

SOCIOLOGY OF LATIN*S: AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH



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Sociology of Latin@s: An Intersectional Approach

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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Section 1.1: Sociological Perspective and Sociological Imagination

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the systematic study of society and social interaction. In order to carry out their studies, sociologists identify cultural patterns and social forces and determine how they affect individuals and groups. One way sociology achieves a more complete understanding of social reality is through its focus on the importance of the social forces affecting our behavior, attitudes, and life chances. This focus involves an emphasis on social structure, the social patterns through which a society is organized. Sociology provides a lens for understanding the human condition and the structural forces that influence our behavior and attitudes. In this course, we will focus on the many ways social and structural forces influence the lives, behaviors, attitudes, and life changes of the Latin@ population.

Yet, we are often not aware of the impact of these societal forces. Consider that most Americans probably agree that we enjoy a great amount of freedom. And yet perhaps we have less freedom than we think. Although we have the right to choose how to believe and act, many of our choices are affected by our society, culture, and social institutions in ways we do not even realize. Perhaps we are not as distinctively individualistic as we might like to think. The struggle over state shut-downs, social distancing and mandatory masks in public, threw this debate over freedom into the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, take the right to vote. The secret ballot is one of the most cherished principles of American democracy. We vote in secret so that our choice of a candidate is made freely and without fear of punishment. That is all true, but it is also possible to predict the candidate for whom any one individual will vote if enough is known about the individual. Again, our choice (in this case, our choice of a candidate) is affected by many aspects of our social backgrounds and, in this sense, is not made as freely as we might think.



Figure **Section1.1.3**: Rainbow colors at the white House celebrating marriage equality, following the 2015 Supreme Court Decision, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, legalizing gay marriage. (CC BY-SA 2.0; osseous via Flickr)

To illustrate this point, consider the 2008 presidential election between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain. Suppose a room is filled with 100 randomly selected voters from that election. Nothing is known about them except that they were between 18 and 24 years of age when they voted. Because [CNN exit poll data](#) found that Obama won 66% of the vote from people in this age group, a prediction that each of these 100 individuals voted for Obama would be correct about 66 times and incorrect only 34 times. Someone betting \$1 on each prediction would come out \$32 ahead ($\$66 - \$34 = \$32$), even though the only thing known about the people in the room is their age.

Now let's suppose we have a room filled with 100 randomly selected white men from Wyoming who voted in 2008. We know only three things about them: their race, gender, and state of residence. Because exit poll data found that 67% of white men in Wyoming voted for McCain, a prediction can be made with fairly good accuracy that these 100 men tended to have voted for McCain. Someone betting \$1 that each man in the room voted for McCain would be right about 67 times and wrong only 33 times and would come out \$34 ahead ($\$67 - \$33 = \$34$). Even though young people in the United States and white men from Wyoming had every right and freedom under our democracy to vote for whomever they wanted in 2008, they still tended to vote for a particular candidate because of the influence of their age (in the case of the young people) or of their gender, race, and state of residence (white men from Wyoming).

Yes, Americans have freedom, but our freedom to think and act is constrained at least to some degree by our social structures - by society's standards and expectations and by the many aspects of our social backgrounds. This is true for the kinds of important beliefs and behaviors just discussed, and it is also true for less important examples. What color of mask did you wear during COVID-19? Was it a designer mask? Did it have a message? What social forces impacted your choice of mask?



Figure Section1.1.4: "Vote Here Vote Aquí" sign in multiple languages. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; myJon via Flickr)

The social structure plays an integral role in the **social location** (i.e., place or position) people occupy in society. Your social location is a result of cultural values and norms from the time-period and place in which you live. Culture affects personal and social development including the way people will think or behave. Social and cultural characteristics pertaining to age, gender, race, education, income, religion, sexuality, immigration status, disability and other social factors influence the location people occupy at any given time. One analytical focus of this textbook will be to highlight the **intersections** of important social location characteristics, such as gender and immigration status, and how these intersections impact the lives of Latin@s in unique ways.

Furthermore, social location influences how people perceive and understand the world in which we live. People have a difficult time being objective in all contexts, because of their social location within cultural controls and standards derived from values and norms. Objective conditions exist without bias because they are measurable and quantifiable (Carl, 2013). Subjective concerns rely on judgments rather than external facts. Personal feelings and opinions from a person's social location drive subjective concerns. The **sociological imagination** is a tool to help people step outside subjective or personal biography, and look at objective facts and the historical background of a situation, issue, society, or person (Carl, 2013).

✓ Thinking Sociologically

The time period we live (history) and our personal life experiences (biography) influence our perspectives and understanding about others and the world. Our history and biography guide our perceptions of reality reinforcing our personal bias and subjectivity. Relying on subjective viewpoints and perspectives leads to diffusion of misinformation and fake news that can be detrimental to our physical and socio-cultural environment and negatively impact our interactions with others. We must seek out facts and develop knowledge to enhance our objective eye. By using valid, reliable, proven facts, data, and information, we establish credibility and make better decisions for the world and ourselves.

1. Consider a socio-cultural issue related to the Latin@ community that you are passionate about and want to change or improve.
2. What is your position on the issue? What ideological or value-laden reasons or beliefs support your position? What facts or empirical data support your position?
3. What portion of your viewpoint or perspective on the issue relies on personal values, opinions, or beliefs in comparison to facts?
4. Why is it important to identify and use empirical data or facts in our lives rather than relying on ideological reasoning and false or fake information

According to C. Wright Mills (1959), the sociological imagination requires individuals to "think themselves away" from examining personal and social influences on people's life choices and outcomes. Large-scale or macrosociological influences help create an understanding about the effect of the social structure and history on people's lives. Whereas, small-scale or microsociological

influences focus on interpreting personal viewpoints from an individual's biography. Using only a microsociological perspective leads to an unclear understanding of the world from biased perceptions and assumptions about people, social groups, and society (Carl 2013).

In *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), Mills presented his classic distinction between personal troubles and public issues. **Personal troubles** refer to a problem affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blame on the individual's own failings. Examples include such different problems as police brutality, immigration, mass incarceration, hate crimes, sexual harassment, and unemployment. **Public issues**, whose source lies in the social structure and culture of a society, refer to a social problem affecting many individuals. Thus problems in society help account for problems that individuals experience personally. Mills, feeling that many problems ordinarily considered private troubles are best understood as public issues, coined the term sociological imagination to refer to the ability to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems.

To illustrate Mills's viewpoint, let's use our sociological imagination to understand some important contemporary social problems. We will start with unemployment, which Mills himself discussed. If only a few people were unemployed, Mills wrote, we could reasonably explain their unemployment by saying they were lazy, lacked good work habits, and so forth. If so, their unemployment would be their own personal trouble. But when millions of people are out of work, unemployment is best understood as a public issue because, as Mills (1959) explained, "the very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals." The unemployment rate rose dramatically during the severe economic downturn that began in 2008, yet had reduced to its lowest level before the COVID-19 pandemic. Once COVID-19 hit, millions of people in the U.S. lost their jobs through no fault of their own. While some individuals are undoubtedly unemployed because they are lazy or lack good work habits, a more structural explanation focusing on lack of opportunity and forced shut-downs is needed to explain why so many people were out of work as this book went to press. Though experienced as a personal trouble, unemployment can better be understood through analysis as a public issue. According to a [Pew Research Center study](#), unemployment rates among African Americans have exceeded the unemployment rates of Euro Americans over the past six decades (Desilver, 2013). Current unemployment trends are no different.

Next we can consider how the global COVID-19 pandemic has presented the world with severe uncertainty. Personal troubles range from families devastated by the passing of a loved one, essential medical workers caring for COVID-19 patients on the frontline, and a shut-down of our public space that has confined many to their homes. Yet, an analysis of the unprepared public health system to manage this crises, lack of national political leadership, lack of access to (quality) health care in communities of color, combined with the high risk that poor communities face, illustrates the public issues surrounding the pandemic; economic and health care systems serve to only exacerbate the social inequalities that pre-dated COVID-19. The Pew Research Center (2020) found that Latin@s were much more likely to report having lost a family member to the COVID-19 and experienced financial difficulties including difficulty paying for housing and job loss. Additionally, the rise of hate crimes against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities during COVID-19 further illustrates the how sociological imagination can be employed to consider the personal impact of these hate crimes as well as the public, structural roots of this racism.

Sociological Perspective

A key basis of the **sociological perspective** is the concept that the individual and society are inseparable. It is impossible to study one without the other. Incorporating a sociological perspective reminds us that we are always participating in something larger than ourselves. Using our sociological imagination, we can begin to see our micro, personal troubles in the context of macro, public issues. Perhaps then, we can better understand the complexity of our social life as well as the social change and resistance that may serve to improve the human condition.

Key Takeaways

- Sociology provides a lens for understanding the human condition and the structural forces and structures that influence our behavior, attitudes, social interaction, and society at large. This book will focus on how societal and structural forces impact the lives of Latin@s in the United States.
- Using the tools of the sociological imagination and the sociological perspective help people to understand we are always participating in something larger than ourselves.

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Section 1.2: Defining Race, Ethnicity, and Identity

Questioning the Biological Definition of Race

From a biological perspective, **race** refers to a category of people who share certain inherited physical characteristics, such as skin color, facial features, and stature. Most people think of race in biological terms, and for more than 300 years, or ever since white Europeans began colonizing populations of color elsewhere in the world, race has indeed served as the “premier source of human identity” (A. Smedley, 1998, p. 690).

✓ Phenotype and Genotype

Phenotype refers to the composite observable traits and behaviors of an individual or group. **Genotype** refers to a person's genetic makeup.

Phenotype is thus the physical manifestation of genotype. The most noticeable phenotype difference is skin tone: some groups of people have very dark skin, while others have very light skin or brown skin. Other differences also exist. Some people have very curly hair, while others have very straight hair. Some individuals have thin lips, while others have thick lips. Some people tend to be relatively tall, while others tend to be relatively short. Some have oval eyes, while others have round eyes. In the past, theorists have posited categories of race based on various geographic regions, ethnicities, skin colors, and more. Their labels for racial groups have connoted regions (Mongolia and the Caucasus Mountains, for instance) or skin tones (Black, white, yellow, and red, for example).

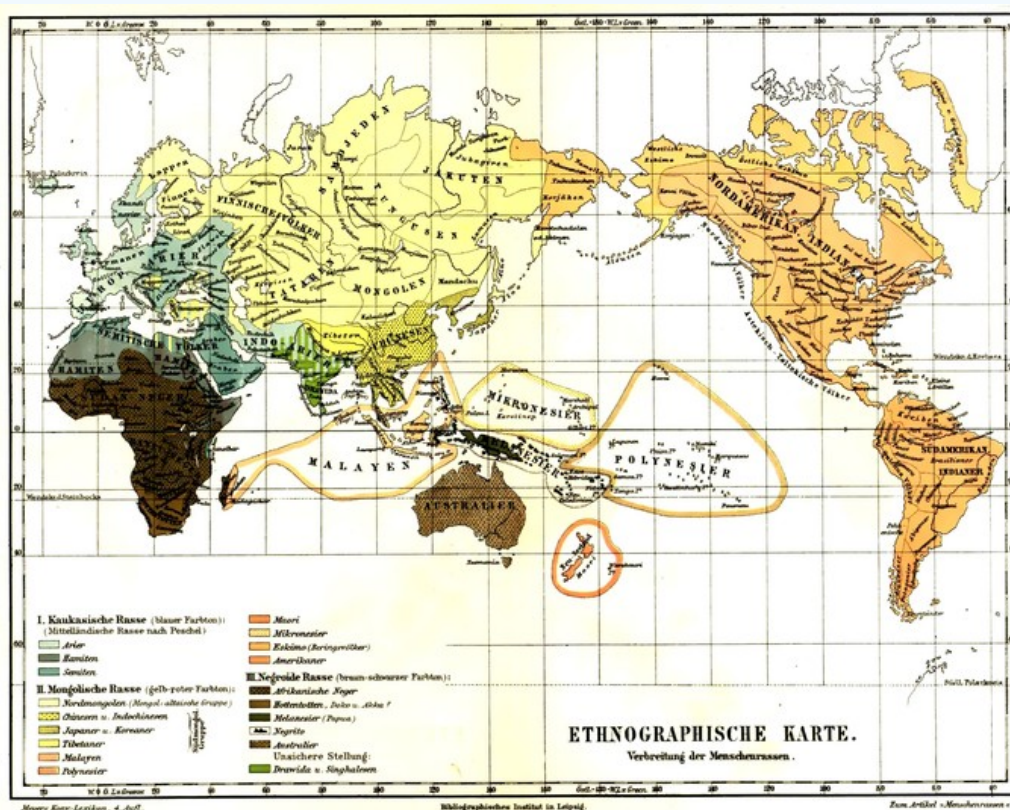


Figure **Section1.2.1**: Meyers's ethnographic map, late 19th-Century. (CC PDM 1.0; Wikimedia)

An example of an early modern attempt at racial categorization, this map depicts the three great races, according to Meyers Konversationslexikon, a major encyclopedia in the German language in the late 1800s. The subtypes of the "Mongoloid" race are shown in yellow and orange tones, those of the "Europid/Caucasoid" race in light and medium grayish green-cyan tones, and those of the "Negroid" race in brown tones. Dravidians and Sinhalese are in olive green, and their classification is

described as uncertain. The Mongoloid race sees the widest geographic distribution, including all of the Americas, North Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the entire inhabited Arctic.

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It is certainly easy to see that people in the United States and around the world differ physically in some obvious ways. Race has been used as a classification system to categorize humans in a variety of ways. Using such physical differences as their criteria, scientists at one point identified as many as nine races: African, American Indian or Native American, Asian, Australian Aborigine, European (more commonly called “white”), Indian, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian (A. Smedley, 1998).

Although people certainly do differ in the many physical features that led to the development of such racial categories, anthropologists, sociologists, and many biologists question the value of these categories and thus the value of the biological concept of race (A. Smedley, 2007). For one thing, we often see more physical differences within a race than between races. For example, some people we call “white” (or European), such as those with Scandinavian backgrounds, have very light skins, while others, such as those from some Eastern European or Middle Eastern backgrounds, have much darker skins. In fact, some “whites” have darker skin than some “Blacks,” or African Americans. Some whites have very straight hair, while others have very curly hair; some have blonde hair and blue eyes, while others have dark hair and brown eyes. Because of interracial reproduction going back to the days of slavery, African Americans also differ in the darkness of their skin and in other physical characteristics. In fact it is estimated that about 80% of African Americans have some white (i.e., European) ancestry; 50% of Mexican Americans have European or Native American ancestry; and 20% of whites have African or Native American ancestry. If clear racial differences ever existed hundreds or thousands of years ago (and many scientists doubt such differences ever existed), in today’s world these differences have become increasingly blurred.

Another reason to question the biological concept of race is that an individual or a group of individuals is often “assigned” to a race based on arbitrary or even illogical grounds. A century ago, for example, Irish, Italians, and Eastern European Jews who left their homelands for a better life in the United States were not regarded as white once they reached the United States but rather as a different, inferior (if unnamed) race (Painter, 2010). The belief in their inferiority helped justify the harsh treatment they suffered in their new country. Today, of course, we call people from all three backgrounds white or European. Many individuals under the umbrella labels of Latinx or MENA (Middle East and North Africa) may also be classified as white, but that does not mean they see themselves as white. Many in these groups do not feel represented in discussions of race. As quoted by Jad Elharake, a former University of Michigan student, “A MENA category would represent a diverse set of dismissed identities with specific needs,” yet the 2020 Census failed to include such a category (Alshammari, 2020). In Chapter 6, we will examine Latinx identity more closely and discuss the problems and limitations of the U.S. Census in capturing the racial and ethnic identity of Latin@s in the United States.



Figure Section1.2.2: "Jesus is Middle Eastern" billboard. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Dean.Chahim via Flickr)

In this context, consider someone in the United States who has a white parent and a Black parent. What race is this person? American society usually calls this person Black or African American, and the person may adopt the same identity (as does Barack

Obama, who had a white mother and African father). But where is the logic for doing so? This person, including President Obama, is as much white as Black in terms of parental ancestry. Or consider someone with one white parent and another parent that is the child of one Black parent and white parent. This person thus has three white grandparents and one Black grandparent. Even though this person's ancestry is thus 75% white and 25% Black, this person is likely to be considered Black in the United States and may well adopt this racial identity. This practice reflects the traditional **“one-drop rule”** in the United States that defines someone as Black if the person has at least one drop of “Black blood,” and that was used in the antebellum South to keep the enslaved African population as large as possible (Wright, 1993). Yet in many Latin American nations, this person would be considered white. In Brazil, the term Black is reserved for someone with no European (white) ancestry at all. If we followed this practice in the United States, about 80% of the people we call “Black” would now be called “white.” With such arbitrary designations, race is more of a social category than a biological one.



Figure **Section1.2.3**: Former President Barack Obama had an African father and a white mother. Obama identifies himself as African American. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; Steve Jurvetson via Flickr)

A third reason to question the biological concept of race comes from the field of biology itself and more specifically from the study of genetics and human evolution. Starting with genetics, people from different races are more than 99.9% the same in their DNA (Begley, 2008). To turn that around, less than 0.1% of all the DNA in our bodies accounts for the physical differences among people that we associate with racial differences. In terms of DNA or genotype, then, people with different racial backgrounds are much more similar than dissimilar. In a December, 2003, Scientific American article, Bamshad and Olson, two geneticists working on mapping the human genome, concluded that “race” does not exist genetically.

According to evolutionary theory, the human race began thousands and thousands of years ago in sub-Saharan Africa. As people migrated around the world over the millennia, natural selection took over. It favored dark skin for people living in hot, sunny climates (i.e., near the equator), because the heavy amounts of melanin that produce dark skin protect against severe sunburn, cancer, and other problems. By the same token, natural selection favored light skin for people who migrated farther from the equator to cooler, less sunny climates, because dark skin there would have interfered with the production of vitamin D (Stone & Lurquin, 2007). Evidence shows physical differences in human appearance including skin color are a result of human migration patterns and adaptations to the environment (Jablonski, 2012). Evolutionary evidence thus reinforces the common humanity of people who differ in the rather superficial ways associated with their appearances: we are one human species, *homo sapiens sapiens*, composed of people who happen to look different. Nonetheless, people use physical characteristics to identify, relate, and interact with one another.

✓ Thinking Sociologically

Global Census: What race would you be somewhere else?

Visit Global Census: What race would you be somewhere else? To help you understand how race is classified differently depending on the country, and some countries measure ethnicity (discussed next the next section) rather than race in their Census.

What racial group do others identify you as? What racial group do you identify yourself? Is there a difference in how you identify yourself versus how others identify you?

Do you think it is important for a country to measure race (or ethnicity) of its population? Why or why not?

Race as a Social Construct

The reasons for doubting the biological basis for racial categories suggest that race is more of a social category than a biological one. Another way to say this is that race is a **social construction**, a concept that has no objective reality but rather is what people decide it is (Berger & Luckmann, 1963). In this view race has no real existence other than what and how people think of it; what matters is the social meaning attached to race.



Figure **Section 1.2.4**: Saúl "Canelo" Alvarez, World Champion Mexican boxer. How does Alvarez's phenotypical characteristics and Mexican nationality lend support to the social construction of race concept? (CC BY-SA 4.0; Box Azteca via [Wikimedia](#))

Although race is a social construction, it is also true that things perceived as real are real in their consequences. Because people do perceive race as something real, it has real consequences. Even though so little of DNA accounts for the physical differences we associate with racial differences, that low amount leads us not only to classify people into different races but to treat them differently—and, more to the point, unequally—based on their classification. Yet modern evidence shows there is little, if any, scientific basis for the racial classification that is the source of so much inequality.

Social science organizations including the American Association of Anthropologists, the American Sociological Association, and the American Psychological Association have all taken an official position rejecting the biological explanations of race. Over time, the typology of race that developed during early **racialized science** has fallen into disuse, and the social construction of race is a more sociological way of understanding racial categories. In [Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real](#), Smedley & Smedley (2005) wrote that "racialized science, with its emphasis on identifying immutable differences between racial groups, can be expected only to maintain and reinforce existing racial inequality, in that its adherents indirectly argue that no degree of government intervention or social change will alter the skills and abilities of different racial groups." Research in this school of thought suggests that race is not biologically identifiable and that previous racial categories were arbitrarily assigned,

based on pseudo science, and used to justify racist practices (Omi & Winant, 1994; Graves, 2003). From the 17th through the 19th centuries, the merging of folk beliefs about and scientific explanations of group differences produced what social anthropologist Audrey Smedley has called an “**ideology of race**” which, often in the name of (racialized) science, serves to justify the racial hierarchy and racial hegemony. “Race is a means of creating and enforcing social order, a lens through which differential opportunity and inequality are structured” (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Further, they argue that the most important “criterion of status” remains to be the distinction between white and Black.

