multicultural nations we have considered, colonialism and immigration have left their mark.

## The Legacy of Colonialism

The permanent settlement of South Africa by Europeans began in 1652, when the Dutch East India Company established a colony in Cape Town as a port of call for shipping vessels bound for India. The area was sparsely populated, and the original inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, the Hottentots and Bushmen, were pushed inland like the indigenous peoples of the New World. To fill the need for laborers, the Dutch imported slaves from areas of Africa farther north. Slavery was confined mostly to areas near towns and involved more limited numbers than in the United States. The Boers, seminomads descended from the Dutch, did not remain on the coast but trekked inland to establish vast sheep and cattle ranches. The *trekkers*, as they were known, regularly fought off the Black inhabitants of the interior regions. Sexual relations between Dutch men and slave and Hottentot women were quite common, giving rise to a mulatto group referred to today as Cape Coloureds.

The British entered the scene by acquiring part of South Africa in 1814, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The British introduced workers from India as indentured servants on sugar plantations. They had also freed the slaves by 1834, with little compensation to the Dutch slave owners, and had given Blacks almost all political and civil rights. The Boers were not happy with these developments and spent most of the nineteenth century in a violent struggle with the growing number of English colonists. In 1902, the British finally overwhelmed the Boers, leaving bitter memories on both sides. Once in control, however, they recognized that the superior numbers of the non-Whites were a potential threat to their power, as they had been to the power of the Afrikaners.

The growing non-White population consisted of the Coloureds, or mixed population, and the Black tribal groups, collectively called Bantus. The British gave both groups the vote but restricted the franchise to people who met certain property qualifications. **Pass laws** were introduced, placing curfews on the Bantus and limiting their geographic movement. These laws, enforced through “reference books” until 1986, were intended to prevent urban areas from becoming overcrowded with job-seeking Black Africans, a familiar occurrence in colonial Africa (van den Berghe 1965; A. Marx 1998).

## Apartheid

In 1948, South Africa was granted its independence from the United Kingdom, and the National Party, dominated by the Afrikaners, assumed control of the government. Under

### pass laws

Laws that controlled internal movement by non-Whites in South Africa.



South Africa employed an explicit system of de jure segregation under apartheid that included spatial separation on trains as shown in these separate entry points in Johannesburg. Whites waited at the front of trains, while Black South Africans waited at the rear.



**apartheid**

The policy of the South African government intended to maintain separation of Blacks, Coloureds, and Asians from the dominant Whites.

the leadership of this party, the rule of White supremacy, already well under way in the colonial period as custom, became more and more formalized into law. To deal with the multiracial population, the Whites devised a policy called apartheid to ensure their dominance. **Apartheid** (in Afrikaans, the language of the Afrikaners, it means “separation” or “apartness”) came to mean a policy of separate development, euphemistically called *multinational development* by the government. At the time, these changes were regarded as cosmetic outside South Africa and by most Black South Africans.

The White ruling class was not homogeneous. The English and Afrikaners belonged to different political parties, lived apart, spoke different languages, and worshipped separately, but they shared the belief that some form of apartheid was necessary. Apartheid can perhaps be best understood as a twentieth-century effort to reestablish the master–slave relationship. Blacks could not vote. They could not move throughout the country freely. They were unable to hold jobs unless the government approved. To work at approved jobs, they were forced to live in temporary quarters at great distances from their real homes. Their access to education, health care, and social services was severely limited (W. Wilson 1973).

Events took a significant turn in 1990, when South African Prime Minister F. W. De Klerk legalized 60 banned Black organizations and freed Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress (ANC), after 27 years of imprisonment. Mandela’s triumphant remarks after his release appear in *Listen to Our Voices*.

The next year, De Klerk and Black leaders signed a National Peace Accord, pledging themselves to the establishment of a multiparty democracy and an end to violence. After a series of political defeats, De Klerk called for a referendum in 1992 to allow Whites to vote on ending apartheid. If he failed to receive popular support, he vowed to resign. A record high turnout gave a solid 68.6 percent vote that favored the continued dismantling of legal apartheid and the creation of a new constitution through negotiation. The process toward power sharing ended symbolically when De Klerk and Mandela were jointly awarded the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize (A. Marx 1998; Ottaway and Taylor 1992; Winant 2001).

## The Era of Reconciliation and Moving On

In April 1994, South Africa held its first universal election. Apartheid had ended. Nelson Mandela’s ANC received 62 percent of the vote, giving him a five-year term as president. Mandela enjoyed the advantage of wide personal support throughout the nation. He retired in 1999 when his second term ended. His successors have faced a daunting agenda because of the legacy of apartheid.