According to historian Milton Meltzer, the rise of the transatlantic slave trade created an incentive to categorize human groups in order to justify the subordination of Africans as slaves. As Europeans began to sort themselves and others into groups based on physical appearance, they attributed to individual members of these groups certain behaviors and capacities that were supposedly deeply ingrained. These supposed physical, intellectual, behavioral, and moral differences soon became part of common folk belief.

During the time of slavery in the U.S. South, the skin tone of enslaved peoples lightened over the years as babies were born from the union, often in the form of rape of enslaved individuals, by slave owners and other whites. As it became difficult to tell who was “Black” and who was not, many court battles over people’s racial identity occurred. People who were accused of having Black ancestry would go to court to “prove” they were white in order to avoid enslavement or other problems (Staples, 1998). Litigation over race continued long past the days of slavery. In a relatively recent example, Susie Guillory Phipps sued the Louisiana Bureau of Vital Records in the early 1980s to change her “official” race to white. Phipps was descended from a slave owner and a slave; thereafter, her other ancestors were white. Despite this fact, she was called “Black” on her birth certificate because of a state law, echoing the “**one-drop rule**,” that designated people as Black if their ancestry was at least 1/32 Black (meaning one of their great-great-grandparents was Black). Phipps had always thought of herself as white and was surprised after seeing a copy of her birth certificate to discover she was officially Black because she had one African ancestor about 150 years earlier. She lost her case, and the U.S. Supreme Court later refused to review it (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Relatedly, the tradition of hostility between the English and the Irish was a powerful influence on early European thinking of the Irish as an inferior “race.” The atrocities committed against the Irish by the English veterans of the war in Ireland in the early 1600s would be repeated against American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) (Takaki, 2008). Both AI/AN and Mexican Americans lost their land, and often their lives, due in part to Manifest Destiny, the Mexican American War, and whites’ belief in their god-given (superiority and) right to inhabit (and steal) lands in which people were already living, as will be discussed further in Chapter 3: Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism. Irish Americans were treated similar to African Americans during the 1800s; it was not until they “became white” that the stigma of their Irish ancestry would be erased and they would gain access to property, power and privilege, similar to other whites.

Following World War II, alongside empirical and conceptual problems with “race,” evolutionary and social scientists were acutely aware of how beliefs about race had been used to justify discrimination, apartheid, slavery, and genocide. This questioning gained momentum in the 1960s during the U.S. civil rights movement and the emergence of numerous anti-colonial movements worldwide. The social construction of race has developed within various legal, economic, and sociopolitical contexts, and may be the effect, rather than the cause of major race-related issues. Race has real, material effects in housing discrimination, in the legal process, in policing practices, in education, in workplace discrimination, and many other domains of society characterized by institutionalized practices of preference and systemic oppression. As a result, racial groups possessing relatively little power often find themselves excluded or oppressed. Law enforcement officers often utilize race to profile suspects, a term commonly referred to as **racial profiling**. This use of racial categories is frequently criticized for perpetuating an outmoded understanding of human biological variation, and promoting stereotypes.

✓ Racial Formation

Sociologists Omi and Winant’s theories of **racial formation** describes race development as a socio-historical process involving political struggle and that “race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (Omi & Winant, 1994).

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Socioeconomic factors, in combination with early but enduring views of race, have led to considerable suffering within disadvantaged racial groups. Racial discrimination often coincides with racist mindsets, whereby the individuals and ideologies of one group come to perceive the members of outgroups as both racially defined and morally inferior. Such practices illuminate how far-removed modern understanding of race is from biological qualities. In modern society, some people who consider themselves “white” actually have more melanin (a pigment that determines skin color) in their skin than other people who identify as “Black.” Consider the case of the actress Rashida Jones. She is the daughter of a Black man (Quincy Jones) and a white woman, and her best-known roles include Ann Perkins on *Parks and Recreation*, Karen Filippelli on *The Office*, and Zooey Rice in *I Love You Man*, none of whom are Black characters. In some countries, such as Brazil, class is more important than skin color in determining racial categorization. People with high levels of melanin may consider themselves “white” if they enjoy a middle-class lifestyle. On the other hand, someone with low levels of melanin might be assigned the identity of “Black” if he or she has little education or money.

The social construction of race is also reflected in the changing labels for racial categories; these labels change with the times. It’s worth noting that race, in this sense, is also a system of labeling that provides a source of identity; specific labels fall in and out of favor during different social eras. For example, the category “negroid,” popular in the nineteenth century, evolved into the term “negro” by the 1960s, which shifted to Black as a result of the Black Power and Black Nationalist movements declaring “Black is Beautiful,” and in contemporary times “African American” may also be used. This term was intended to celebrate the multiple identities that a Black person might hold, but this word choice is not without its problems: it lumps together a large variety of ethnic groups under an umbrella term while excluding others who could accurately be described by the label but who do not meet the spirit of the term. For example, actress Charlize Theron is a blonde-haired, blue-eyed “African American.” She was born in South Africa and later became a U.S. citizen. Is her identity that of an “African American” as most of us understand the term? Further, many Black Americans do not have knowledge of African cultural roots and thus may reject the label of African American. In Chapter 1.4, more discussion is provided on the changing U.S. Census categories for race.



Figure **Section1.2.5**: Businesses located in Little Saigon (Orange County, California) advertise cosmetic surgeries geared towards “beautifying” Vietnamese American women. (Janét Hund)

Aside from labels, a society’s conceptualization of beauty is also intertwined with race, racism, and colorism, as light skin phenotype is often correlated with beauty within the dominant society and social institution of mass media. According to the research of Eugenia Kaw, Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) women’s decision to undergo cosmetic surgery is an attempt to escape persisting racial prejudice that correlates their stereotyped genetic physical features (“small, slanty” eyes and a “flat” nose) with negative behavioral characteristics, such as passivity, dullness, and a lack of sociability. When AAPI women elect for cosmetic surgery, it is more often double eyelid, sculpted nose or breast enlargement. The women in Kaw’s study indicated that they chose their surgeries to improve their social status, and to gain “symbolic capital,” thus prestige. “(The medical establishment and U.S. culture) are able to motivate women to view their feelings of inadequacy as individually motivated, as opposed to socially induced, phenomena, thereby effectively convincing them to participate in the production and reproduction of the larger structural inequalities that continue to oppress them” (Kaw, 1993). In Chapters 3 and 6, we will discuss the impact of colonialism on colorism within Latino@ families, such as the preference for lighter skin expressed by family members when children are born and even in mate selection.

Racialization

Sociologists also use the term **racialization** which refers to the processes by which a group of people is defined by their “race.” Processes of racialization begin by attributing racial meaning to people's identity and, in particular, as they relate to our institutional systems, such as housing, employment, mass media, and education. In societies in which white people have economic, political, and social power, processes of racialization have emerged from the concept of a racial hierarchy in these social systems. The visible effects of racialization are the resulting racial inequalities such as police brutality, substandard housing, and under-funded education. To be racialized is to be oppressed and imposed upon by the dominant group.

The exploitation, control and exclusion associated with racialization leads to people being singled out for unique treatment on the basis of real or imagined physical characteristics. Hence, racialized peoples are assigned racial categories leading to stigmatization and marginalization. While a stigma is a mark of disgrace, to be marginal is to be denied full access to social, political, economic, and cultural power and social institutions.

Various racialized caricatures can be found in mass media such as Black Face or Yellow Face characters prevalent in the last century. African American men have been portrayed as criminal or violent, while African American women have been portrayed as sassy or aggressive. The Latinx population has been racialized by their sex appeal, Latinas as spicy and Latinos as the Latin Lover. Racialization of the Latinx population is further discussed throughout this book. Conversely, Asian American men are regarded on the big screen as having no sex appeal, while Asian American women have been portrayed as sex slaves. Consistent images of American Indians/Alaska Natives equate with the portrayal as “savages” or lacking human qualities.

Minority Group & Dominant Group

Whereas racialization is an active process engaged in by society, the use of minority and dominant groups is more passive labeling. Sociologist Louis Wirth (1945) defined a **minority group** as “any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society resulting in differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.” Minority group status can be based on social categories such as age, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, religious beliefs, disability or socioeconomic class status. Minority groups are not necessarily numerical minorities (Griffiths, Keirns, Strayer, Cody-Rydzewsk, Scaramuzzo, Sadler, Vyain, Byer & Jones, 2015). For example, a large group of people may be a people of color because they lack social power. In fact, the South African system of apartheid (a system of de jure discrimination) was a major indicator that a people of color is socially and not numerically defined, as 90% of the population of South Africa is Black but until the very early 1990s they were the people of color and the 10% of the population who are white were the dominant group. The physical and cultural traits of people of colors “are held in low esteem by the dominant or majority group which treats them unfairly” (Henslin, 2011, p. 217).

According to Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris (1958), a people of color is distinguished by five characteristics: (1) unequal treatment and less power over their lives, (2) distinguishing physical or cultural traits like skin color or language, (3) involuntary membership in the group, (4) awareness of subordination, and (5) high rate of in-group marriage. In addition to communities of color, additional examples of people of colors might include the LGBTQ+ group, religious practitioners whose faith is not widely practiced where they live, and people with disabilities.

The **dominant group** has greater power, prestige, property (wealth), and status in society and receives greater, automatic privileges. As a result, the dominant group uses its position to discriminate against those that are different. Historically known as WASP (white Anglo Saxon Protestant), the dominant group in the United States is represented by white, middle-class, Protestant people of northern European descent (Doane, 2016). A dominant group is positively privileged (Weber, 1978), unstigmatized (Rosenblum & Travis, 2011) and generally favored by the institutions of society, (Marger, 1996) particularly the social, economic, political, and educational systems.

Minority groups can garner power by expanding political boundaries or through expanded migration, though both of these efforts do not occur with ease and require societal support from both communities of color and dominant group members. The loss of power among dominant groups threatens not only their authority over other groups, but also the privileges and way of life established by the dominant group. In Chapter 6.3, white privilege and challenges to white supremacy are discussed.

As there is some controversy with using the concept of people of color, due to the often inferior and pejorative connotation with this label, efforts are made throughout this book to use the concepts, **people of color** or **communities of color**. The use of these

concepts seeks to call attention to the commonalities of experience that Black or African Americans, American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), Latinx, and Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) share - though in the ensuing chapters we will focus on the historical and contemporary experiences of Latin@s.



Figure **Section1.2.6**: "'We are not a minority!!' mural with tribute to Che Guevara, originally painted in 1978 as part of the Chicano Park Struggle in San Diego, California. (CC BY 2.0; rizobreaker via Flickr)

Ethnicity

Because of the meaning attached to race, many social scientists prefer the term ethnicity in speaking of people of color and others with distinctive cultural heritages. In this context, **ethnicity** refers to the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another. Similarly, an **ethnic group** is a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; with relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and with some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup. So conceived, the terms ethnicity and ethnic group avoid the biological connotations of the terms race and racial group and the biological differences these terms imply. At the same time, the importance we attach to ethnicity illustrates that it, too, is in many ways a social construction, and our ethnic membership thus has important consequences for how we are treated.

People who identify with an ethnic group share common cultural characteristics (e.g., nationality, history, language, religion, etc.). Ethnic groups select rituals, customs, ceremonies, and other traditions to help preserve shared heritage (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Lifestyle requirements and other identity characteristics such as geography and region influence how we adapt our ethnic behaviors to fit the context or setting in which we live. Culture is also key in determining how human bodies grow and develop such as food preferences and diet, and cultural traditions promote certain activities and abilities including physical well-being and sport (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Someone of Mexican descent living in Southern California who is a college professor will project different ethnic behaviors than someone of the same ethnic culture who is a housekeeper in Las Vegas, Nevada. Differences in profession, social class, gender, and region will influence each person's lifestyle, physical composition, and health though both may identify and affiliate themselves as Mexican.

Not all people see themselves as belonging to an ethnic group or view ethnic heritage as important to their identity. People who do not identify with an ethnic identity either have no distinct cultural background because their ancestors come from a variety of cultural groups and offspring have not maintained a specific culture, instead have a blended culture, or they lack awareness about their ethnic heritage (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). It may be difficult for some people to feel a sense of solidarity or association with any specific ethnic group because they do not know where their cultural practices originated and how their cultural behaviors adapted over time. In some instances, individuals may practice **symbolic ethnicity**, emphasis on ethnic food and ethnically associated political issues rather than deeper ties to one's heritage (Gans, 1979), such as an Irish American celebrating St. Patrick's Day or a 4th generation Mexican-American celebrating Cinco de Mayo as their only measure of their respective ethnic identities .

What is your ethnicity? Is your ethnic heritage very important, somewhat important, or not important in defining who you are? Why?

Race & Ethnicity

Like race, the term ethnicity is difficult to describe and its meaning has changed over time. And like race, individuals may be identified or self-identify with ethnicities in complex, even contradictory, ways. For example, ethnic groups such as Irish, Italian, Russian, Jewish, and Serbian might all be groups whose members are predominantly included in the racial category “white.” Conversely, the ethnic group British includes citizens from a multiplicity of racial backgrounds: Black, white, Asian, and more, plus a variety of racial combinations. These examples illustrate the complexity and overlap of these identifying terms. Ethnicity, like race, continues to be an identification method that individuals and institutions use today—whether through the census, affirmative action initiatives, non-discrimination laws, or simply in personal day-to-day relations.

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Figure 1.3.21.3.2: Altar at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Los Angeles, during Dia de los Muertos celebration, November 2019. (Sofia Beas)

Mexican Americans comprise an ethnic group, and their ethnicity may be measured by any of the following: Spanish language, holidays such as Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), food such as tamales, adoration of the Virgin de Guadalupe, and values such as **familism**, higher emphasis placed on the family unit in terms of support and obligation, (in contrast to dominant culture's individualism). Mexican Americans comprise the largest ethnic group under the racial-ethnic umbrella group of Latinx Americans; Latinx in itself though is not an ethnic group as there is great diversity of different ethnic groups under this umbrella such as: Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Argentineans, etc. all of which may have distinct history, language, religion, and values. As discussed in a later chapter, Latinx would also not be considered a distinct racial group, according to the U.S. Census.

The sense of identity many people gain from belonging to an ethnic group is important for reasons both good and bad. As one of the most important functions of groups is the identity they give us, ethnic identities can thus give individuals a sense of belonging and a recognition of the importance of their cultural backgrounds. The term ethnic pride captures the sense of self-worth that many people derive from their ethnic backgrounds. More generally, if group membership is important for many ways in which members of the group are socialized, ethnicity certainly plays an important role in the socialization of millions of people in the United States and elsewhere in the world today.

A downside of ethnicity and ethnic group membership is the conflict they create among people of different ethnic groups. History and current practice indicate that it is easy to become prejudiced against people with different ethnicities from our own, particularly

if those ethnic groups are not "white." Around the world today, ethnic conflict continues to rear its ugly head. The 1990s and 2000s were filled with "ethnic cleansing" and pitched battles among ethnic groups in Eastern Europe, Africa, and elsewhere. Our ethnic heritages shape us in many ways and fill many of us with pride, but they also are the source of much conflict, prejudice, and even hatred, as the story about George Floyd's lynching that began this chapter so sadly reminds us, as well as the recent increase in anti-Asian and anti-Latin@ prejudice. Do you also recall that the day President Donald Trump declared his candidacy for President was also the day he castigated the Mexican nationality with derogatory labels, thus justifying his appeal for a border wall?

Ethnic Enclaves

Ethnic enclaves are neighborhoods with high concentrations of one particular ethnic group, usually resulting from immigration patterns. Ethnic enclaves tend to share these characteristics: 1) live in close proximity; 2) support the traditional values customs and ways of life of that ethnic group; 3) maintain social services such as employment networks, political clubs, civic organizations and houses of worship; 4) establish retail stores where traditional foods clothing household goods and utensils are sold; 5) develop and sustain native language newspapers and sometimes radio and TV stations; 6) provide employment and social and sometimes financial support for new immigrants; 7) permit new immigrants to adapt to a new country without experiencing serious levels of culture shock and homesickness. In general, ethnic enclaves provide a safe haven with a variety of social supports for new immigrants that serve to ease their transition into a new and different culture.



Figure 1.3.61.3.6: Olvera Street in Downtown Los Angeles . (CC BY 2.0; Newton Court via [Wikimedia](#))

These enclaves offer economic opportunities to immigrants and mechanisms for maintenance of immigrant cultures, but also the potential exploitation of immigrant labor, often based on gender. The enclaves of Asian and Latinx immigrants emerging since the 1960s, compliments of the 1965 immigration policy, compare to earlier enclaves of Jewish and Italian immigrants at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. In recent decades, enclaves can potentially serve as agents for social mobility of immigrant populations. Enclaves may also hinder assimilation into mainstream U.S. culture. A preponderance of ethnic enclaves are found in urban and suburban parts of the country such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Miami, Washington, D.C., and New York. These enclaves can be characterized by a host of benefits and challenges.

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

Conclusion

David K. Shieler (1997) felt compelled to observe that there is “no more intractable, pervasive issue than race” and that when it comes to race, we are “a country of strangers.” Sociologists and other social scientists have warned that the conditions of people of color have actually been worsening (Massey, 2007; Wilson, 2009). Despite the historic election of Barack Obama in 2008 as the first president of color, race remains an “intractable, pervasive issue.” As the old French saying goes, *plus ça change, plus la meme chose* (the more things change, the more they stay the same). Indeed, it would be accurate to catapult back to Du Bois and thus paraphrase him, that “the problem of the 21st century is the problem of the color line.” Evidence of this continuing problem appears in much of the remainder of this chapter and text.

Debates continue in and among academic disciplines as to how race should be understood. Most social scientists and biologists believe race is a social construct, meaning it does not have a basis in the natural world but is simply an artificial distinction created by humans. As a result of this understanding, some researchers have turned from conceptualizing and analyzing human variation by race to doing so in terms of populations, dismissing racial classifications altogether. In the face of the increasing rejection of race as a valid classification scheme, many social scientists have replaced the word race with the word “ethnicity” to refer to self-identifying groups based on shared religion, nationality, or culture.

Key Takeaways

- Race has a biological component (e.g. phenotype and genotype) resulting in classification systems of different racial groups, depending on the time period and geographical location.
- Sociologists question the consideration of race as a biological categorization due to the social construction of race and the fact that human beings have far more biological similarities than differences.
- Racial ideology, racial formation, racialization, and racialized science are concepts that help to understand that race is important in this society due to its social meaning which is marked by struggle, division, and hierarchy.
- Various labels (e.g. minority group, dominant group, marginalized group, people of color, and communities of color) are used to identify racial groups.

Contributors and Attributions

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Section 1.3: Socioeconomic Status, Gender, Sexuality

Social Stratification

In general, all societies are stratified along one or more lines comprised of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and/or social class or **socioeconomic status (SES)**, which is a measured by similar levels of income, education, and occupation. In other words, **social stratification** is the unequal ways in which the resources of society are distributed. Sociologist Craig Oettinger defines stratification as who gets what and how much they get over time. According to Abercrombie and Urry (1983), social differences become social stratification when people are ranked hierarchically along some dimension of inequality whether this be income, wealth, power, prestige, age, ethnicity or some other characteristic. Sociologists use the term social stratification to describe the system of social standing.



Figure **Section1.3.1** and **Section1.3.2**: (left) Two individuals on escalator inside building. In the upper echelons of the working world, people with the most power reach the top. (CC BY-NC 2.0; Alex Proimos via Flickr). (right) The people who live in these houses most likely share similar a similar social class, with similar levels of income and education. (CC BY 2.0; Orin Zebest via Flickr).

In the United States, people like to believe everyone has an equal chance at success. An emphasis on self-effort perpetuates the belief that people control their own social standing. However, sociologists recognize that social stratification is a society-wide system that makes inequalities apparent. While there are always inequalities between individuals, sociologists are interested in larger social patterns. Stratification is not about individual inequalities, but about systematic inequalities based on group membership, social classes, and the like. No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities. The structure of society affects a person's social standing. Although individuals may support or fight inequalities, social stratification is created and supported by society as a whole.

One key determinant of social standing is the social standing of our parents. Parents tend to pass their social position on to their children. People inherit not only social standing but also the cultural norms that accompany a certain lifestyle. They share these with a network of friends and family members. Social standing becomes a comfort zone, a familiar lifestyle, and an identity. This is one of the reasons first-generation college students do not, as a whole, tend to fare as well as students whose parents graduated from college.

Recent Economic Changes and U.S. Stratification

The most significant threat to the relatively high standard of living we are accustomed to in the United States is the decline of the middle class. The size, income, and wealth of the middle class have all been declining since the 1970s. This is occurring at a time when corporate profits have increased more than 141 percent, and CEO pay has risen by more than 298 percent (Popken, 2007).

As a result of the Great Recession that rocked our nation's economy in the last decade, many families and individuals found themselves struggling like never before. The nation fell into a period of prolonged and exceptionally high unemployment. While no one was completely insulated from the recession, perhaps those in the working classes felt the impact most profoundly. Before the recession, many were living paycheck to paycheck or even had been living comfortably. As the recession hit, they were often among the first to lose their jobs. Unable to find replacement employment, they faced more than loss of income. Their homes were foreclosed, their cars were repossessed, and their ability to afford healthcare was taken away. This put many in the position of

deciding whether to put food on the table or fill a needed prescription. While some recovered from the Great Recession, others have struggled to improve their socioeconomic status.



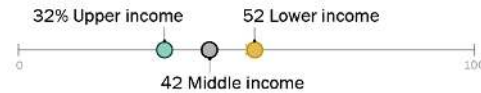
Figure **Section1.3.3**: "COVID-19 Sequoyah." This statue of Sequoyah, originator of the Cherokee language, is shown wearing a mask during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. (CC BY-SA 2.0; Gerry Dincher via Flickr)

The COVID-19 pandemic roiled across the U.S. in 2020, with working class and poor Americans most at-risk for contracting this virus and most at-risk for facing financial challenges associated with COVID-19. In a study conducted by Finch and Finch (2020) on the cases of and deaths from COVID-19 during the first ten weeks of the pandemic in the U.S., counties with higher poverty rates experienced more cases and deaths than more affluent counties. The results of this study also suggest that essential workers (e.g., public sanitation, grocery stores, and delivery services) tend to be occupied by lower-paid employees who may not have equal access to testing for the virus. These workers may also be less able to quarantine away from their families, as compared to health care workers. Additionally, low-income, under-resourced communities tend to suffer more from diabetes, heart disease, and pulmonary disease, pre-existing conditions which put these individuals at higher risk for COVID-19. Communities of color, particularly Latinx, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, and African American, have experienced disproportionate cases and deaths from COVID-19. The following socioeconomic factors explain the disproportionate impact: discrimination; healthcare access and utilization; occupation; educational, income and wealth gaps; and housing (Center for Disease Control, 2020). In addition to being at greater risk for COVID-19 infection, as Figure **Section1.3.4** indicates, 52% of lower income individuals in the U.S. are experiencing an economic fall-out from COVID-19 while only 32% upper income individuals are experiencing this fall-out (Parker, Horowitz & Brown, 2020).

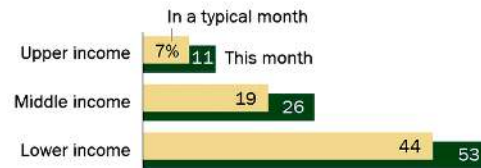
Economic fallout from COVID-19 is hitting lower-income adults harder

% saying ...

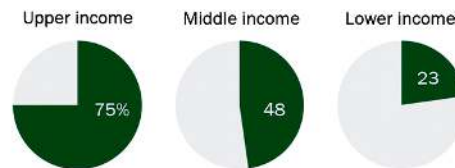
They or someone in their household has lost a job or taken a pay cut due to the coronavirus outbreak



They cannot pay all of their bills in full ...



They have rainy day funds that would cover their expenses for three months in case of emergency



Note: Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2018 earnings.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.
"About Half of Lower-Income Americans Report Household Job or Wage Loss Due to COVID-19"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure Section 1.3.4: Economic fallout from COVID-19. (Used with permission; About half of lower-income Americans report household job or wage loss due to covid-19, Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2020))

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

A **class system** is based on both social factors and individual achievement; it affords the opportunity for mobility or movement. A **social class** consists of a set of people who share similar status with regard to factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation. Yet, a social class stratification system or ranking creates inequality in society and determines one's social position in terms of these factors. A **caste system** is based on an ascribed status such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, or disability, and is characterized by a lack of mobility. Unlike caste systems, class systems are open. In a class system, occupation is not fixed at birth.

A person's class status or SES influences their personal and social identity. Marx and Engels (1967) suggested there is a social class division between the capitalists who control the means of production and the workers. Weber previously ranked individuals on their wealth, power, and prestige (Weber [1968] 1978). The calculation of **wealth** comprises one's assets minus their debts; for sociologists, wealth is often equated with (ownership of) property. For sociologists such as Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, authors of *Black Wealth, White Wealth*, wealth matters more than income because great wealth is likely to be inherited or ascribed whereas income is earned in a day, week, month or year. **Power** is the ability to influence others directly or indirectly while **prestige** is the esteem or respect associated with social status (Carl, 2013). In 1985, Erik Wright interjected that people can occupy contradictory class positions throughout their lifetime. Dennis Gilbert and Joseph Kahl (1992) developed a six-tier model portraying the U.S. class structure including underclass, working-poor, working, lower middle, upper middle, and capitalists. The social class model depicts the distribution of property, prestige, and power among society based on income, education, and occupation.

Though family and other societal models help guide a person toward a career, personal choice also plays a role. In theory, people are free to gain a different level of education or employment than their parents. They can also socialize with and marry members of other classes, which allows people to move from one class to another. These **exogamous marriages** represent unions of spouses from different social categories. Marriage in these circumstances is based on values such as love and compatibility rather than on social standing or economics. Though social conformities still exist that encourage people to choose partners within their own social class, people are not as pressured to choose marriage partners based solely on those elements. Marriage to a partner from the same social background is an **endogamous** union.

While the U.S. is often viewed as a class system, it also has remnants of a racial caste system associated with history and legacy of slavery, forced removal of Native Americans, and policies and practices associated with colonialism and Manifest Destiny. Many systemic efforts to deny African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans the right to vote, equal education, and ownership of land characterize our history of racial caste. Contemporary racial inequalities characterized by voter suppression, unequal educational outcomes, wealth, and income echo this history.

Each class lifestyle requires a certain level of wealth in order to acquire the material necessities and comforts of life (Henslin, 2011). The correlation between the standard of living and quality of life or **life chances** (e.g., opportunities and barriers) influence one's ability to afford food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, other basic needs, and luxury items. A person's standards of living including income, employment, class, and housing affects their identity.



Figure **Section1.3.5**: Man Praying on Sidewalk with Food in Front of Him. (CC BY 4.0; Sergio Omassi via Pexels)

Social class serves as a marker or indication of resources. These markers are noticeable in the behaviors, customs, and norms of each stratified group (Carl, 2013). People living in impoverished communities have different cultural norms and practices compared to those with middle incomes or families of wealth. For example, the urban poor often sleep on cardboard boxes on the ground or on sidewalks and feed themselves by begging, scavenging, and raiding garbage (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Middle income and wealthy families tend to sleep in housing structures and nourish themselves with food from supermarkets or restaurants.

Language and fashion also vary among these classes because of educational attainment, employment, and income. People will use language like “white trash” or “welfare mom” or “thug” to marginalize people in working classes and use distinguished labels to identify the upper class such as “noble” and “elite.” Sometimes people engage in conspicuous consumption or purchase and use certain products (e.g., buy a luxury car or jewelry) to make a social statement about their status (Henslin, 2011). Nonetheless, the experience of poor people is very different in comparison to others in the upper and middle classes, and the lives of people within each social class may vary based on their position within other social categories including age, disability, sexuality, gender, race-ethnicity, region, and religion.

Thinking Sociologically

Could you survive in poverty, middle class, or wealth? In her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (2005), Dr. Ruby K Payne presents lists of survival skills needed by different societal classes. Test your skills by answering the following questions:

Could you survive in . . . (mark all that apply)

1. ____ find the best rummage sales.
2. ____ locate grocery stores' garbage bins that have thrown away food.

3. ____ bail someone out of jail. ____ get a gun, even if I have a police record.
4. ____ keep my clothes from being stolen at the laundromat.
5. ____ sniff out problems in a used car.
6. ____ live without a checking account.
7. ____ manage without electricity and a phone.
8. ____ entertain friends with just my personality and stories.
9. ____ get by when I don't have money to pay the bills.
10. ____ move in half a day.
11. ____ get and use food stamps.
12. ____ find free medical clinics.
13. ____ get around without a car.
14. ____ use a knife as scissors.

Middle Class know how to....

1. ____ get my children into Little League, piano lessons, and soccer.
2. ____ set a table properly.
3. ____ find stores that sell the clothing brands my family wears.
4. ____ use a credit card, checking and /or savings account.
5. ____ evaluate insurance: life, disability, 20/80 medical, homeowners, and personal-property.
6. ____ talk to my children about going to college.
7. ____ get the best interest rate on my car loan.
8. ____ help my children with homework and don't hesitate to make a call if I need more information.

Wealth, check if you....

1. ____ can read a menu in French, English and another language.
2. ____ have favorite restaurants in different countries around the world.
3. ____ know how to hire a professional decorator to help decorate your home during the holidays.
4. ____ can name your preferred financial advisor, lawyer, designer, hairdresser, or domestic-employment service.
5. ____ have at least two homes that are staffed and maintained.
6. ____ know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty with domestic staff.
7. ____ use two or three "screens" that keep people whom you don't wish to see away from you
8. ____ fly in your own plane, the company plane, or the Concorde.
9. ____ know how to enroll your children in the preferred private schools.
10. ____ are on the boards of at least two charities.
11. ____ know the hidden rules of the Junior League.
12. ____ know how to read a corporate balance sheet and analyze your own financial statements.
13. ____ support or buy the work of a particular artist.

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, a Georgetown University sociology professor, explains the "race vs. class" conversation, in which the racial divide of the middle and working-class works against people's self-interests and benefits the wealthy and powerful. In 2012, he stated,

What we have to tell our white brothers who are working class, blue-collar cats, is that "you are in the same boat as most African Americans and most Latino people. You suffer from the economy equally. If you allow elite politicians to manipulate you into believing that your real enemy is a Black guy who works along side you in a factory where you are both inhaling toxic chemicals that will lead both of you to die early. As opposed to this elite figure in the American political echelon or corporate structure that is living off of your anxiety about this Black guy, you are going down in defeat."

Dyson challenges working class whites to recognize their common social class experiences with most people of color, hypothesizing that when white people begin to understand how they have been manipulated by white elites to focus on race rather than class, a multi-racial working class solidarity may unfold.



Figure **Section1.3.6**: Michael Eric Dyson attending a candlelight vigil on the 44th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, at the King memorial in Washington D.C. (CC BY 2.0; Jean Song/MEDILL via Wikimedia)

Race and Socioeconomic Status

Probably the best way to begin to understand racial and ethnic inequality in the United States is to read first-hand accounts by such great writers of color as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Piri Thomas, Richard Wright, and Malcolm X, all of whom wrote moving, autobiographical accounts of the bigotry and discrimination they faced while growing up. Sociologists and urban ethnographers have written their own accounts of the daily lives of people of color, and these, too, are well worth reading. One of the classics is Elliot Liebow's (1967) *Tally's Corner*, a study of Black men and their families in Washington, DC.



Figure **Section1.3.7**: "Haskell Indian Nations University" sign in Lawrence, Kansas. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; miracc via Flickr)

Statistics also give a picture of racial and ethnic inequality in the United States. We can begin to get a picture of this inequality by examining racial and ethnic differences in such life chances as income, education, poverty, unemployment and home ownership, as provided in the Table 1.5.8. The data for Native Americans is not provided in here, but their numbers resembles Black and Latinx populations. For example, according to the Pew Research Center, in 2012, 17% of Native Americans earned a college degree while the poverty rate for Native Americans was 26%.

Table **Section1.3.8**: Socioeconomic Indicators by Race-Ethnicity (2014-2015). (Chart created by Jonas Oware with data from the Pew Research Center)

Socioeconomic Indicators	Black	AAPI	White	Latinx
College Degree (% of 25 year+ adults)	23	53	36	15
High School Completion (% of 25 years adults)	88	89	93	67
Home Ownership (% of Householders Owning a Home)	43	57	72	45
Household Income	\$43,000	\$77,900	\$71,300	\$43,000
Poverty (% in poverty)	26	12	10	24
Unemployment Rate (%)	10.3	3.6	4.5	7.6

Additionally, a persistent racial wealth gap has characterized U.S. history. The median net worth for white households has far exceeded that of Black households through recessions and booms over the last three decades. Following the Great Recession, the median net worth for Black families declined more than for white families. In fact, the ratio of white family wealth to Black family wealth is higher today than at the start of the century, with white family wealth netting ten times more than Black family wealth (McIntosh, Moss, Nunn & Shambaugh, 2020). Figure 1.5.9 below provides a glimpse at the 2016 racial wealth gap.

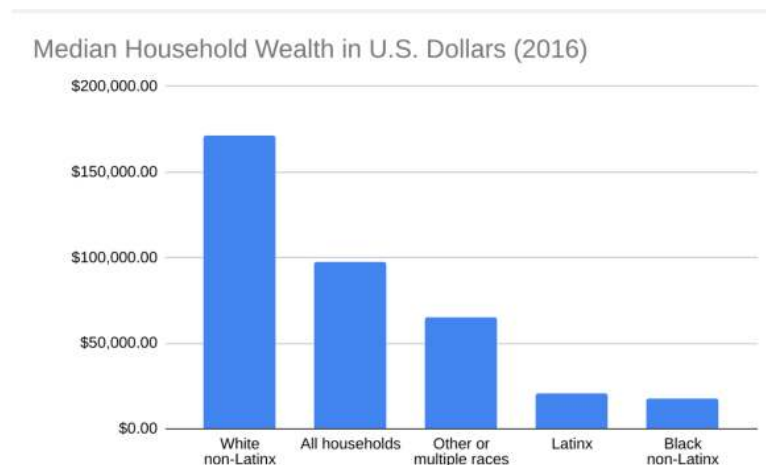


Figure **Section 1.3.9**: Median Household Wealth in U.S. Dollars (2016). While all households averaged just under \$100,000 in wealth, white non-Latinx household held more than \$160,000 in wealth with Latinx and Black households averaging well under \$20,000. Other or multiple races households averaged approximately \$60,000 in wealth. (Chart created by Jonas Oware with data from [Statista](#))

The data is clear: U.S. racial and ethnic groups differ dramatically in their life chances. Compared to whites, for example, Blacks, Latinx, and Native Americans have much lower family incomes and much higher rates of poverty; they are also much less likely to have college degrees. In addition, Blacks and Native Americans have much higher infant mortality rates than whites: Black infants, for example, are more than twice as likely as white infants to die. Still, these comparisons obscure some differences within some of the groups just mentioned. Among Latinos, for example, Cuban Americans have fared better than Latinos overall, and Puerto Ricans worse. Similarly, among Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI), people with Chinese and Japanese backgrounds have fared better than those from Cambodia, Korea, and Vietnam.

Gender Stratification

Each of us is born with physical characteristics that represent and socially assign our sex and gender. **Sex** refers to our biological differences, and **gender** the cultural traits assigned to females and males (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). While our physical make-up

distinguishes our sex, society and our social interaction implicates the **gender socialization** process we will experience throughout our life. **Gender identity** is an individual's self-concept and their association with femininity, masculinity and perhaps questioning of these social categories. Children learn gender roles and acts of sexism in society through socialization (Griffiths, Keirns, Strayer, Cody-Rydzewski, Scaramuzzo, Sadler, Vyain, Byer & Jones, 2015). Children become aware of gender roles between the ages of two and three and by four to five years old; they are fulfilling gender roles based on their sex (Griffiths et al., 2015). Nonetheless, gender-based characteristics do not always match one's self or cultural identity as people grow and develop.

1. Why do people need and use gender labels?
2. Why do people create gender roles or expectations?
3. Do gender labels and roles influence limitations on individuals or the social world? Explain.

Gender stratification focuses on the unequal access females have to socially valued resources, power, prestige, and personal freedom as compared to men based on differing positions within the socio-cultural hierarchy (Light, Keller, & Calhoun, 1997). Traditionally, society treats women as second-class citizens in society. The design of dominant gender ideologies and inequality maintains the prevailing social structure, presenting male privilege as part of the natural order (Parenti, 2006). Theorists suggest society is a male dominated patriarchy where men think of themselves as inherently superior to women resulting in unequal distribution of rewards between men and women (Henslin, 2011).



Video **Section1.3.10**: Race - The Power of an Illusion: How the Racial Wealth Gap Was Created. (Close-captioning and other settings appear at the bottom of the screen.) (Fair Use; California Newsreel via Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/133506632>)

Media portrays women and men in stereotypical ways that reflect and sustain socially endorsed views of gender (Wood, 1994). Media affects the perception of social norms including gender. People think and act according to stereotypes associated with one's gender broadcast by media (Goodall, 2016). Media stereotypes reinforce **gender inequality** of girls and women. According to Wood (1994), the underrepresentation of women in media implies that men are the cultural standard and women are unimportant or invisible. Stereotypes of men in media display them as independent, driven, skillful, and heroic lending them to higher-level positions and power in society.



Figure **Section1.3.11**: Gender equality, woman using laptop and man in background on laptop. (CC BY-NC-SA; Flickr)

According to Pew Research Trends (2020) on average, women make 85% of men's earnings, though this gap has narrowed over recent decades and varies widely based on the job/occupation, education level, race, and ethnicity. Women outnumber men amongst college graduates, yet male college graduates out-earn female college graduates. Inequality in career pathways, job placement, and promotion or advancement result in an income gap between genders affecting the buying power and economic vitality of women in comparison to men. Today's society is encouraging gender flexibility resulting from cultural shifts among women seeking college degrees, prioritizing career, and delaying marriage and childbirth.

Still, women continue to face challenges associated with inter-partner violence, including rape. Depictions in the media emphasize male dominant roles and normalize violence against women (Wood, 1994). Culture plays an integral role in establishing and maintaining male dominance in society ascribing men the power and privilege that reinforces subordination and oppression of women.

Your task is to find the ten words on the sex-role inventory trait list below that are most often culturally associated with each of the following labels and categories: femininity, masculinity, wealth, poverty, President, teacher, mother, father, minister, or athlete. Write down the label or category and ten terms to compare your lists with other students.

1. self-reliant
2. yielding
3. helpful
4. defends own beliefs
5. cheerful
6. moody
7. independent
8. shy
9. conscientious
10. athletic
11. affectionate
12. theatrical
13. assertive
14. flatterable
15. happy
16. strong personality
17. loyal
18. unpredictable
19. forceful
20. feminine

21. reliable
22. analytical
23. sympathetic
24. jealous
25. leadership ability
26. sensitive to other's needs
27. truthful
28. willing to take risks
29. understanding
30. secretive
31. makes decisions easily
32. compassionate
33. sincere
34. self-sufficient
35. eager to soothe hurt feelings
36. conceited
37. dominant
38. soft-spoken
39. likable
40. masculine

41. warm
42. solemn
43. willing to take a stand
44. tender
45. friendly
46. aggressive
47. gullible
48. inefficient
49. act as leader
50. childlike
51. adaptable
52. individualistic
53. does not use harsh language
54. unsystematic
55. competitive
56. loves children
57. tactful
58. ambitious
59. gentle
60. conventional

Compare your results with other students in the class and answer the following questions:

1. What are the trait similarities and commonalities between femininity, masculinity, wealth, poverty, President, teacher, mother, father, minister, and athlete?
2. How are masculinity and femininity used as measures of conditions and vocations?

Stratification and Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a physical, emotional and perhaps spiritual expression of sexual desire or attraction. Culture sets the parameters for sexual norms and habits. Enculturation dictates and controls social acceptance of sexual expression and activity. Eroticism like all human activities and preferences, is learned and malleable (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Sexual orientation labels categorize personal views and representations of sexual desire and activities. Many people ascribe and conform to the sexual labels constructed and assigned by society. Because sexual desire or attraction is inborn, people within the socio-sexual dominant group (e.g., heterosexual) often believe their sexual preference is “normal.” However, heterosexual fit or type is not normal. History has documented diversity in sexual preference and behavior since the dawn of human existence (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012).

Individuals develop sexual understanding around middle childhood and adolescence (APA, 2008). There is no genetic, biological, developmental, social, or cultural evidence linked to homosexual behavior. The difference is in society’s discriminatory response to homosexuality likely derived from **heteronormativity** or the belief that heterosexuality is the default, preferred or normal mode of sexual orientation. Alfred Kinsley was the first to identify sexuality is a continuum rather than a dichotomy of gay or straight (Griffiths et al., 2015). His research showed people do not necessarily fall into the sexual categories, behaviors, and orientations constructed by society (e.g., heterosexual and homosexual). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) expanded on Kinsley’s research to find women are more likely to express homosocial relationships such as hugging, handholding, and physical closeness. Whereas, men often face negative sanctions for displaying homosocial behavior in the U.S. society, such social interaction is extremely normal in many parts of the world including sub-Saharan Africa.



Figure **Section 1.3.12**: Emotional expression of sexual identity. Two men smiling, head to head, nose to nose. (CC BY-NC-SA; Pexels)

Society ascribes meaning to sexual activities (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Variance reflects the cultural norms and sociopolitical conditions of a time and place. Since the 1970s, organized efforts by LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual or Allied) activists have helped establish gay culture and civil rights (Herdt, 1992). For example, in 2020, the Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, protects gay, lesbian, and transgender from employment discrimination. **Gay culture** provides social acceptance for persons rejected, marginalized, and punished by others because of sexual orientation and expression. **Queer theorists** are reclaiming the derogatory label of “queer” to help in broadening the understanding of sexuality as flexible and fluid (Griffiths et al., 2015).