A significant step to help South Africa move past apartheid was the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). People were allowed to come forward and confess to horrors they had committed under apartheid from 1961 through 1993. If they were judged by the TRC to be truly remorseful, and most were, they were not subject to prosecution. If they failed to confess to all crimes they had committed, they were prosecuted. The stories gripped the country as people learned that actions taken in the name of the Afrikaner government were often worse than anyone had anticipated (Gobodo-Madikizela 2003).

The immediate relief that came with the end of apartheid has given way to greater concerns about the future of all South Africans. In *Research Focus*, we consider the views expressed by contemporary South Africans.

With the emergence of the new multiracial government in South Africa, we see a country with enormous promise but many challenges that are similar to those of our own multiracial society. Some of the controversial issues facing the ANC-led government are very familiar to citizens in the United States.

*Desperate poverty:* Despite the growth of a small but conspicuous middle class among Black South Africans, poverty rates stand at 60.6 percent, compared to 4.0 percent of White South Africans.

*Affirmative action:* Race-based employment goals and other preference programs have been proposed, yet critics insist that such efforts constitute reverse apartheid.





## Listen to Our Voices

### AFRICA, IT IS OURS!

**A** mandla! Amandla! i-Afrika, mayibuye! [Power! Power! Africa, it is ours!]

My friends, comrades and fellow South Africans, I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all. I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people.

Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands.

On this day of my release, I extend my sincere and warmest gratitude to the millions of my compatriots and those in every corner of the globe who have campaigned tirelessly for my release.

Negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid will have to address the overwhelming demand of our people for a democratic nonracial and unitary South Africa. There must be an end to white monopoly on political power.

And [there must be] a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic systems to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed and our society thoroughly democratized. . . .

Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. We call on our people to seize this moment so that the process toward democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts.

To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be



Nelson Mandela

able to forgive. The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts. It is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured.

We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa. The freedom movement is the political home for you, too. We call on the inter-

national community to continue the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime.

To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process toward the complete eradication of apartheid. Our march to freedom is irreversible. We must not allow fear to stand in our way.

Universal suffrage of a common voters' role in a united democratic and nonracial South Africa is the only way to peace and racial harmony.

In conclusion, I wish to go to my own words during my trial in 1964. They are as true today as they were then. I wrote: I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

*Source:* Mandela 1990. Copyright © 1990 by the New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission of the *New York Times*.

*Medical care:* The nation is trying to confront the duality of private care for the affluent (usually Whites) and government-subsidized care (usually for people of color). AIDS has reached devastating levels, with 12 percent of the population having HIV or AIDS as of 2008. Half of all deaths result from AIDS.

*Crime:* Although the government-initiated violence under apartheid has ended, the generations of conflict and years of intertribal attacks have created a climate for crime, illegal gun ownership, and disrespect for law enforcement.



## Research Focus

### LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE

In the United States, we take for granted the regular release of opinion or survey data about what people think about the sensitive issues in their country. However, public opinion surveying does not typically occur in totalitarian countries such as South Africa under apartheid. Today, surveying is now a regular part of South African life and, not too surprisingly, the subject sometimes turns to race relations.

We can examine national surveys of opinions conducted from 2001 through 2006 to find out what adults from all racial groups thought about racism in everyday life. The data from these studies reveal a racial divide on many issues.

Nearly two-thirds of Black Africans (65 percent) indicated that they felt the country was headed in the right direction, whereas only about one-third (36 percent) of Whites felt the same way.

Black South Africans overwhelmingly see unemployment as the major problem facing the nation, whereas Whites place crime and security as the top problem, with government corruption as number two. Blacks, meanwhile, do not see the government as a problem but give priority to both housing and water supply—two issues not ranked highly by their fellow White citizens. More than 60 percent of Blacks but less than half of Whites feel that relations between groups are improving.

All South Africans—whether Black, Coloured, Indian, or White—agree that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government and that South Africa will remain democratic. Blacks are much more likely to see the gap between the rich and poor as a threat to democracy. Blacks are more likely to see education and health care as improving over the 10 years of post-apartheid South Africa, whereas Whites see it as actually getting worse. Just 19 percent of White respondents, however, said they would consider a return to apartheid.

In summary, the survey revealed deep concerns among all South Africans about a number of social and economic issues, but the specific factor of race is not viewed as the dominant problem. Yet the consciousness of racism has not vanished. The majority still see racism as a serious concern. Yet when asked, they generally see their own group as the victim of racism with little recognition of the problems of prejudice and discrimination facing the other groups.