Other Types of Social Stratification: Age and Disability

Our numeric ranking of age is associated with particular cultural traits. Even the social categories we assign to age express cultural characteristics of that age group or cohort. Age signifies one’s cultural identity and social status (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012). Many of the most common labels we use in society signify age categories and attributes. For example, the terms “newborns and infants” generally refer to children from birth to age four, whereas “school-age children” signifies youngsters old enough to attend primary school.

Generations have **collective identity** or shared experiences based on the time-period the group lived. Consider the popular culture of the 1980s to today. In the 1980s, people used a landline or fixed line phone rather than a cellular phone to communicate and went to a movie theater to see a film rather than downloaded a video to a mobile device. Therefore, someone who spent their youth and most of their adulthood without or with limited technology may not deem it necessary to have or operate it in daily life. Whereas, someone born in the 1990s or later will only know life with technology and find it a necessary part of human existence. Those born in 2020 or after will only know life as experienced during COVID-19 or post-COVID-19 and will thus likely be more dependent on video games and social media for everyday social interaction.

Because there are diverse cultural expectations based on age, there can be conflict between age cohorts and generations. **Age stratification** theorists suggest that members of society are classified and have social status associated to their age (Riley, Johnson & Foner, 1972). Conflict often develops from age associated cultural differences influencing social and economic power of age groups. For example, the economic power of working adults conflicts with the political and voting power of the retired or elderly.

Age and generational conflicts are also highly influenced by government or state-sponsored milestones. In the United States, there are several age-related markers including the legal age of driving (16 years old), use of tobacco products (21 years old), consumption of alcohol (21 years old), and age of retirement (65-70 years old). Regardless of knowledge, skill, or condition, people must abide by formal rules with the expectations assigned to the each age group within the law. Because age serves as a basis of social control and reinforced by the state, different age groups have varying access to political and economic power and resources (Griffiths et al., 2015). For example, the United States is the only industrialized nation that does not respect the abilities of the elderly by assigning a marker of 65-70 years old as the indicator for someone to become a dependent of the state and an economically unproductive member of society.



Figure **Section1.3.13**: Woman in Black Dress Standing on Sidewalk, Wearing Black Mask During COVID-19 Pandemic. (CC BY-NC-SA; Pexels)

In addition to age, disability is another status that may confer stratification. The term disability does not mean inability and it is not a sickness (US National Library of Medicine, 2007.) There are many different types of disabilities and disabled persons in the United States as well as throughout the world. While no one definition can adequately describe all disabilities, the universally-accepted definition describes a **disability** as “any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity” (U.S. Department of Justice, ADA, 2007.) The term disability includes cognitive, developmental, intellectual, physical, and learning impairments. Some disabilities are congenital (present at birth), or the result of an accident or illness, or age-related.

“The social constructionist view perceives the problem of disability situated within the minds of non-disabled people individually as prejudice, and collectively as the manifestation of hostile social attitudes and practices based upon negative assumptions of impairment” (Barnes & Oliver, 1993, p. 14). This view perceives the inequalities associated with disability as the outcome of the institutionalized practices of contemporary society.

The **1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government programs and services. The ADA is a significant civil rights law designed to eliminate the obstacles of employment and guarantee education for disabled individuals. The ADA offers protection to persons with a physical or mental impairment which limits one or more of their life activities, and requires employers to extend “reasonable accommodations” to these persons. Though the status of disability is no longer viewed simply as a medical problem, sociology has yet to fully consider disability in mainstream sociological discourse and analysis to parallel the stratification of social class, gender, race-ethnicity and sexuality (Barnes & Olive, 1993).

✓ Thinking Sociologically

How does intersectionality enhance our understanding of race and ethnicity? What types of social problems may be better understood by using an intersectional lens?

Key Takeaways

- The study of social stratification, or the unequal distribution of resources provides another lens in how to better understand race and ethnic relations.
- Society is stratified by race, social class, gender, sexuality, disability and age.
- An intersectional lens informs us that we cannot separate the effects of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability, as these can rather be understood in their complexity and thus their intersection.

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Section 1.4: Intersectionality

Consider the following working definition of intersectionality provided by Kimberle Crenshaw and Sirma Bilge (2020):

“Intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytic tool, intersectionality views categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability, ethnicity, and age -among others – as interrelated and mutually shaping one another. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences.”

In a previous section you were provided a sociological understanding of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and migration status and how they relate to a distinct understanding of our society and social stratification. A more comprehensive way to understand these categories and the structures they inhabit is through the use of an intersectional lens.

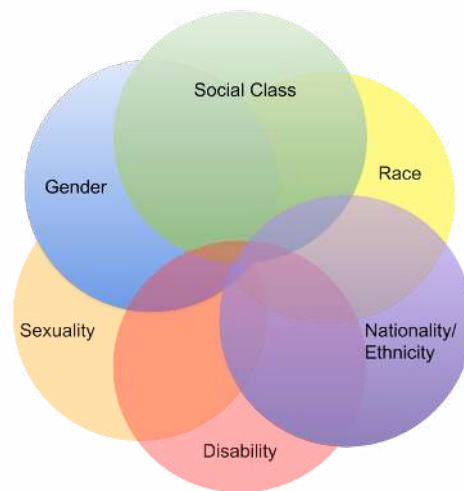


Figure **Section1.4.14**: Ven diagram of Intersectionalty. (Diagram created by Jakobi Oware)

Originally introduced by legal scholar, [Kimberle Crenshaw](#), intersectionality was born of an analysis of the intersection of race and gender. Her analysis of legal cases involving discrimination experienced by African American women involved not only racism but also sexism, yet legal statutes and precedents provided no clear analysis of their intersection, but instead treat them as separate social categories. To understand the intersection of these social categories resulting in their ill treatment, both forms of oppression would need to be considered jointly. Crenshaw advocates for social scientists to integrate race and gender into their "frames" to better capture the complexity of life experiences, particularly the experiences impacting African American women. Crenshaw used the example of police brutality and the countless African American male victims, with few recognizing the names of African American women brutalized by the police. The [#SayHerName](#) campaign was born of an intersectional frame revealing the importance of naming African American female victims of police brutality such as Breonna Taylor, Sandra Byrd, and Rekia Boyd.



Figure *Section 1.4.15*: Black Woman in Discussion with her Colleagues. (CC BY-NC-SA; Pexels)

Black feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) further developed intersection theory, which suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and other attributes. “The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor . . . Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves” (Collins, 1992, p.2). We are all shaped by the forces of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism, though we are likely impacted very differently by these forces.

When we examine race and how it can bring us both advantages and disadvantages, it is important to acknowledge that the way we experience race is shaped, for example, by our gender, social class, sexual orientation, age, disability and other statuses which are structured into our social systems. Multiple layers of disadvantage intersect to create the way we experience race, evidenced in concepts such as **double jeopardy** or **triple jeopardy** when an individual has two or three potentially oppressive statuses, respectively. For example, if we want to understand prejudice, we must understand that the prejudice focused on a Euro American woman because of her gender is very different from the layered prejudice focused on a poor Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) woman, who is affected by stereotypes related to being poor, being a woman, and her race-ethnic status. In contrast, writer Alice Walker suggested these individuals instead may have double or triple insights into the human condition. Rosenblum and Travis (2011) have argued that what one notices in the world depends in large part on the statuses one occupies . . . thus we are likely to be fairly unaware of the statuses we occupy that privilege us . . . [and] provide advantage and are acutely aware of those . . . that yield negative judgments and unfair treatment.

Collins (1990) writes that not all African American women experience life, and hence life chances, the same. A middle class heterosexual, Christian African American woman has more privileges than a poor, lesbian African American transgender woman. In fact, Collins explains that there are no pure oppressors or pure victims. In the previous example, this more privileged African American woman may be oppressed based on her gender and race-ethnicity, but she may be oppressive based on her religion, social class, and sexuality.

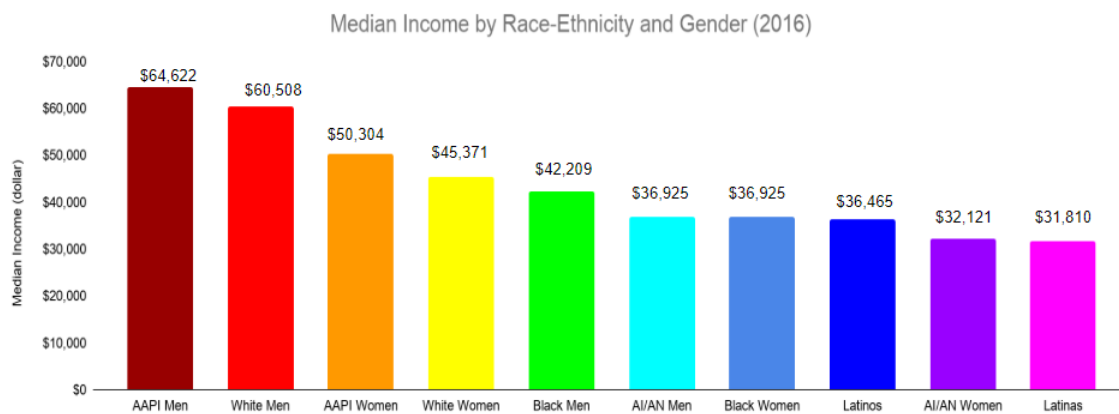


Figure **Section1.4.16**: Median Income by Race-Ethnicity and Gender (2016). AAPI Men Medium Income: \$64,622; White Male Medium Income: \$60,508; AAPI Women Medium Income: \$50,304; White Women Medium Income: \$45,371; Black Men Medium Income: \$42,209; AI/AN Men and Black Women Medium Income \$36,925; Latinos Medium Income \$36,465; AI/AN Women Income: \$32,121; and Latinas Medium Income: \$31,810. (Chart created by Jonas Oware with data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov) / [U.S. Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov))

A variety of public issues may be considered using an intersectional lens; thus, the chapters in this book provide a discussion of intersectionality as a recognition of its utility, complexity and the path towards social change that intersectionality offers. In the following section, intersectionality is presented as a sociological perspective and intersectionality is covered in several chapters of this textbook. Figure 1.5.16 above illustrates the intersection of race-ethnicity, social class and gender with regards to the income gap. Just as Latinas on average have the lowest income in the above chart, [during COVID-19, Latinas also faced disproportionate job loss and unemployment](#). What we don't see in this chart though is the impact of ethnic background, education, sexuality or other social categories that impact our social structures. Looking at the U.S. Congress, an intersectional analysis informs us that most of our Senators and representatives in the House are Euro-American men. While the [blue wave in 2018](#) ushered in more women, particularly more women of color such as Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (pictured below in Figure 1.5.17) and Sharice Davids, the first Native American lesbian Congresswoman, time will tell if Congress will alter significantly to reflect the changing U.S. demographics.



Figure **Section1.4.17**: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez elected to Congress during the 2018 Blue Wave. ([CC BY-NC-SA](#); [Flickr](#))

✓ Thinking Sociologically

How does intersectionality enhance our understanding of race and ethnicity? What types of social problems may be better understood by using an intersectional lens?

Key Takeaways

- The study of social stratification, or the unequal distribution of resources provides another lens in how to better understand race and ethnic relations.
- Society is stratified by race, social class, gender, sexuality, disability and age.

- An intersectional lens informs us that we cannot separate the effects of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability, as these can rather be understood in their complexity and thus their intersection.

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Section 1.5: Sociological Theoretical Perspectives

Sociological Theoretical Perspectives

We can examine issues of historical and contemporary experiences of Latin@s through at least 6 different sociological perspectives: **functionalism**, **conflict theory**, **symbolic interactionism**, **intersection theory**, **critical race theory**, and **anti-colonialism**. As you read through these theories, ask yourself which one makes the most sense and why. Do we need more than one theory to explain various social phenomena such as cultural and structural integration, racism, colorism, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination?

Table **Section 1.5.1**: Sociological Theories or Perspectives. Different sociological perspectives enable sociologists to view social issues through a variety of useful lenses.

Sociological Theories or Perspectives. Different sociological perspectives enable sociologists to view social issues through a variety of useful lenses.

Sociological Paradigm	Level of Analysis	Focus
Structural Functionalism	Macro or Mid	The way each part of society functions together to contribute to the whole. Practices and policies may lead to dysfunction.
Conflict Theory	Macro	The way inequalities contribute to social differences and perpetuates racial and ethnic disparities in power.
Symbolic Interactionism	Micro	One-to-one interactions and communications. The meaning attached to racial and ethnic labels and images.
Intersection Theory	Multi	The way multiple social categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, intersect to produce unique forms of discrimination and oppression.
Critical Race Theory	Multi	Centering race in the examination of social phenomena and inequality.
Anti-Colonialism Theory	Multi	Examines the effects of colonialism on social structures, social groups, and individuals.

Functionalism

In the view of functionalism, racial and ethnic inequalities must have served an important function in order to exist as long as they have. This concept, of course, is problematic. How can racism and discrimination contribute positively to society? A functionalist might look at “functions” and “dysfunctions” caused by racial inequality. Nash (1964) focused his argument on the way racism is functional for the dominant group, for example, suggesting that racism morally justifies a racially unequal society. Consider the way slave owners justified slavery in the antebellum South, by suggesting Black people were fundamentally inferior to white and preferred slavery to freedom.

According to Robert Merton, the **manifest functions** of social institutions and their policies are intended to produce beneficial outcomes. The **latent functions** of social institutions and their policies are not deliberate or intended but still produce beneficial outcomes. For example, while it is not an intended outcome, schools in an urban community may lead to an increase in interracial friendships and relationships, which is a beneficial outcome for the larger community and society. According to Merton, a dysfunction would be considered a harmful latent outcome of an institutional policy or practice. For example, New York City's "Stop-and-Frisk" policy was intended to provide police officers with more latitude in questioning and apprehending potential criminals. However, the policy led to a disproportionate stopping and detention of Black and Latinx men and ultimately deemed as

unconstitutional by the courts. In addition to unfair racial harassment, latent dysfunction would also include a growing distrust in the police and racial minorities feeling unsafe in their own neighborhoods.

Another way to apply the functionalist perspective to racism is to discuss the way racism can contribute positively to the functioning of society by strengthening bonds between in-groups members through the ostracism of out-group members. Consider how a community might increase solidarity by refusing to allow outsiders access. On the other hand, Rose (1951) suggested that dysfunctions associated with racism include the failure to take advantage of talent in the subjugated group, and that society must divert from other purposes the time and effort needed to maintain artificially constructed racial boundaries. Consider how much money, time, and effort went toward maintaining separate and unequal educational systems prior to the Civil Rights Movement.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theories are often applied to inequalities of gender, social class, education, race, and ethnicity. A conflict theory perspective of U.S. history would examine the numerous past and current struggles between the white ruling class and racial and ethnic minorities, noting specific conflicts that have arisen when the dominant group perceived a threat from the people of color. In the late nineteenth century, the rising power of Black Americans after the Civil War resulted in draconian Jim Crow laws that severely limited Black political and social power. For example, Vivien Thomas (1910–1985), the Black surgical technician who helped develop the groundbreaking surgical technique that saves the lives of “blue babies” was classified as a janitor for many years, and paid as such, despite the fact that he was conducting complicated surgical experiments. The years since the Civil War have showed a pattern of attempted disenfranchisement, with gerrymandering and voter suppression efforts aimed at predominantly minority neighborhoods.

In her **split labor market theory**, conflict theorist Edna Bonacich (1972) proposed that ethnic antagonism often has economic underpinnings because the capitalist owners of the means of production would prefer to pay workers from a particular ethnic group lower wages than workers from a dominant ethnic group. According to Bonacich, this will naturally lead to resentment and ethnic antagonism between these groups of workers. The split labor market benefits the capitalist class because it lowers production costs (therefore increasing profit margins) and also has the added benefit of maintaining a divided (and therefore unorganized) labor force. According to this framework, the split labor market would help to explain the ethnic antagonism that exists between white workers in the United States and undocumented workers from Latin America.

Symbolic Interactionism

For symbolic interactionists, race and ethnicity provide strong symbols as sources of identity. In fact, some interactionists propose that the symbols of race, not race itself, are what lead to racism. Famed interactionist Herbert Blumer (1958) suggested that racial prejudice is formed through interactions between members of the dominant group. Without these interactions, individuals in the dominant group would not hold racist views. These interactions contribute to an abstract picture of the subordinate group that allows the dominant group to support its view of the subordinate group, and thus maintains the status quo. An example of this might be an individual whose beliefs about a particular group are based on images conveyed in popular media, and those are unquestionably believed because the individual has never personally met a member of that group. Another way to apply the interactionist perspective is to look at how people define their race(s) and the race of others. As discussed in Chapter 1.2 with regards to the social construction of race, since some people who claim a white identity have a greater amount of skin pigmentation than some people who claim a Black identity, how did they come to define themselves as Black or white?

✓ Thinking Sociologically

How might a symbolic interactionist analyze the prevalence of Latino characters as gang members in feature films? In what ways might the film and characters reinforce racist and negative stereotypes? Do you think these characterizations influence the way other Americans view Latin@s? Why or why not?

Culture of prejudice refers to the argument that prejudice is embedded in our culture. We grow up surrounded by images of stereotypes and casual expressions of racism and prejudice. Consider the casually racist imagery on grocery store shelves or the stereotypes that fill popular movies and advertisements. It is easy to see how someone living in the Northeastern United States, who may know no Mexican Americans personally, might gain a stereotyped impression from such sources as Speedy Gonzalez or Taco Bell’s talking Chihuahua. Because we are all exposed to these images and thoughts, it is impossible to know to what extent

they have influenced our thought processes.

Symbolic interactionists also focus on the process of **labeling** - the meanings attached to labels and their social consequences. The social construction of race is reflected in the way names for racial categories change with changing times. It's worth noting that race, in this sense, is also a system of labeling that provides a source of identity; specific labels fall in and out of favor during different social eras. A symbolic interactionist might say that this labeling has a direct correlation to those who are in power and those who are labeled. For instance, if a teacher labels their students as either "intelligent and motivated" or "slow and lazy" based on racial and ethnic stereotypes, this could impact interactions in the classroom and may also lead to an internalization of those stereotypes and lower academic performance (Rist, 1970; Steele, 2010). Indeed, as these examples show, labeling theory can significantly impact a student's schooling.

Intersection Theory



Figure **Section1.5.3**: Patricia Hill Collins speaking at the Festival Latinidades in 2014. (CC BY-SA 2.0; [festival_latinitudes](#) via [Flickr](#))

As discussed in Chapter 1.5, Black feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) developed intersection theory, which suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes. When we examine race and how it can bring us both advantages and disadvantages, it is important to acknowledge that the way we experience race is shaped, for example, by our gender and class. Multiple layers of disadvantage intersect to create the way we experience race. For example, if we want to understand prejudice, we must understand that the prejudice focused on a white woman because of her gender is very different from the layered prejudice focused on a poor Asian woman, who is affected by stereotypes related to being poor, being a woman, and her ethnic status.

"Intersectionality is not just a form of inquiry and critical analysis but necessarily also a form of praxis that challenges inequalities and opens a collective space for both recognizing common threads across complex experiences of injustice and responding to them politically" (Ferre, 2018). Using an intersectional lens to analyze social systems, it is useful to consider how capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and/or ableism intertwine to stratify society and impact life chances for individuals and groups. Collins & Bilge (2020) combine the critical inquiry into inequalities and stratification with critical praxis to advance social justice. Thus, intersectionality is not only a lens and theory but also a potential solution to social problems, reminding sociologists that the many status intersections of race, social class, gender, sexuality, age and/or disability should be considered when seeking remedies to social ills.

Check out this video of Kimberlé Crenshaw explaining the premise of intersectionality:



Video **Section 1.5.4**: Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw Defines the Urgency of Intersectionality. (Close-captioning available on [Ted.com](https://www.ted.com).)

Critical Race Theory

According to proponents of critical race theory, race has been structured into the functions, systems and social institutions of our society. Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) laid the justification for considering a critical race theory of education. “Critical race theory in education, like its antecedent in legal scholarship, is a radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 62). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) provided a foundational understanding of critical race theory by considering the following six elements:

1. “racism is ordinary, not aberrational” (p. 7)
2. “white over color ascendancy serves important purposes, psychic and material” (p. 7)
3. the social construction of race
4. racialization
5. intersectionality
6. unique voices from people of color

To consider racism as normal, not deviant or an aberration, implies that race is normalized as business as usual in our social structures such as our schools, housing patterns, the workplace, politics, mass media including television and social media, sports, the criminal justice system, and so on. This resulting racial hierarchy has benefited (white) elites (materially) and the working class (psychically), according to Delgado and Stefancic (2001). For example, social justice policies (e.g. desegregation of the transportation industry in 1956) have served the economic interests of the elite as well as the psychological interests of working class. To understand race as a social construction is to understand that racial categories are invented, manipulated, or retired “when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). Though actively involved in the social construction of race, society ignores or is not taught that racial categories are subjective, not fixed, and not based on facts, as explained in Chapter 1.2.

When individuals are racialized, they are stereotyped, minimized, often in the form of caricatures. Within the institution of higher education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) noted that racialization and marginalization result in African American students coming to the university as “intruders” (p. 60). Further, Robin DiAngelo (2018) revealed that 84% of our college professors are white (p. 31). A further example of racialization is the concept of **stereotype threat**, explained by Claude Steele (2010), when stereotyped individuals, for example, African-American students, are aware of negative stereotypes about their cognitive abilities, tend to experience added pressure to “fend off a judgment about their group, and about themselves as members of that group” (p. 54).

Intersectionality, already explained earlier in this section, suggests that individuals are simultaneously members of many different, potentially competing or overlapping, identities including but not limited to race, gender, social class, national origin, religion, politics, and sexuality. This tenet can help to understand how the experiences of Black women and Latinas, for example, may vary if they are upper class and lesbian versus if they are working class and heterosexual. “If we pay attention to the multiplicity of social life, perhaps our institutions and arrangements will better address the problems that plague us” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 56). Finally, when examining the unique voices of color element, it should be understood that people of color contribute distinct ideas, perspectives, and experiences that “whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado & Stefancic, p. 9). Further, these voices validate

the perspectives of other people of color, which may diverge from the perspectives of the dominant group. For example, Ibram X. Kendi (2020) writes of an opportunity gap that exists in education whereas predominantly white institutions frame this as an achievement gap; where the former places the problem with society, the latter frames the problem as people of color themselves.



Figure Section1.5.5: "RACISM" (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Gregor MacLennan via Flickr)

Finally, critical race theorists pose a variety of social reforms. Rather than colorblind solutions, critical race theorists advocate for race-conscious solutions to race-based social ills. "The system applauds affording equality of opportunity but resists programs that assure equality of results" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 23). For example, the institutional research performed by Janét Hund (2019) found when African American and Latinx community college students were taught by same race-ethnic faculty, their course completion rates were higher; this research suggests that hiring more African American and Latinx faculty would serve to improve the course completion rates for African American and Latinx colleges students.

Anti-Colonialism Theory

Colonialism, the domination of one powerful group or nation over an area or group of people often including the exploitation of labor and resources, has existed in various forms since the late 15th century. Osterhammel (2005) identified three types of colonialism:

- 1) Colonies of exploitation where the primary goal is to exploit raw materials, labor, and land. An example of this type of colonial system is India under British colonial rule.
- 2) Colonies of settlement where the colonial power occupies and settles the land of the colonized people. An example of this type of system is the settlement of the Americas (modern day Latin America) by the Spanish.
- 3) Colonial territories of strategic military significance. An example of this type of colonial relationship is the establishment of U.S. military bases in Puerto Rico (Vieques) and Cuba (Guantanamo Bay).

Anti-Colonial theory is framework of analysis that "challenges and deconstructs the power dynamics and legacies of colonialism." This framework asserts that the official histories, social structures, and microlevel and symbolic social interactions tend to favor the colonizers. Instead, the intent is to center the experiences and resistance of colonized people (i.e. the subaltern who exist outside of the colonial power structure) in order to not only better understand the pervasiveness of colonization but also to achieve decolonization and foster genuine autonomy and self-determination for previously colonized societies. Some social theorists who have advanced the framework on anti-colonial theory include Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, W.E.B. DuBois, and Anibal Quijano.

Summary

Functionalist views of race study the role dominant and marginalized groups play to create a stable social structure. Conflict theorists examine power disparities and struggles between various racial and ethnic groups. Interactionists see race and ethnicity as important sources of individual identity and social symbolism. The concept of culture of prejudice recognizes that all people are subject to stereotypes that are ingrained in their culture. Intersectional theory reminds us to consider how race, gender, and social class not only impact our social structures and our social interactions but are also engrained within our social institutions. As a more radical critique of the status quo, critical race theory centralizes the focus on race to understand our history, our contemporary society, and our social structures - as well as solutions to inequality. And finally, anti-colonialism theory seeks to challenge the micro and macro-level impact of colonialism and works to empower colonized and previously colonized people.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

[Section 2.1: Spanish Colonialism](#)

[Section 2.2: Post-Spanish Colonialism](#)

[Section 2.3: Neo-Colonialism and U.S. Intervention](#)

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Section 2.1: Spanish Colonialism

The Arrival of Europeans to the Americas

The accidental arrival of Europeans to the Americas marked one of the most significant historical events and forever changed the world and everyone living in this hemisphere. In his book *Harvest of Empire*, Gonzalez points out that academics estimate that between 60-110 million indigenous people inhabited the Americas. The inhabitants of the complex and splendid city of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec (Mexico) empire numbered 250,000. By comparison, the city of London contained 50,000 and Seville had a population of 40,000 at that time.

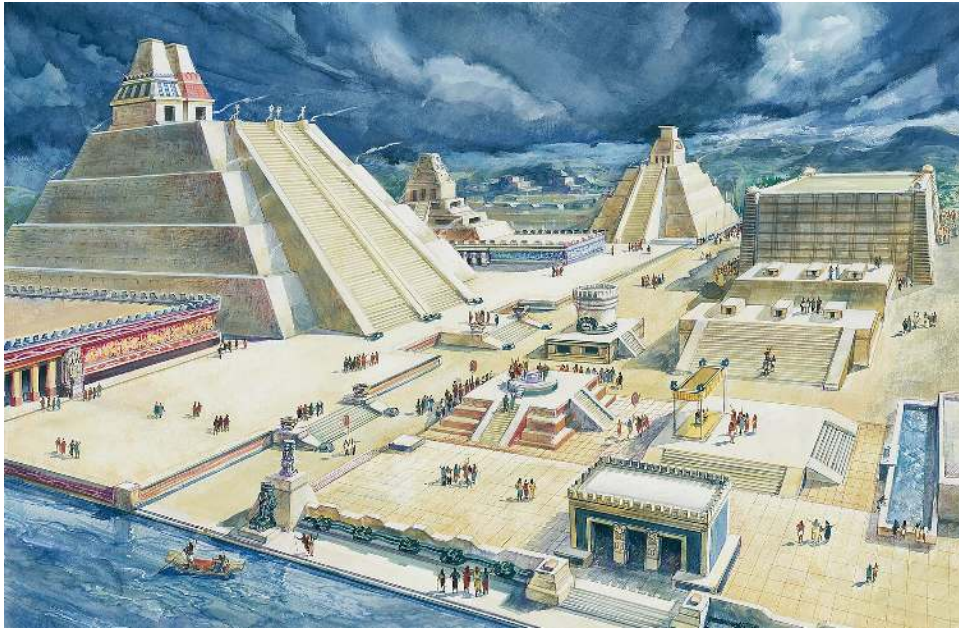


Figure *Section 3.1.1*: This illustration represents the ancient central square and the largest temple called Templo Mayor (Main Temple) in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, 16th century. The illustration was made in 1900.. (CC BY-SA 4.0; The Sun via [Wikimedia](#))

Just prior to the excursions of Christopher Columbus, the Spanish had successfully expelled the Moors (Muslim population of African descent) from their southern stronghold of Granada, which they had held and defended against Spanish crusades for centuries. This effort was termed *La Reconquista* and would prepare Spain for its imperial conquest and colonization in America. The practice of paying their warrior conquistadores (Hidalgos) with land grants would be carried over to the Americas. *La Reconquista* of land occupied by the Moors also reinforced their belief that they were the true and rightful defenders of Catholicism (and Christianity generally).

The toll of conquest from battle, massacres, enslavement, and their lack of immunity to new diseases such as smallpox, measles, tuberculosis and bubonic plague was catastrophic for indigenous populations. According to Gonzalez, an average of more than 1 million people perished annually for the majority of the 16th century in the Americas. By the late 1500s, scarcely 2 million indigenous people remained in the hemisphere. In response to protestations from Spanish clergy, such as Bartolome de las Casas, a set of “New Laws” were adopted by the crown in 1542 to institute protections of indigenous people including a recognition of “Indians” as free and equal subjects of the Spanish Crown. However, Spanish landowners largely ignored the laws in many regions and continued to keep indigenous workers in “virtual slavery” for generations to come.

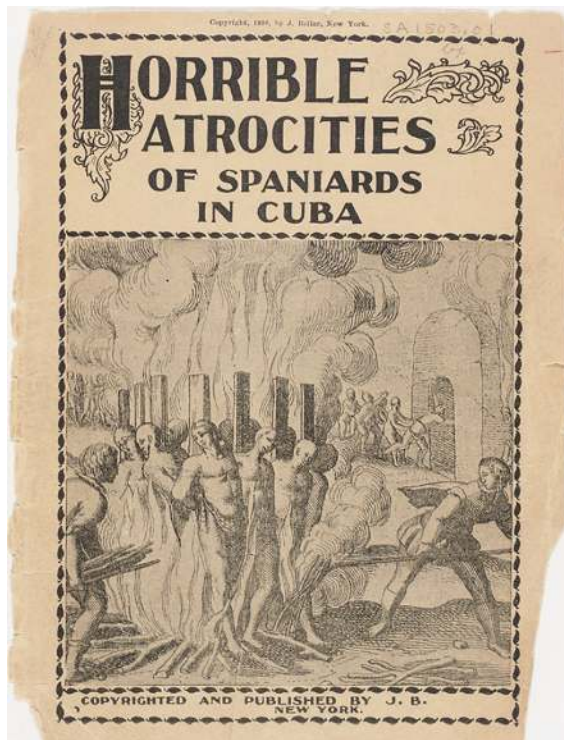


Figure *Section 3.1.2*: An historical and true account of the cruel massacre and slaughter of people in the West Indies by the Spaniards. Originally published by Bartolome de las Casas and illustrated by De Bry ([CC BY-SA 4.0](#); [Harvard](#) via [Wikimedia](#))

Juan Gonzalez outlines some important differences between Spanish colonialism (in modern Latin America) and Anglo colonialism (in modern United States).

The Role of the Church in Colonial Projects

For example, the role of the Catholic Church in the Spanish colonial system played a central role in the religious conversion of indigenous people. Both the Spanish Crown and Church considered the colonial project and conversion to Catholicism as a unified effort. “As the Conquest proceeded, priests performed baptisms by the thousands. Before the holy water could dry on their foreheads, the Indian women were routinely grabbed as concubines by Spanish soldiers and settlers. The priests even performed occasional marriages between Spaniards and Indians, especially among the elite of both groups, thus fostering and legitimizing a new *mestizo* race in America.” (Gonzalez, p. 13)

The conquest was a military, cultural, religious, and sexual conquest supported by the Church. For instance, Francisco de Aguirre, a conquistador involved in the conquest of modern-day Chile, was reported to have fathered more than 50 *mestizo* children and boasted that this was his own service to God and “greater than the sin incurred in doing so.” (Gonzalez, p. 13)

By contrast, the Anglo colonization in modern-day United States was characterized by a racial separation. This racial separation was buttressed by segregation laws and unmarried sexual unions between white Anglo settlers and indigenous people were rare. Furthermore, proselytizing and conversion of the indigenous population was not important, was not the central goal of a centralized church, and was not intertwined with the Anglo colonial project.

The Role of Race in Colonial Projects

According to Gonzalez and other historians, the history of racial mixing in Spain (especially those from southern regions such as Andalusia) made it more acceptable for Spanish settlers to engage in sexual unions, and eventually marriages sanctioned by the Church, with Indigenous and African people. On the other hand, interracial marriages and sexual unions among white Anglo settlers in North America remained taboo for any class of whites and Anglo-Saxons rarely recognized their bi-racial children (see Thomas Jefferson and slave Sally Hemmings). Even after the emancipation of slaves, anti-miscegenation laws remained legally codified into state laws until the 1967 Supreme Court decision, *Love v. Virginia*, which found such laws to be unconstitutional.

Of course, racial mixing did not guarantee nor lead to racial equality with regard to important societal resources. In the Spanish colonial system, a racial-caste system existed for centuries, with the Spanish at the top of the social status ladder, Indigenous/Africans at the bottom, and a myriad of mestizo or mixed categories in between.

The Role of Land and Politics in Colonial Projects

There were also striking differences in the management of their respective colonial projects. As one of the largest empires at this time, the Spanish colonies required a substantial bureaucracy to maintain control of such an expansive project. The Spanish system had 1.1 million in religious office and 500,000 government jobs by the 17th century. The enormous amounts of gold and silver extracted, processed and shipped back to Europe was a substantial part of their bureaucratic processes. It is estimated that by 1600 they had produced 2 billion pesos worth and by 1800 it was 6 billion pesos. Unlike the Spanish colonialists, Dutch and English settlers relied less on state and church sponsored and were more reliant on rich individual sponsors and increasingly on joint stock companies, such as the Plymouth Company and the Dutch West Indies Company. As American expansionism increased in the post-Monroe Doctrine era, there would continue to be an emphasis on private company ventures and investors, such as the United Fruit Company in Central America.

Differences also existed in how the two European groups made land acquisitions, of both the judicial and extrajudicial kind. Anglo settlers utilized land speculation to acquire land in the New World. On the other hand, Spanish conquistadors and settlers utilized the *mayorazgo*, best described as a “a family’s rural and urban land holdings were made legally indivisible, handed down from generation to generation through the eldest son. Outside family members could manage and profit from them but did not own or could not sell them.” Pg. 23. *Mayorazgos* together with the labor system of *encomiendas* (made common through *La Reconquista* of southern Spain) became the *latifundio* system, whereby a small percentage of the white population owned most of the land and all others were reduced to laborers. (Gonzales, p. 23-24)

Contributors and Attributions

- Ramos, Carlos. (Long Beach City College)

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Section 2.2: Post-Spanish Colonialism

Independence from Spain

Drawing their inspiration from the American Revolution and taking advantage of the political disarray in Spain following Napoleon's invasion of Spain and rising resistance movements, independence minded Latin American figures such as Simon Bolivar and Francisco de Miranda began to organize anti-Colonial movements of their own. After successfully resisting the French occupation, King Ferdinand was once again in command and vowed to maintain his Spanish colonies and sent his army to quell the independence movements. Although ultimately successful, many of the independence movements lasted for over a decade and came at an especially high human toll. For example, Mexico's independence movement, famously started in 1810 by the "Grito de Dolores" led by the parish priest Miguel Hidalgo leading Indigenous peasants and miners, ended in 1821 leaving more than 600,000 people dead, approximately 10 percent of the Mexican population.



Figure *Section 3.2.1*: A fresco depicting Simon Bolivar leading rebel troops against Spanish forces in the Battle of Ibarra (1823). ([CC BY-SA 4.0](#); [MeisterDrukke](#) via [Wikimedia](#))

During and following the independence movements from Spanish Colonial rule, the Latin American freedom fighters received little support from US leaders. Based on a combination of factors such as self-interest (acquisition of Florida from Spain), racist notions regarding the ability of Latin American countries and people to thrive under democratic rule, and fear of slave revolts and the increase in manumission in Latin American countries, the American founding fathers and other Anglo leaders rebuffed pleas from leaders of independence movements during the wars with Spain and afterward as the fledgling Latin American countries struggled with the political growing pains as new democracies. Here are some of the quotes from influential Americans:

"However our present interests may restrain us within our limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times when our rapid multiplication will expand beyond those limits, and cover the whole northern if not the southern continent." – Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Monroe, 1801

"Democracy is not better suited to Spanish Americans than to the birds, beasts, or fishes." – John Adams, March 27, 1815

"We have no concern with South America. We can have no well-founded political sympathy with them. We are sprung from different stocks". – Edward Everett, Editor, North American Review

With very little help or assistance from their North American counterparts, by the 1820s, all but Puerto Rico and Cuba had won their independence from Spain.

With regard to slavery and manumission, Simon Bolivar proclaimed at the founding congress of Bolivia in 1826 that slavery is the “negation of all law, and any law which should perpetuate would be a sacrilege.” U.S. plantation owners feared that such a commitment to abolish slavery would spread north to the United States. True to form, by 1850 all former Spanish colonies who had fought for and won their independence had abolished slavery.

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Section 2.3: Neo-Colonialism and U.S. Intervention

U.S. Intervention in Latin America

In 1822, U.S. President James Monroe finally recognized Mexico's independence. The following year, he made an historic declaration now known as The Monroe Doctrine. In his annual address to Congress, he issued one of the most impactful policy statements in the history of the Americas, proclaiming that Latin America was indeed within the "sphere of influence" of the United States and that the newly formed Latin American countries "henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers... it is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of [the continent] without endangering our peace and happiness." (Gonzalez, p. 39)

In describing the large scope and scale of this policy shift, one historian wrote:

"During the twentieth century, a succession of presidents using Monroe's words to justify repeated military occupations of Latin American nations. This dual interpretation of the doctrine's provisions continues to this day. It underscores an unresolved contradiction of U.S. history – between our ideals of freedom and our predilection for conquest." (Gonzalez, p. 39)

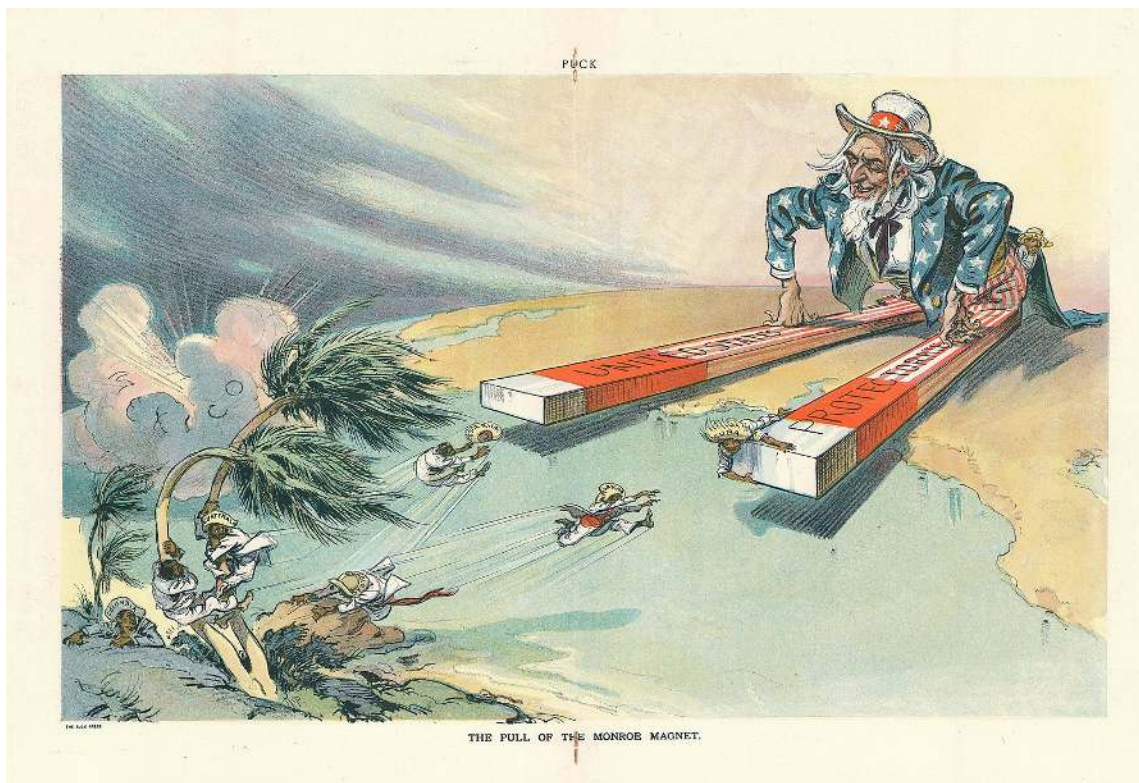


Figure *Section 3.3.1*: A 1913 political cartoon by U. Keppler titled "The Pull of the Monroe Magnet" depicting the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine and critique of U.S. "protectorates" in Latin America, beginning with Cuba in 1901. (CC BY-SA 4.0; Puck via [Wikimedia](#))

The westward and southern expansion of the United States is also related to the idea of “Manifest Destiny”. This term was coined by John O’Sullivan, owner and publicist of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, in 1845. Along with other advocates of US expansionism, especially in to Latin America, he considered Latin Americans to be culturally and racially inferior to their Anglo counterparts. Their advancements in science and technology and democratic institutions were *prima facie* evidence of their superiority. They also drew from pseudoscience and now-debunked medical experts to justify such thinking.