There seemed little doubt from this survey that, as during the apartheid era, South Africa still has a racial problem to solve.

*Sources: Economist 2005a; Kaiser Family Foundation 2004; McGreal 2008; Schlemmer 2001a, 2001b.*

*School integration:* Multiracial schools are replacing the apartheid system, but for some, the change is occurring too fast or not fast enough. Although 15 percent of Whites hold a college degree, only 1.8 percent of Black South Africans are so advantaged.

These issues must be addressed with minimal increases in government spending as the government seeks to reverse deficit spending without an increase in taxes that would frighten away needed foreign investment. As difficult as all these challenges are, perhaps the most difficult is land reform (Kane-Berman 2006; South African Institute of Race Relations 2007; Kaiser Family Foundation 2008).

The government has pledged to address the issue of land ownership. Between 1960 and 1990, the government forced Black South Africans from their land and often allowed Whites to settle on it. Beginning in 1994, the government took steps to transfer 30 percent



of agricultural land to Black South Africans. Where feasible, the government plans to restore the original inhabitants to their land; where this is not feasible, the government is to make "just and equitable compensation." By 2007, less than 4 percent of the farmland had been transferred. Overall, White South Africans, who make up less than 9 percent of the population, receive 45 percent of the income. There have been some positive signs. Black South Africans have been able to legally own their own homes since the 1980s; by 2008, almost two-thirds owned their homes. To continue to move past apartheid, many South Africans feel redistribution of wealth needs to occur.

The magnitude of this land reform issue cannot be minimized. Originally, the goal was to achieve the land transfer by 2004, but this has now been deferred to 2015. Certain critics say at the current rate it will take until 2060 to reach the 2004 objective. With its other economic problems and now the decision to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in hosting the 2010 football (soccer) World Cup, more new land is likely to be occupied by Black South Africans through squatter arrangements than through government-approved transfer (Kane-Berman 2008; McGreal 2008).

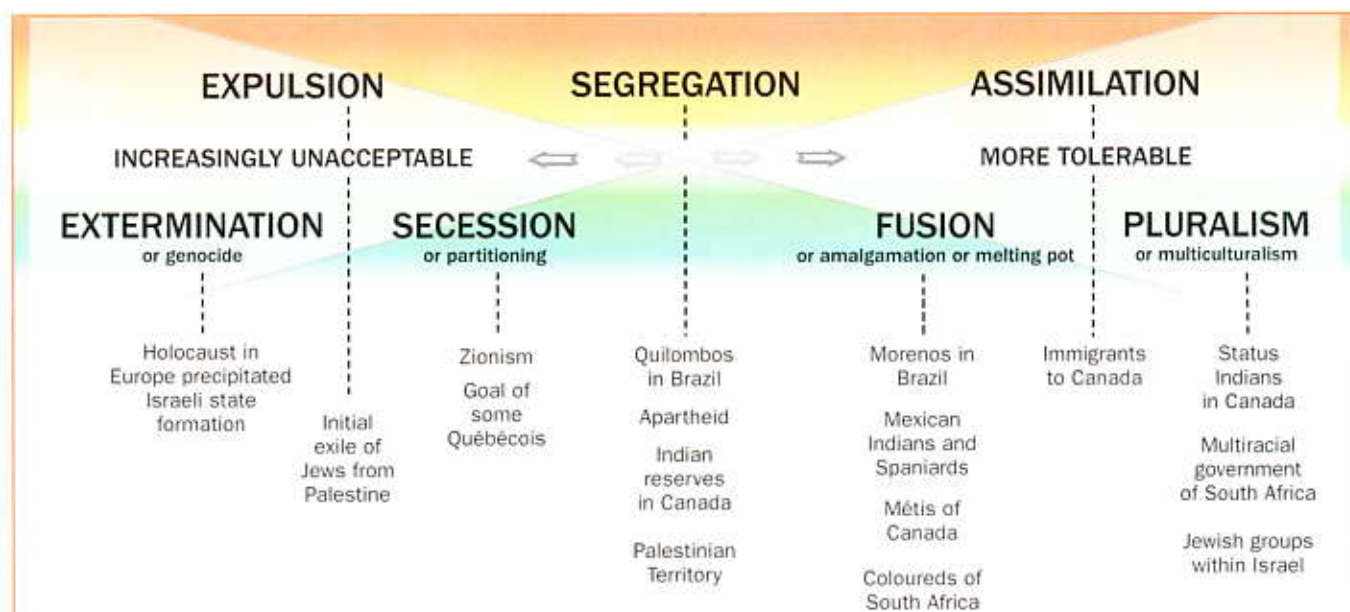
## Conclusion

As shown in the figure below, each society, in its own way, illustrates the processes in the Spectrum of Intergroup Relations first introduced in Chapter 1. The examples range from the Holocaust, which precipitated the emergence of Israel, to the efforts to create a multiracial government in South Africa. A study of these five societies, coupled with knowledge of subordinate groups in the United States, will provide the background from which to draw some conclusions about patterns of race and ethnic relations in the world today.