For instance:

“To the Caucasian race is the world indebted for all the great and important discoveries, inventions, and improvements that have been made in science and the arts.” – Dr. George Caldwell, *Thoughts on the Original Unity of the Human Race*, 1830

“Wherever in the history of the world the inferior races have been conquered and mixed in with the Caucasian, the latter have sunk into barbarism.” - Dr. Josiah Nott, *Speech*, 1844



Figure *Section 3.3.2*: This 1872 illustration titled "American Progress" by John Gast represents Manifest Destiny. Settlers are moving west, guided and protected by Columbia, aided by modern technology like railroads, and driving Native Americans and bison into obscurity. Columbia represents Anglo America, dressed in a Roman toga to represent classical republicanism, and brings the enlightened east to the darkened west. (CC BY-SA 4.0; The Autry via Wikimedia)

Mexico

In the Mexican province of Tejas (the modern-day state of Texas) Anglo-settlers used old Spanish land grants, illegal land grabs, filibustering, and marriage into elite Mexican families to acquire Mexican land and property. For instance,

“James Power, who married Dolores de la Portilla, an heiress of the rich De la Garza landowning family. Power thus initiated a form of land acquisition that hundreds of Anglo adventurers in the Southwest copied – he married into the Mexican elite and thereby acquired a *mayorazgo*.” (Gonzalez, p. 41).

Due to the increase in illegal Anglo squatters and migrants, the Mexican government abolished slavery in 1929 in hopes of creating an economic disincentive for American southerners to venture into the Mexican territory. By then, however, Anglo settlers outnumbered Mexicans in the province of Tejas. When President Santa Anna took control of Mexico in 1833, he soon rescinded the exemptions from taxes and antislavery laws that the Texans had previously been granted, setting up the inevitable clash between the Anglo Texan settlers and the Mexican government under Santa Anna. This clash led to the Texas War of Independence, the infamous Battle of the Alamo, and the decisive Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. General Santa Anna was captured and Mexico was forced to recognize Texas independence over the following years. It was finally annexed into the United States in 1845, after some years political dispute between the two countries.

Manifest destiny and pressure to expand propelled the US to annex more Mexican territory through the Mexican-American War of 1846. The last president of the Texas Republic, named Anson Jones, was critical of then President Polk and General Zachary Taylor for their shameful war mongering and their efforts to “induce [him] to aid them in their unholy and execrable design of manufacturing a war with Mexico.” (Gonzalez, p. 44) The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) officially ended the war and Mexico was forced to relinquish about half of its territory, including present-day Nevada, New Mexico, California, parts of Arizona, Utah and a disputed 150-mile wide Neuces Strip, giving Anglo-Americans ownership of and access to approximately 3 million head of wild horses and cattle. And thus out of the Spanish/Mexican vaquero culture was born the U.S. cattle industry. As historian Carey McWilliams pointed out, Anglo-America cowboy culture was rooted in Spanish/Mexican vaquero culture. For example, the language of the Western range was derived from Spanish words used by Spanish/Mexican cowboys for generations such as bronco, buckaroo, burro, mesa, canyon, lasso, rodeo, corral, loco, lariat, among others. In addition, the United States also now had ownership over the gold in California, rich gold and silver deposits, copper and wool deposits, an established sheep raising industry in New Mexico, and fertile land in Central California. This newfound wealth and the presence of Mexican laborers “provided the underpinnings of twentieth-century western prosperity” that is not often recognized in Western U.S. and frontier history.

Central America and the Panama Canal

William Walker launched an uprising in the northern state of Sonora and proclaimed the president of the “Republic of Sonora”. For this, he was forcibly chased out of Mexico by federal troops and arrested in the US for violating international neutrality laws.

In an historical movement towards independence, Central American countries broke away from Mexico in 1823 and formed the United Provinces of Central America. In 1838, they formed their own 5 independent countries – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

The California Gold Rush and pressure from merchants and US business interests increased the need for a faster passage to the Pacific coast of the US. Two competing companies led by the business magnates of their time – William Aspinwall and Cornelius Vanderbilt - built railroad lines that traversed Central American through Panama and Nicaragua. During this time, the US government put the Monroe Doctrine into action. For example, U.S. sailors went ashore onto a sovereign nation to defend Vanderbilt’s company to settle a disagreement with a local government. Similarly, the U.S. Navy bombarded a town called San Juan/Greytown over a financial quarrel between an American company and local governmental agencies. Brazen violations of sovereignty were not limited to the US armed forces. In 1854, Colonel Henry Kinney, the founder of the Texas Rangers and land speculator, declared that he had purchased 22 million acres of land in Nicaragua (about 70% of the entire country) and launched a failed armed revolt against the government in order to enforce his illegal claim.

Back in the U.S., such schemes to appropriate land through dubious land grabs were also lauded by newspaper columnists, using racist tropes and Manifest Destiny to justify such acts:

“Central America is destined to occupy an influential position in the family of nations, if her advantage of location, climate and soil are availed of by a race of ‘Northmen’ who shall supplant the tainted, mongrel and decaying race which now curses it so fearfully.”

– New York Times, December 15, 1854

In 1899, two giant US fruit companies merged and formed the United Fruit Company. Combined, they already owned 230,000 acres of land throughout Central America and controlled 112 miles of railroad. The UFC would become emblematic of the US presence in Central America over the next century. It would come to control the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, institute the US policies of “gunboat” and “dollar” diplomacy to install and topple governments, and extract billions of dollars in profits from Central American countries over the decades.

Spanish Caribbean

Unlike other Latin American countries, Puerto Rico and Cuba remained under Spanish colonial rule throughout the 19th century.

Spain allowed American investment in Cuba. US government offered Spain \$130 million in 1852 but they refused their offer. US investments in sugar, railroads, iron and steel manufacturing grew to more than \$50 million by 1890. The Cuban and American economies were co-dependent by the end of the 19th century, with 94% of the sugar exports going to the U.S. and business with Cuba accounted for 1/4 of U.S. international global commerce.

Meanwhile, in the Dominican Republic... After Haiti won its independence in 1804, they invaded the eastern part of the island and freed Dominican slaves but imposed a harsh social hierarchy. The Dominicans ousted the Haitian occupiers and founded their own sovereign country – The Dominican Republic – in 1844. Almost immediately following its founding as a nation, U.S. politicians and economic venturers began to court Dominican leaders. The US Navy thought Samana Bay in the northeast section of the island would make a great naval base and President Ulysses Grant, in the post-US Civil War era, signed an annexation treaty with Dominican dictator Buenaventura Baez with the intent of turning the country into a “colonizing venture for any American black who were dissatisfied with the post-Civil War South.” The U.S. Senate did not concur with his colonial project and rejected the treaty in 1870.

Following the first Cuban War of Independence, thousands of Spanish and Cuban planters migrated to the Dominican Republic and along with international investors and transplants from the US and Europe, established an impressive sugar-based economy. By 1893, it had one of the largest sugar plantations in the western hemisphere and about half of all DR trade was with the US.

Pressure to go to war from pro-expansionists such as Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge as well as newspaper titans such as William R. Hearst almost inevitably led to the Spanish American War of 1898. The Spanish empire was teetering and its military might diminished, and it was no match for the US. The Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish American war and the US acquired control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

Following the end of the Spanish American War and the rapid increase of US investment in Latin America, by 1924 it accounted for nearly half of all international US investment.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Migration- Historical and Contemporary

Section 3.1: History and Background

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Section 3.1: History and Background

History

Immigration is the act of foreigners passing or coming into a country for the purpose of permanent residence. Immigration occurs for many reasons, including economic, political, family re-unification, natural disasters, or poverty. Many immigrants came to America to escape religious persecution or dire economic conditions. Most hoped coming to America would provide freedom and opportunity.

Immigration to the United States has been a major source of population growth and cultural change. Different historical periods have brought distinct national groups, races and ethnicities to the United States. During the 17th century, approximately 175,000 Englishmen migrated to Colonial America. Over half of all European immigrants to Colonial America during the 17th and 18th centuries arrived as indentured servants. The mid-nineteenth century saw mainly an influx from northern Europe, the early twentieth-century mainly from Southern and Eastern Europe, and post-1965 mostly from Latin America and Asia.

Historical Race/Ethnic Population Demographics in America: A Brief Statistical Overview

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

For a more striking look at the history of immigration to the United States, please watch the video below by Metrocosm:



Video **Section3.1.1**: "Here is Everyone Who Has Emigrated to the United States Since 1820." 2 Centuries of U.S. Immigration From 1920 to 2013, 79 million people obtained lawful permanent resident status in the United States. This map visualizes all of them based on their prior country of residence. The brightness of a country corresponds to its total migration to the U.S. at the given time. 1 dot = 10,000 people. ([Text-based data table](#)).
(Fair Use; [Metrocosm](#) via [YouTube](#))

Contemporary Immigration

In recent years, immigration has increased substantially which is conveyed in the Figure 3.1.2 below. In 1965, ethnic quotas were removed; these quotas had restricted the number of immigrants allowed from different parts of the world. Immigration doubled between 1965 and 1970, and again between 1970 and 1990. Between 2000 and 2005, nearly 8 million immigrants entered the United States, more than in any other five-year period in the nation's history. In 2006, the United States accepted more legal immigrants as permanent residents than all other countries in the world combined. Though, as Table 3.1.3 reveals, fewer individuals received their authorized permanent resident status from 2016 through 2018. According to the [U. S. and World Population Clock](#) provided by the United States Census Bureau, the most current U. S. population count is 330,065,778 and rising.

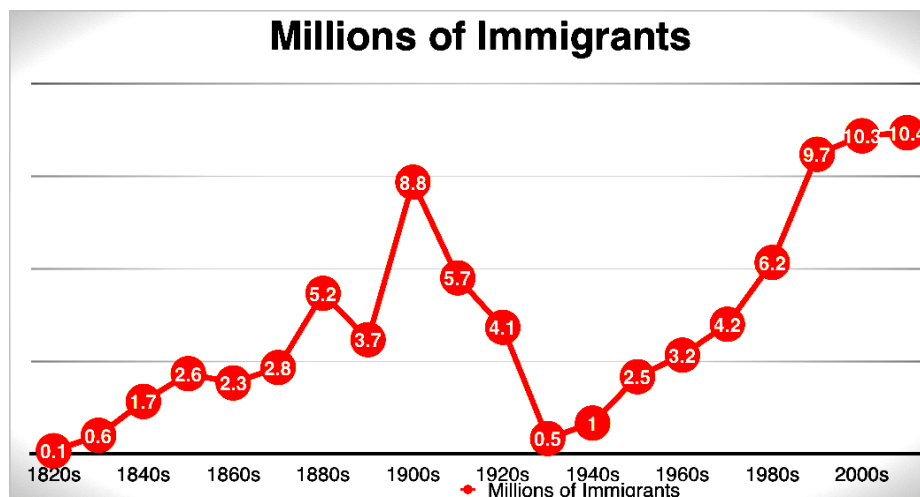


Figure **Section3.1.2**: Legal Immigration in the United States, 1820-2020 (Data from Schaefer, 2015; United States Department of Homeland Security, 2013)

Table **Section3.1.3**: Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Region of Birth: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018 (Data from the United States Department of Homeland Security)

Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Region of Birth Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

Region of Birth	2016	2017	2018
Total	1,183,505	1,127,167	1,096,611
Africa	113,426	118,824	115,736
Asia	462,299	424,743	397,187
Europe	93,567	84,335	80,024
North America	427,293	413,650	418,991
Oceania	5,588	5,071	4,653
South America	79,608	79,076	78,869
Unknown	1,724	1,468	1,151

Recent Immigration Demographics

Until the 1930s most legal immigrants were male. By the 1990s, women accounted for just over half of all legal immigrants. Contemporary immigrants tend to be younger than the native population of the United States, with people between the ages of 15 and 34 substantially over-represented. Immigrants are also more likely to be married and less likely to be divorced than native-born Americans of the same age.

Immigrants come from all over the world, but a significant number come from Latin America. In 1900, when the U.S. population was 76 million, there were an estimated 500,000 Latinx. The Census Bureau projects that by 2050, one-quarter of the population will be of Hispanic descent. This demographic shift is jointly fueled by higher fertility rates amongst the Latinx population as well as immigration from Latin America.

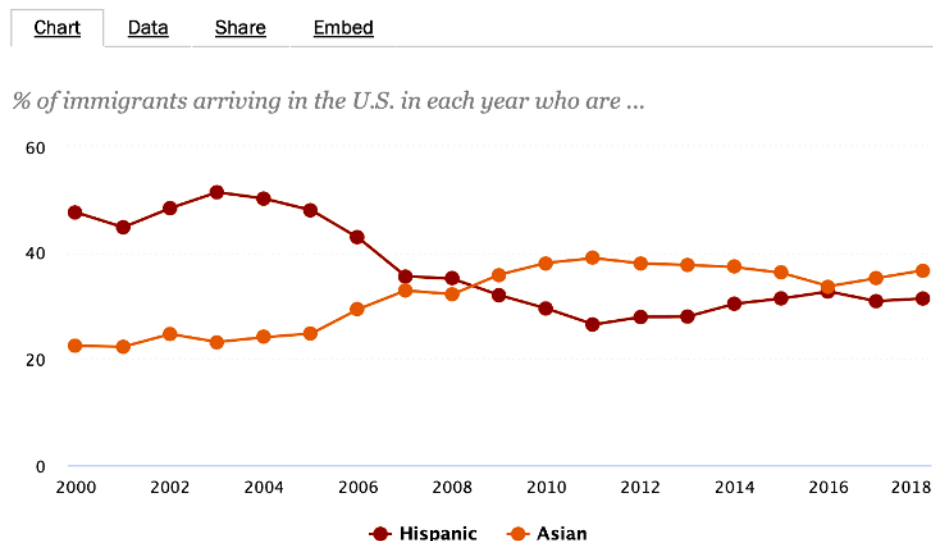
Immigrants are likely to move to and live in areas populated by people with similar backgrounds. This phenomenon has held true throughout the history of immigration to the United States.

Table **Section3.1.4**: Selected Characteristics of Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018 (Data from the Department of Homeland Security)

Selected Characteristics of Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Country of Birth Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

Country of Birth	2016	2017	2018
Mexico	174,434	170,581	161,858
China	81,772	71,565	65,214
Cuba	66,516	65,028	76,486
India	64,687	60,394	59,821
Dominican Republic	61,161	58,520	57,413
Philippines	53,287	49,147	47,258
Vietnam	41,451	38,231	33,834
El Salvador	23,449	25,109	28,326
Haiti	23,584	21,824	21,360
Jamaica	23,350	21,905	20,347

Among new arrivals, Asians outnumber Hispanics



Note: Figures for 2000 to 2004 are based on the household population and do not include arrivals residing in group quarters. For 2000-2017, the shares are computed using immigrants who arrived in the year before the ACS surveys of 2001-2018; for 2018, based on those arriving in 2018 in the 2018 ACS. Race and ethnicity based on self-reports. Asians include only single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2001-2018 American Community Surveys (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure **Section 3.1.5**: Among New Immigrant Arrival, Asians Outnumber Latinx (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

Although Europe has been the traditional sending region for immigrants to the U.S., the post WWII era (after 1946) shows a significant increase in migration from Mexico, South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Asia. (Recent data is conveyed in Table 3.1.4 and Figure 3.1.5 above). The latest migration trend also involves people from Africa. Please visit the following websites for more information: [Foreign Born Data Tables](#) and [The Statistical Abstracts of the United States](#).

Public Opinion Toward Immigrants

American attitudes toward immigration are markedly ambivalent. American history is rife with examples of anti-immigrant opinion. Benjamin Franklin opposed German immigration, warning Germans would not assimilate. In the 1850s, the nativist Know Nothing movement opposed Irish immigration, promulgating fears that the country was being overwhelmed by Irish Catholic immigrants.

In general, Americans have more positive attitudes toward groups that have been visible for a century or more, and much more negative attitude toward recent arrivals. According to a 1982 national poll by the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut, "By high margins, Americans are telling pollsters it was a very good thing that Poles, Italians, and Jews emigrated to America. Once again, it's the newcomers who are viewed with suspicion. This time, it's the Mexicans, the Filipinos, and the people from the Caribbean who make Americans nervous."

One of the most important factors regarding public opinion about immigration is the level of unemployment; anti-immigrant sentiment is highest where unemployment is highest, and vice versa. In fact, in the United States, only 0.16% of the workforce are legal immigrants. A more recent survey by the Pew Research Center (see Figure 3.1.6 below) suggests a more positive view of U. S. immigrants in which they are seen as a source of "strength."

U.S. immigrants are seen more as a strength than a burden to the country

% who say immigrants today ...

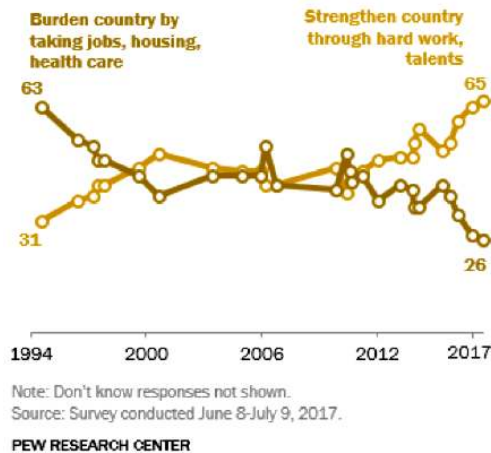


Figure Section 3.1.6: U. S. Immigrants are Seen More as a Strength than a Burden to the Country (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

Unauthorized Immigration to the United States

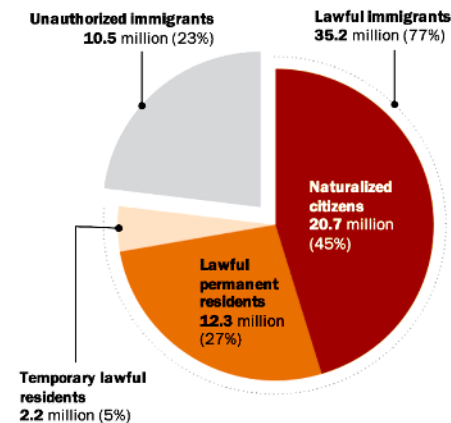
Unauthorized immigration refers to the act of entering the United States without governmental permission and in violation of the *United States Nationality Law*, or staying beyond the termination date of a visa, also in violation of the law. An **undocumented immigrant** in the United States is a person (non-citizen) who has entered the United States without government permission and in violation of United States Nationality Law, or stayed beyond the termination date of a visa, also in violation of the law. The undocumented immigrant population is estimated to be between 7 and 20 million. More than 50% of undocumented immigrants are from Mexico.

While the majority of undocumented immigrants continue to concentrate in places with existing large Hispanic communities, undocumented immigrants are increasingly settling throughout the rest of the country. A percentage of undocumented immigrants do not remain indefinitely but do return to their country of origin; they are often referred to as **sojourners**, which are people that leave or emigrate from their home country with the intention of returning to their homeland one day.

The continuing practice of hiring unauthorized workers has been referred to as the magnet for unauthorized immigration. As a significant percentage of employers are willing to hire undocumented immigrants for higher pay than they would typically receive in their former country, undocumented immigrants have prime motivation to cross borders. But migration is expensive and dangerous for those who enter without authorization. Participants in debates on immigration in the early twenty-first century have called for increasing enforcement of existing laws governing unauthorized immigration to the United States, building a barrier along some or all of the 2,000-mile (3,200 km) U.S.-Mexico border, or creating a new guest worker program.

Unauthorized immigrants are almost a quarter of U.S. foreign-born population

Foreign-born population estimates, 2017



Note: Figures for the total and subgroups differ from published U.S. Census Bureau totals because census data have been augmented and adjusted to account for undercount of the population. All numbers are rounded. Unauthorized immigrants include some with temporary protection from deportation under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS), as well as pending asylum cases.
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data.

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Figure Section3.1.7: Unauthorized Immigrants are Almost a Quarter of U. S. Foreign-born Population (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Internally Displaced People

In 2013, the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide exceeded 50 million people for the first time since the end of World War II. Half these people were children. A **refugee** is defined as an individual who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster, while **asylum-seekers** are those whose claim to refugee status has not been validated. An **internally displaced person**, on the other hand, is neither a refugee nor an asylum-seeker (Ritzer, 2015). Internally displaced persons have fled their homes while remaining inside their country's borders. In the case of the United States, the 2018 Camp Fire displaced many residents in Paradise, California. Unfortunately there was not enough housing available or being built fast enough for all former city of Paradise residents to be able to return, thus making them internally displaced.

The war in Syria caused most of the 2013 increase, forcing 2.5 million people to seek refugee status while internally displacing an additional 6.5 million. Violence in Central African Republic and South Sudan also contributed a large number of people to the total (United Nations, 2014).

The refugees need help in the form of food, water, shelter, and medical care, which has worldwide implications for nations contributing foreign aid, the nations hosting the refugees, and the non-government organizations (NGOs) working with individuals and groups on site (United Nations, 2014). Where will this large moving population, including the sick, elderly, children, and people with very few possessions and no long-term plan, go?