By looking beyond our borders, we gather new insights into the social processes that frame and define intergroup relationships.

The colonial experience has played a role in all cases under consideration in this chapter but particularly in South Africa. In Mexico and South Africa, which have long histories of multiethnic societies, intergroup sexual relations have been widespread but with different results. Mestizos in Mexico occupy a middle racial group and experience less tension, whereas in South Africa, the Cape Coloureds had freedoms under apartheid almost as limited as those of the Black Africans. South Africa enforced *de jure* segregation, whereas Israeli communities seem to have *de facto* segregation. Israel's and South Africa's intergroup conflicts have involved the world community. Indigenous people figure in the

## SPECTRUM OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS



social landscape of Canada, Brazil, and Mexico. Policies giving preference to previously devalued racial groups are in place in both Brazil and South Africa. Complete assimilation is absent in all five societies considered in this chapter and is unlikely to occur in the near future; the legal and informal barriers to assimilation and pluralism vary for subordinate people choosing either option. Looking at the status of women in Mexico reminds us of the worldwide nature of gender stratification and also offers insight into the patterns present in developing nations.

If we add the United States to these societies, the similarities become even more striking. The problems of racial and ethnic adjustment in the United States have dominated our attention, but they parallel past and present experiences in other societies with racial, ethnic, or religious heterogeneity. The U.S. government

has been involved in providing educational, financial, and legal support for programs intended to help particular racial or ethnic groups, and it continues to avoid interfering with religious freedom. Bilingual, bicultural programs in schools, autonomy for Native Americans on reservations, and increased participation in decision making by residents of ghettos and barrios are all viewed as acceptable goals, although they are not pursued to the extent that many subordinate-group people would like.

The analysis of this chapter has reminded us of the global nature of dominant-subordinate relations along dimensions of race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. In the next chapter, we will take an overview of racial and ethnic relations as well as explore social inequality along the dimensions of age, disability status, and sexual orientation.

## Summary

1. Mexico's mosaic of mestizos and native indigenous people creates a diversified society with segments of the population that definitely feel disadvantaged and ignored.
2. Canada, with one of the largest proportions of indigenous peoples, continues to develop strategies to promote economic development while preserving cultural traditions. A similar pattern has emerged among the growing immigrant community.
3. The sizable French-speaking population within Canada has asked and receives consideration for its special cultural heritage, which is not fully endorsed by others in the nation.
4. Brazil is not a racial paradise, as has sometimes been suggested, but continues to deal with significant disparity among people of color.
5. Israel has both a significant Arab population and a diverse Jewish community among whom there are sharp political and religious differences.
6. Palestinians in the occupied territories are in a desperate economic situation that has been aggravated by violent divisions within their ranks and by reprisals from Israel in response to attacks from those to within the territories.
7. The apartheid era in South Africa underscores how race can be a tool for total subjugation of millions of people.
8. The South Africa of the post-apartheid era is marked by reconciliation of the different racial groups, which are facing significant issues involving land, education, health, and public safety.



## Key Terms

apartheid 394	mestizo 379	visible minorities 384
color gradient 380	mulatto escape hatch 387	world systems theory 378
Diaspora 389	pass laws 393	Zionism 389
ethnonational conflict 378	Québécois 383	
Intifada 391	quilombo 386	

## Review Questions

1. Identify who the native peoples are and what their role has been in each of the societies discussed in this chapter.
2. On what levels can one speak of an identity issue facing Canada as a nation?
3. What role has secession played in Canada and Israel?
4. How have civil uprisings affected intergroup tensions in Mexico and Israel?
5. To what extent are the problems facing Brazil and South Africa today part of the legacy of racial divisions?

## Critical Thinking

1. Social construction of race emphasizes how we create arbitrary definitions of skin color that then have social consequences. Drawing on the societies discussed, select one nation and identify how social definitions work in other ways to define group boundaries.
2. Apply the functionalist and conflict approaches of sociology first introduced in Chapter 1 to each of the societies under study in this chapter.
3. The conflicts outlined in this chapter are examples of ethnonational conflicts, but how have the actions or inactions of the United States contributed to these problems?