Given current immigration policies, specifically admissions ceilings, the United States is not a frequent destination for refugees and asylum-seekers, although it is sought out by displaced individuals. This means that as of September 2019, there was 339,386 pending asylum applications. However, in 2018, only 25,439 people were granted asylum. As far as refugees, the United States recognized a total of 22,405 people as refugees. Again, while there is great demand by displaced folks, the United States is limiting the amount of refugees it recognizes and asylum applications it approves. Table 3.1.8 below lists the top five countries that the

United States recently recognized the largest amounts of refugees from - with striking annual reductions. Per the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the biggest declines in refugee recognition tend to be from predominantly Muslim countries.

Table **Section3.1.8**: Selected Characteristics of Refugee Arrivals by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018 (Data from the United States Department of Homeland Security)

Selected Characteristics of Refugee Arrivals by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

Country of Nationality	2016	2017	2018
Total	84,988	53,691	22,405
Democratic Republic of Congo	16,370	9,377	7,878
Burma	12,347	5,078	3,555
Syria	12,587	6,557	62
Iraq	9,880	6,886	140
Somalia	9,020	6,130	257

Regarding contemporary asylum cases, individuals from China have the highest amounts of asylums granted affirmatively and defensively. According to the American Immigration Council (2020), an **affirmative asylum** is a person not in removal proceedings who may affirmatively apply for asylum through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The American Immigration Council (2020) defines **defensive asylum** as a person in removal proceedings who may "apply for asylum defensively by filing the application with an immigration judge at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in the Department of Justice. In other words, asylum is applied for as a defense against removal from the U.S." The second largest group of individuals being granted affirmative asylum are currently persons from Venezuela and for defensive asylum, it is people from El Salvador. With regards to the religious background of refugees, Blizzard and Batalova (2019) note, "2016 marked the only time since 2009 when the United States resettled more Muslim refugees than Christians. In that year, 84,994 refugees were admitted; of these, 46 percent (38,900) were Muslim and 44 percent (37,521) were Christian. More than half of Muslim refugees in 2016 were from Syria (32 percent) or Somalia (23 percent)."

Table **Section3.1.9**: Selected Characteristics of Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018 ([Data from the Department of Homeland Security](#))

Selected Characteristics of Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

Country of Nationality	2016	2017	2018
Total	11,634	15,846	25,439
China	1,387	2,820	3,844
Venezuela	316	482	5,966
El Salvador	1,380	2,121	1,177
Guatemala	1,285	1,996	1,337
Egypt	679	1,020	1,427

Table **Section3.1.10**: Selected Characteristics of Individuals Granted Asylum Defensively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018 ([Data from the Department of Homeland Security](#))

Selected Characteristics of Individuals Granted Asylum Defensively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

Country of Nationality	2016	2017	2018
Total	8,728	10,663	13,248
China	3,108	2,795	3,061
El Salvador	764	1,355	1,786
Honduras	618	956	1,188
Guatemala	636	953	1,021
India	315	470	956

It is clear that the rates for asylum granted defensively are much lower than those of asylum granted affirmatively. This seems to be consistent with a much tougher stance on immigration on behalf of the Trump administration, so folks facing removal proceedings are not likely be rewarded with asylum.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Latin@ Subgroup Patterns and Demographics

Section 4.1: History and Demographics of Latin@ Subgroups

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Section 4.1: History and Demographics of Latin@ Subgroups

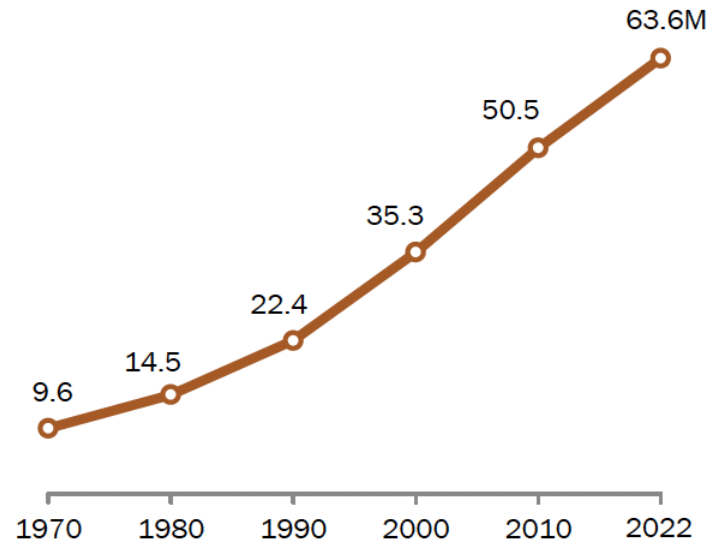
Brief History and Demographics of Latin@ Subgroups

Mexican Americans form the largest subgroup and also the oldest of Latin@ subgroups. Prior to the annexation of Texas and the Mexican-American War, the Southwest portion of the United States was Mexican and Spanish territory. As the United States began to expand westward under the guise of "Manifest Destiny" and the conquest of Indigenous ancestral lands, there were political, economic, and ideological pressures to acquire Mexican territories. With the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, the U.S. succeeded in acquiring most of the Southwest from Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed at the end of the war between Mexico and the U.S., guaranteed specific rights to all people of Mexican origin living in the U.S. including full American citizenship, retention of Spanish as a legitimate language, political rights, and the retention of land ownership. These rights were not honored by the U.S. and the Mexicans subsequently experienced a significant loss of land, social status, culture and language. They were treated as second-class citizens and a source of expendable labor.

Mexican migration to the United States increased in the early 1900s in response to the need for agricultural labor. Mexican migration during this period was often circular; workers would stay for a few years and then go back to Mexico with more money than they could have made in their country of origin. The length of Mexico's shared border with the United States has made immigration easier than for many other immigrant groups. There were also periods of anti-immigrant sentiment culminating in deportations and repatriations, such as during the Great Depression in the 1930's and Operation Wetback during the 1950's. After the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which removed national-origins quotas and allowed for family reunification, the percentage of immigrants from Mexico grew considerably.

U.S. Hispanic population reached more than 63 million in 2022

U.S. Hispanic population, in millions



Note: Population totals are as of July 1, 2022, and as of April 1 for 1970-2010. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1970-1980 estimates based on decennial censuses (see 2008 report, "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050"); additional analysis of 1990-2010 PL94-171 census data and the 2022 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau).

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Figure 4.1.1. U.S. Hispanic population reached nearly 64 million in 2022. (Used with permission; U.S. Hispanic population reached more than 63 million in 2022. Pew Research Center. Washington, D.C. (2023))

The socio-historical forces that forged the Puerto Rican population in the United States are different than those that created the Mexican-American community but were also influenced by U.S. imperialism and expansion. The end of the Spanish-American War of 1898 brought U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans and the Jones Act of 1917 allowed them open access to the U.S. mainland prior to the island becoming a commonwealth in 1952. These changes in concert with neo-liberal policies such as Operation Bootstrap created economic conditions that pushed Puerto Ricans onto the mainland. By the 1940s, 70,000 Puerto Ricans had settled on the mainland and by the 1950s, nearly 20 percent of the Puerto Rican population now resided on the mainland. By 1970, the number had grown to 800,000 and to 2.4 million in the early 1990's. Today, there approximately 5.1 million Latinx of Puerto Rican descent living in the United States, representing the second-largest Latinx subgroup. About 30% of them were born in Puerto Rico. More recently, there has been an increase in migration to the state of Florida. According to the Pew Research Center, since

the aftermath of Hurricane María, the Puerto Rican population in Florida has increased to one million, and 29% of mainland Puerto Ricans now live in Florida.

Cuban Americans are the third-largest Latin@ subgroup, and their history is quite different from that of Mexican Americans. The main wave of Cuban immigration to the United States started after Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 and reached its crest with the Mariel boatlift in 1980. Castro's Cuban Revolution ushered in an era of communism that continues to this day. To avoid having their assets seized by the government, many wealthy and educated Cubans migrated north, generally to the Miami area. Prior to the revolution, fewer than 50,000 Cubans lived in the United States. By 1973, the numbers grew to 500,000 and 1 million by 1993. Today, there are approximately 2.3 million Latin@ of Cuban origin in the United States and mostly concentrated in Florida (66%). There are important factors that have differentiated the Cuban experience from that of other Latin@ groups. For instance, most Cubans came to the U.S. as political refugees and have received a positive reception from the U.S. government with the passage of the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 and the "Wet-foot, dry-foot" policy modification passed in the 1990s (later rescinded by President Obama in 2017). Second, the majority of first wave Cuban refugees were from the middle and upper classes, displaced by the Cuban revolution. With the support and aid provided by the U.S. government, many were able to apply their business skills and educational training in the United States. In Southern Florida, a much larger percentage of businesses and banks are owned by Cubans compared to other Latinx communities.

The Latin@ population reached 60.6 million in 2019, up from 50.7 million in 2010, accounting for 52% of the overall U.S. population growth over this period. However, the population growth rate of the Latinx population has slowed consistently over time. For example, between 1995 and 2000, the population growth was 4.8% while between 2015-2019 the population growth was 1.9%.

The Latin@ population also has the lowest median age among the four major racial/ethnic groups. The median age is 30 while median age for whites is 44, 38 for Asian Americans, and 35 for African Americans. The younger age composition has important sociological ramifications such as representation in the educational system, the composition and percentage of new voters, and future demographic growth.

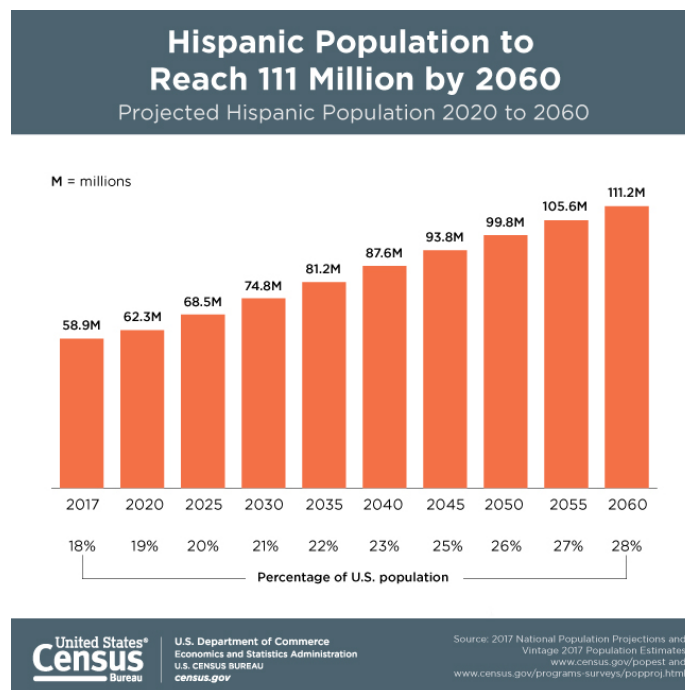


Figure **Section4.1.2**: Projected Hispanic Population Growth in the United States. (CC PDM 1.0; via U.S. Census Bureau)

Reasons for Migrating and Settlement Patterns

According to immigration scholars, there are many reasons migrants from Latin American countries have provided for leaving their home country and making an oftentimes harrowing and dangerous journey, and in many cases crossing more than one international

border to arrive in the United States (Valenzuela, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Chavez, 2001; . The following is a list of reasons from research studies:

- 1) Push and pull economic factors such as availability of jobs, inflation, and economic downturns. For example, relatively higher paying jobs in the U.S. agricultural industry would serve as a "pull" migration factor for rural migrants living in Mexico.
- 2) Deliberate labor recruitment. An example of this would be the initiation of the "Bracero Program", an official labor agreement signed between the U.S. and Mexico in 1942 to fill labor vacancies during World War II.
- 3) Social and kin (family) networks. Once families, friends, and acquaintances have migrated and settled in the U.S., they become a social force for continued migration due to family reunification and the creation of ethnic enclaves.
- 4) Immigration becomes part of a family or town's history. Many times, once a young person becomes of a certain age, they are expected to leave their family or town and migrate to the U.S. as part of a tradition.
- 5) Target earners. Some migrants come to the U.S. and plan to stay temporarily until they save a target amount of money (e.g. \$25,000 in order to build a new house in their hometown) and then return to their home country.
- 6) Dissatisfaction with opportunities. Many people are dissatisfied with economic or educational opportunities in their home country and decide to migrate to the U.S. for relatively better options.
- 7) Natural disasters. Oftentimes after a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, people are displaced and may flee to the U.S. out of desperation or to reunite with family or friends.
- 8) Adventure and curiosity. A smaller percentage of migrants leave their home countries out of a sense of adventure and curiosity.
- 9) Gendered migration. Migrants have also felt pressure to leave their home country to escape patriarchy in their home country. For example, women may feel the need to escape oppressive conditions within their households or larger social institutions.
- 10) The American Dream/"El Sueño Americano". People also report migrating to the U.S. because of a belief in the American Dream or El Sueño Americano which is a belief that jobs and opportunities are plentiful and upward mobility into an idealized and romanticized vision of a middle class is possible.

In her studies on gendered migration, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) identified three types of migration that influence the settlement patterns of individuals and families once they are here in the U.S. The first is "**Family-Stage**" migration where the head of household (traditionally male) migrates first then the remainder of the family members migrate in stages. This type of migration oftentimes experience expose gender conflict especially if the married couple reunify after several years of separation, requiring the wife/mother to assume head of household responsibilities back home. The second type is "**Family-Unit**" migration where the family typically migrates all at once. Due to the cost prohibitive nature of a family migrating all at once, these families tend to be from higher social classes in their home countries. This type of migration often have a more gender egalitarian because it requires the family to plan and make arrangement together and may depend on the help of both sides of the family. The third type of migration is "**Single-Stage**" migration where individuals migrate to the U.S. as unmarried singles and form a family here in the United States. This type of migration leads to a higher percentage of people marrying outside of their ethnic group or nationality.

In his study on the roles of children in the settlement patterns of Mexican families in California, Valenzuela (1999) found that the they often play 3 distinct roles:

- 1) Tutors. Oftentimes, children serve as translators for their parents or relatives. They also serve as teachers and cultural brokers for their own parents and younger siblings.
- 2) Advocates. Children may also need to intervene or mediate on behalf of their parents or family even during challenging transactions or difficult situations. For example, advocating on behalf of their parent when speaking with a monolingual

English speaking law enforcement officer or bill collector. This many often lead to strain or role confusion for the child advocate.

3) Surrogate Parents. Children may need to serve as nannies or in parent-like roles for their younger siblings. This may become a necessity if the parents work long hours and may also lead to role confusion within the household.

Valenzuela also discovered that the female children were given the most responsibility in serving these roles and the oldest children were more often expected to take on the role of surrogate parents.

Applying Sociology: *How do the reasons for migrating, types of migration, and roles of children relate to your own experiences or the experiences of your family members? How are these similar and different from previous waves of immigration to the U.S.?*

Country of Origin

According to the Pew Research Center, figure 8.1.3 shows that in 2018 the Mexican-origin population accounted for 62% of the overall Latinx population in the United States. The second largest group, Puerto Ricans, has seen an increase in migration from the island to the mainland in the last few years and made up 9.7% of the U.S. Latinx population. The third-largest group is the Cuban-origin population, made up 4% of the U.S. Latinx population and the Salvadoran-origin population is close behind with 3.9%. The South American subgroup with the highest percentage is Colombian, making up 2.1% of the total Latinx population. The remainder of Central and South Americans countries on the list each make up less than 2 percent of the total population but represent a wide array of rich regional traditions and cultures.

Figure Section4.1.3: Hispanic origin groups in the U.S., 2018. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

Hispanic origin groups in the U.S., 2018

Origin	U.S. population	% among all U.S. Hispanics
Mexican	36,964,000	61.9%
Puerto Rican	5,772,000	9.7
Cuban	2,362,000	4.0
Salvadoran	2,325,000	3.9
All other Latino	2,287,000	3.8
Dominican	2,075,000	3.5
Guatemalan	1,513,000	2.5
Colombian	1,241,000	2.1
Honduran	980,000	1.6
Spaniard	814,000	1.4
Ecuadorian	708,000	1.2
Peruvian	675,000	1.1
Venezuelan	492,000	0.8
Nicaraguan	438,000	0.7
Argentine	287,000	0.5
Panamanian	211,000	0.4
Chilean	174,000	0.3
Costa Rican	150,000	0.3
Bolivian	116,000	0.2
Uruguayan	61,000	0.1
Other Central American	48,000	0.1
Paraguayan	24,000	<0.05
Other South American	22,000	<0.05
Total	59,740,000	100.0

Notes: Hispanic populations rounded to nearest thousand; listed in descending order of population size. Hispanic origin is based on self-described ancestry, lineage, heritage, nationality group or country of birth.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2018 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

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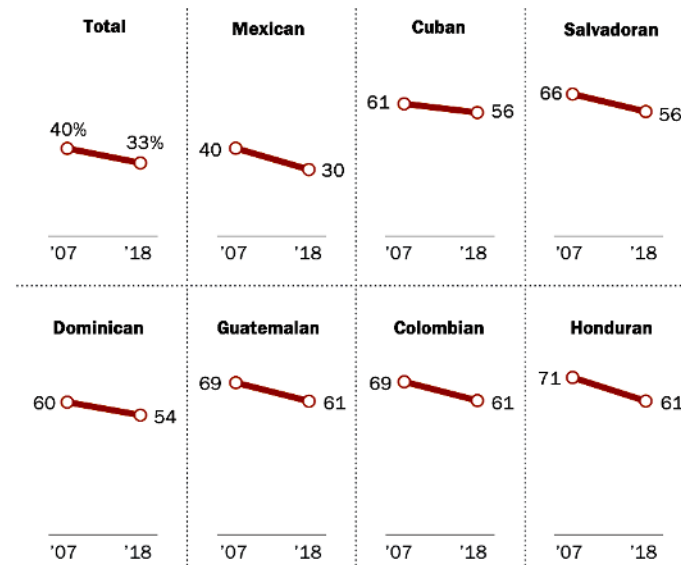
(2020))

Immigration Status and Citizenship

Overall, in 2018 approximately 80% of the Latin@ population are U.S. citizens, including those living in Puerto Rico. Due to their unique historical colonial experience, virtually all Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. Panamanians (89%) and Mexicans (80%) have among the highest citizenship rates, which Hondurans (53%) and Venezuelans (51%) have the lowest citizenship rates. According to Figure 8.1.4, the overall share of Latin@ immigrants has dropped since 2007 and immigrants now make up 33% of the total Latin@ population. As the largest group by far, the Mexican population is close to the mean and approximately 30% of its population are immigrants. Similarly, all other groups have experienced a drop in percentage of foreign-born in their respective groups. Cubans, Salvadorans, and Dominicans have a similar percentage of foreign-born with 56%, 56%, and 54%, respectively. Guatemalans, Colombians, and Hondurans all have a foreign-born rate of 61%.

Immigrant share has fallen in largest Latino origin groups since 2007

% born outside of the U.S., by origin group



Note: Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2007 and 2018 American Community Surveys (IPUMS).

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Figure **Section4.1.4**: Immigration share has fallen in large Latino origin groups since 2007. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2020))

According to the USDA, in 2016 over 70% of the farm worker labor force in the United States was foreign-born, mostly from Latin America. Approximately 21% of the farm worker labor force were authorized immigrants with permanent residency or green cards and 48% of the farm worker labor force was made up of unauthorized immigrant workers. As we know from other research studies, such as Milkman et al (2010), undocumented workers are more susceptible to workplace violations, low wages, and threats from employers.



Figure 5.1.5: "Farm workers picking cucumbers." (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; Bread for the World via Flickr)

Mexican Americans, especially those who are undocumented, are at the center of a national debate about immigration. Myers (2007) observes that no other people of color (except the Chinese) has immigrated to the United States in such an environment of illegality. He notes that in some years, three times as many Mexican immigrants may have entered the United States illegally historically as those who arrived legally. It should be noted that this is due to enormous disparity of economic opportunity on two sides of an open border, not because of any inherent inclination to break laws. In his report, "Measuring Immigrant Assimilation in the United States," Jacob Vigdor (2008) states that Mexican immigrants experience relatively low rates of economic and civil assimilation. He further suggests that "the slow rates of economic and civic assimilation set Mexicans apart from other immigrants and may reflect the fact that the large numbers of Mexican immigrants residing in the United States illegally have few opportunities to advance themselves along these dimensions."

By contrast, Cuban Americans are often seen as a model people of color within the larger Latin@ group. Many Cubans had higher socioeconomic status when they arrived in this country, and their anti-Communist agenda has made them welcome refugees to this country. In south Florida, especially, Cuban Americans are active in local politics and professional life. As with Asian Americans, however, being a model minority can mask the issue of powerlessness that these people of color face in U.S. society.

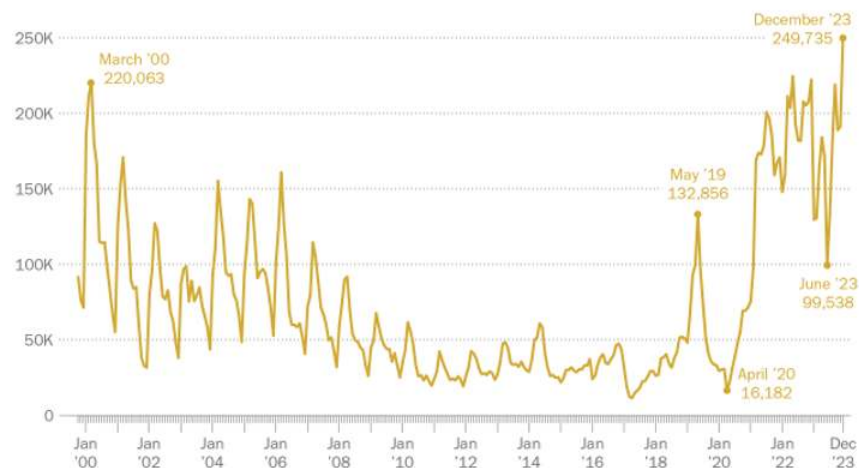
Despite the rhetoric of anti-immigrant politicians and commentators, Light, He, & Robey (2020) did not find empirical evidence that undocumented criminality has increased in recent years. Using comprehensive arrest data in Texas between 2012 and 2018, they found that "undocumented immigrants have substantially lower crime rates than native-born citizens and legal immigrants across a range of felony offenses."

Recent Immigration Trends

At the end of 2023, migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border increased dramatically, especially since the official end of the Coronavirus epidemic (see Figure 5.1.6). In this period, encounters have surpassed 200,000 a month on three separate occasions, peaks not recorded since 2000. One significant policy change was in response to the Coronavirus epidemic was to invoke Title 42 under the Trump administration, which allowed the US government to expel migrants back to their home countries without being held in custody or allowed migration proceedings. After the end of the pandemic, Title 42 was revoked after the end of the pandemic and the policy reverted back to the status quo pre-pandemic policy. Historically, the majority of encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border were primarily migrants from Mexico and the "Northern Triangle" (migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras). However, this has shifted more recently due to the drop in migration from Mexico in general and an increase in migration from South American countries and China. At the end of 2023, the majority of encounters at the border (54%) were migrants from nations "other than the 4 countries". The highest increase has been the number of encounters of migrants from Venezuela and China.

2023 ended with more migrant encounters at U.S.-Mexico border than any month on record

Monthly migrant encounters by U.S. Border Patrol at U.S.-Mexico border



Note: Beginning in March 2020, monthly totals combine apprehensions and expulsions into a new category known as encounters. Monthly totals before March 2020 include apprehensions only. Some migrants are encountered more than once.
Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

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Figure **Section 4.1.6**: Migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico Border hit a record high at the end of 2023. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2024))

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Identity, Culture, and Adaptation

[Section 5.1: Identity](#)

[Section 5.2: Integration and Adaptation](#)

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Section 5.1: Identity

Identity and labels

The labels that people of Latin@ heritage use depends on the historical, regional, cultural, and political context. Labels can also be self-imposed, such as Chicano or Chicana, or imposed from without, such as Hispanic. Some ethnic labels, such as Californio, are specific to a region (California) and historical context (1800's). For example, Pío Pico was the last Mexican Governor of California and was part of the Californios, a term referring to the political, economic, and cultural elites of Mexican heritage living in California in the 19th century.

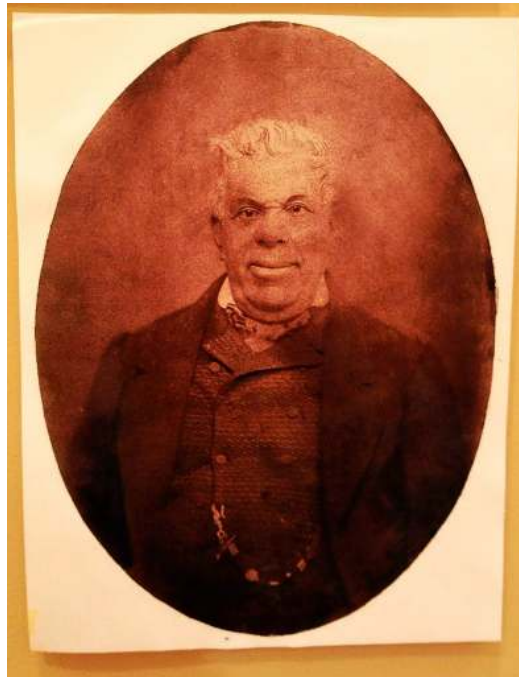


Figure *Section5.1.5*: Pío Pico (1801 - 1894): The last Mexican Governor of California. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Joe Mud via Flickr)

The term Chicano (or Chicana) gained popularity among people of Mexican origin during the 1960s in the midst of what is called the **Chicano Movement**. Young, radicalized Mexican Americans began to question the attempt of previous Latin@ movements to assimilate into the Anglo-dominant America and became critical of the institutional discrimination and racism experienced by their community. There is some dispute among historians regarding the origins of the term Chicano, as it was commonly used as a slur in the early 1900s against recently arrived Mexican and working poor immigrants. The terms Chicano (and Xicano) may have been derived from the original pronunciation of the term for the Aztecs (Mexico). Regardless of its origin, the term **Chicano** (or **Chicana**) was reclaimed and embraced by politicize youth as a way to embrace their **Indigenous** heritage and roots ("Indigenismo"), reject Anglo-assimilation, recognize Mexicans as a twice colonized people, and take part in a larger social movement ("el movimiento") to challenge institutional discrimination and racism.



Video **Section5.1.6**: Chicano! Struggle in the Fields. (Close-captioning and other YouTube settings will appear once the video starts.) (Fair Use; [CaliforniaMexicoCtr](#) via [YouTube](#))

The Chicano Movement addressed different social problems and issues, a "movement of movements", as described by Chicano and Latino Studies Professor Jimmy Patino. As presented in Video 8.1.6 above, *Chicano! Struggle in the Fields*, the first was the fight for farm worker's rights, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta through the United Farm Workers (UFW). This became the heart of the Chicano Movement and sought to improve the working conditions of farm workers but eventually extended and their efforts led to everyone having more labor and educational rights.

The second part of the movement was related to land rights of Mexican people and the reclamation of lands, led by the lawyer and activist Reies Lopez Tijerina. Tijerina challenged the unlawful transfer of land that took place after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 through formal court challenges, protests, and even staged an armed raid to reclaim territory in New Mexico.



Video **Section5.1.7**: Chicano! Taking Back the Schools. (Close-captioning and other YouTube settings will appear once the video starts.) (Fair Use; [CaliforniaMexicoCtr](#) via [YouTube](#))

The third branch of the Chicano Movement was the rise of student activism and self-empowerment, as conveyed in Video 8.1.7 above, *Chicano! Taking Back the Schools*. For example, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, an activist and former boxer, organized the

National Youth and Liberation Conference in Denver, Colorado in 1969. This became a powerful organizing effort and brought in Chicanos from around the country to meet, take part in cultural workshops and events, and politicize and organize their own schools and communities. They drafted El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán (Spiritual Plan of Aztlán), to acknowledge the Indigenous ancestry and homeland of the Aztec people and also to map out a plan for Chicano nationalism and self-determination. In 1969, Chicano and Chicana students met at an historic conference at UC Santa Barbara to draft El Plan de Santa Barbara based on the identity and philosophy of **Chicanismo** to propose a larger plan to advocate for self-determination and empowerment, Chicano nationalism, and the central role of higher education in achieving liberation at the community level. The result of the conference was the establishment of the student organization, M.E.Ch.A (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), and became the blueprint for the establishment of Chicano and Chicana Studies programs and departments throughout the UC System. Featured in the Chicano! Taking Back the Schools video above, another example of the student movement was the East Los Angeles Walkouts that took place in 1968, where thousands of Chicano students took part in non-violent protests by walking out of their schools to protest unequal educational opportunities, a lack of Chicano-themed course and curriculum, and a lack of Chicano and bilingual teachers. (Noriega et al, 2010)



Figure **Section5.1.8**: Chicano Park/Parque Chicano in Barrio Logan, San Diego, California founded in 1970. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Nathan Gibbs via Flickr)

Panethnic Terms

A **panethnic** label is used as an "umbrella" term to categorize a set of ethnic subgroups with a shared culture, language, and history. The following are panethnic terms that are used to describe, generally, people of Latin American descent.

According to the UCLA sociologist G. Cristina Mora, the term **Hispanic** first officially appeared in the 1980 Census to categorize people from Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, but excluding Brazilians. Prior to this census, those of Latin American descent were referred to as "Spanish-speaking", "having Spanish origin" or "white" which was frustrating to advocates and activists at the time, including the National Council of La Raza, who were lobbying for more resources and programs in Mexican and Puerto Rican communities. Although the term Hispanic emerged as an more official term and adopted by many, the term has its detractors because it tends to emphasize Spanish culture at the expense of Indigenous culture, it is an English word, perceived as an imposed label, and associated with the more assimilated who are hoping to de-emphasize their Latin@ culture. According to Mora (2019):

"Resistance to the idea of Hispanic emerged at a time when academics and started applying a much more critical lens to colonial history. There was a pushback and a sense that words matter - that by elevating "Hispanic" one is obscuring a history of colonialism, slavery, genocide, the Spanish legacy across the Americas. So "Latino" developed as an alternative, albeit an imperfect one" (Schelenz and Freeling, 2019, p. 1).

According to historian Ramon Gutierrez, the term **Latino or Latina** has its roots in the abbreviated version of Latino Americano that emerged after the independence movements of several countries in the early 1800s. It re-emerged in the late 1900s and can be found in memoirs and political literature in the 1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was promulgated as a preferred substitute for the more official term Hispanic. It is considered a more inclusive term and has also been used to "center" the experiences of other subgroups such as Afro Latinos and Muslim Latinos, whose experiences are oftentimes left out of the discourse and research (Gutierrez and Almaguer, 2016). According to a 2013 Pew Center survey, only about 20% of respondents described themselves as either Hispanic or Latino. Slightly more than half of respondents (54%) prefer to use their family's country of origin (such as Mexican, Cuban, Guatemalan) to identify themselves and just over 20% used "American" to describe themselves (Lopez, 2013).

The term **Latinx** has been used since the early 2000s and is meant to replace Latino and Latina as a gender-neutral alternative and to also acknowledge the experiences of LGBTQ people who are of Latin American descent. Although a recent Pew Center (2020) study found that only a quarter have heard of the term and only 3% use it in their daily lives, the label is growing in popularity and usage, especially among young, college educated women (Noe-Bustamante, Mora, & Lopez, 2020).



Video **Section 5.1.9**: What is Latinx? (Close-captioning and other YouTube settings will appear once the video starts.) (Fair Use; NBC News via YouTube)

Race and Racial Identity

Gutierrez and Almaguer (2016) point out that that Latin@ populations have a very long history of racial classification that goes back to the Spanish colonial period, which lasted hundreds of years in Latin America. The racial mixing (referred to as **mestizaje**) that occurred included Spanish troops, indigenous populations, and imported African slaves and led to the development of a color and class stratification system, sometimes referred to as a racial caste system. In those societies where indigenous people were used as the primary colonial labor force, indigenous ancestry was devalued and stigmatized, mostly in Mexico, Central America, and Peru. In those societies where the indigenous population was decimated and replaced by African slaves, such as the Caribbean islands, blackness was devalued. Terms such as mestizo, moreno, mulato and trigueño began to be used in the 16th century and are still used today. What resulted was a system where "either white and black, or white and Indian, were at opposite ends of this racial hierarchy, and a large set of intermediate brown categories that complexly stratified the population were deemed to occupy the middle" (Gutierrez & Almaguer, 2016, p. 154). It is evident that people who have migrated to the United States bring with them this complicated history of racial classification and identity. (See also [Chapter 1.4](#) for an earlier discussion of multiracial individuals, including mestizo, mulatto, etc.).



Figure Section 5.1.10: This is an example of a "casta" painting, popular during the Spanish Colonial period depicting the many different racial groups. The middle painting is titled "De Español y Negra, Mulato" or "From Spanish and Black, a mulatto". The scenes also depicted the racial hierarchy and racialized stereotypes of racial groups and mixed populations. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Steven Zucker via Flickr)

This long history of racial classification has also resulted in a form of **colorism** within the Latin@ population, defined by Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista (2014) as "a form of discrimination imposed upon Latinos/as by members of their own ethnic group." (Chavez-Dueñas et al., p. 4). This internalized hierarchy that devalues indigenous and African ancestry and a preference for whiteness or traditionally European features is reflected at the institutional level in terms of people in power, socioeconomic status, and depictions of people in media (i.e. movies, news broadcasters, telenovelas, etc.). At the micro level, Chavez-Dueñas (2014) found the following comments frequently used by Latin@ family members to describe friends or relatives to be a clear reflection of colorism and an internalized racial hierarchy :

- Hay que mejorar la raza o cástate con un blanco. [We need to improve the race by marrying a white person.]
- Ahí que bonita es su niña, as tan güerita/blanquita! [Oh! How pretty your daughter is, she is so white/light skinned!]
- Oh, nació negrito/prietito pero aun asi lo queremos. [Oh, he was born black/dark but we still love him all the same.]
- Pobrecito, tiene el cabello tan malo. [Poor little thing, her hair is so bad/coarse.]
- Eres tan Indio. [You are so Indian. (connoting negative stereotypes about indigenous people)] (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2014, p. 17).

In the United States, Latin@ people are not designated on the U.S. Census as a "racial group" but instead are considered an ethnic group with a shared cultural backgrounds, who can be of any "race". The 2010 Census form first asks respondents if the person in question is of Hispanics, Latin or Spanish origin and asks to specific a Latin@ subgroup is the answer is "yes" to this question. Then, the following question asks for the person's race but only provides the following potential responses:

2010 Census Race Question

What is Person 1's race? Mark ☒ one or more boxes.

☐ White

☐ Black, African Am., or Negro

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. 

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Chinese ☐ Korean ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro

☐ Filipino ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Samoan

☐ Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. 

☐ Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. 

☐ Some other race — Print race. 



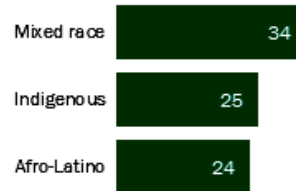
Figure Section5.1.11: 2010 Census Race Question. (CC PDM 1.0; via U.S. Census Bureau)

Given the limited responses to the race question, it is not surprising that in 2010 more than half (53%) of the Latin@ respondents selected the "White" racial category on the Census form. Interestingly, there were differences across the subgroups. Cubans (85.4%) and South Americans (65.9%) were among the highest and Guatemalans (38.5%) and Salvadorans (40.2%) were among the lowest to select the "White" racial category. Approximately 53% of both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans selected the "White" racial category. Some 37% of Latinx@ respondents selected "some other race" and a majority in this group selected their nationality as their specified "race." A small percentage of Latin@ respondents (6%) identified themselves as multiracial and even smaller percentages as American Indian (1.4%) or Black (2.5%) (Gutierrez & Almaguer, 2016). After the results of the 2010 Census were published, news organizations such as the New York Times wrote stories with headlines that read "More Hispanics Declaring Themselves White" and concluded that the results provided evidence that the Latin@ population may "assimilate as white Americans, like the Italians or Irish, who were not universally considered to be white" (Cohn, 2014). So, is this the end of the story? Are Latin@ people simply the next "Italians" and are assimilating into white America?

Other research actually reflects a more complex Latin@ racial and ethnic identity. For example, in their survey of Latin@ adults, Parker, Horowitz, Morin, & Lopez (2015) found that 67% of respondents considered their "Hispanic" background to be both a racial and ethnic background, contrary to the assumption made in the Census question and other standard race survey questions. In this same survey, a much higher percentage of Latin@ adults described themselves as being of mixed race (34%), Indigenous (25%), and Afro-Latino (24%) than was captured in the 2010 Census. Part of this was the contextualization of the questions in the current survey. For example, respondents were asked if they consider themselves "Afro-Latino or Afro-Caribbean or, for example, Afro-Mexican." Respondents were also asked if they had ancestry that included specific indigenous peoples of the Americas, such as Mayan, Taino, Quechua, etc. As for being of mixed race ancestry, more culturally relevant terms such as mestizo or mulatto were utilized in this survey. The results provide a rich and more complex picture regarding the self-identity and racial classification of the Latin@ population.

Large Minorities of Hispanics Self-Identify as Mixed Race, Indigenous or Afro-Latino

% of Hispanic adults who say they consider themselves ...



Note: Hispanic is based on self-identification of Hispanic origin.

Source: Pew Research Center 2014 National Survey of Latinos, Sep. 11-Oct. 9, 2014 (N=1,520 Hispanic adults)

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Figure **Section 5.1.12**: Large Minorities of Hispanics Self-Identify as Mixed Race, Indigenous or Afro-Latino. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

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Section 5.2: Integration and Adaptation

Integration and adaptation Patterns

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

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

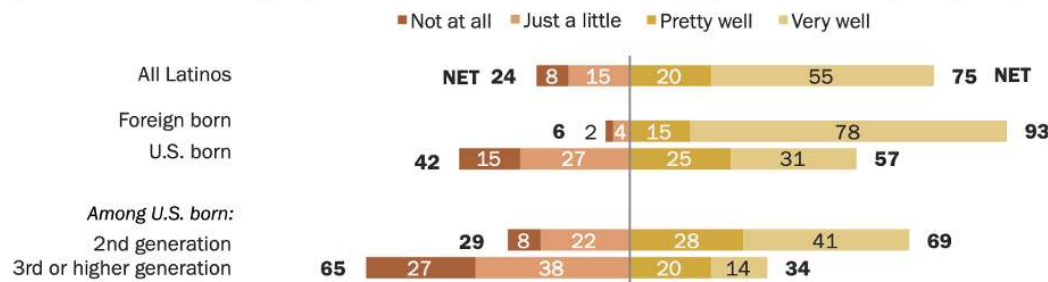
Cuban Americans, perhaps because of their relative wealth and education level at the time of immigration, have fared better than many immigrants. Further, because they were fleeing a Communist country, they were given refugee status and offered protection and social services. The Cuban Migration Agreement of 1995 has curtailed legal immigration from Cuba, leading many Cubans to try to immigrate illegally by boat. According to a 2009 report from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. government applies a “wet foot/dry foot” policy toward Cuban immigrants; Cubans who are intercepted while still at sea will be returned to Cuba, while those who reach the shore will be permitted to stay in the United States.

Spanish Language Usage among Latin@s in the United States

According to studies on language maintenance across generations in the United States, immigrants (especially those who have migrated as adults) continue to speak their ethnic language mostly in public and private social spheres. The second generation (children of immigrants) maintain an active grasp of their ethnic language and tend to speak it in private social spheres (at home and with relatives) and speak English in public social spheres (at school and with friends). The third generation tends to experience significant loss of the ethnic language and may speak it more symbolically than actively. (Fishman, 1966; Michnowicz et al, 2023)

Majority of third- or higher-generation Latinos say they can't carry on a conversation in Spanish

% of U.S. Latino adults who say they can carry on a conversation in Spanish ____, both understanding and speaking



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Individual estimates may not round to NET figures because the NETs were calculated using unrounded values. In this analysis, "foreign born" groups together Latino adults born in Puerto Rico or outside the U.S. to noncitizen parents. Those born in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens at birth.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Aug. 1-14, 2022.

"Latinos' Views of and Experiences With the Spanish Language"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

According to a Pew Center survey, Latin@s in the U.S., in general, tend to follow this generational language shift pattern found by Joshua Fishman. For instance, 57% of U.S.-born Latin@s reported that they are able to converse in Spanish compared to 93% of their foreign-born counterparts. This also follows along generational lines. While 69% of children of immigrants (2nd generation) say they are able to converse in Spanish, only 34% of their third generation or higher were able to do so. Compared to other groups, such as Asian Americans, Latin@ tend to have higher rates of language maintenance into the 2nd and 3rd generations. Lopez, focusing on specifically on Southern California, attributed this difference to Latin@s having a shared language (Spanish), that Spanish is ubiquitous and has become the lingua franca of the working class in Southern California, and more contact between second and third generation Latin@s and Spanish-speaking relatives due to a combination of cultural and socioeconomic circumstances. (Lopez, 1996)

Geography has also been found to either increase or limit Spanish language maintenance over generations. For example, Villa & Rivera-Mills (2009) found that a certain region of the country becomes a Spanish heartland "where those of Spanish-speaking origin have a historic presence, form a democratic majority in many areas and move back and forth across national and international political borders, thus creating a bilingual dynamic in which Spanish is lost or maintained in relation to its affective and instrumental values." (p. 29) Conversely, geography may limit the maintenance of Spanish over generations and lead to an accelerated language shift towards English. Michnowicz et al (2023) found that among Latin@s living in North Carolina, the shift to English typically found in the 3rd generation has occurred in the 2nd generation (among children of immigrants). They concluded that the "newly developing Latino communities in the Southeast [U.S.] may lack the critical mass of Spanish-speakers necessary to preserve the language long term, and the absence of a well-established, focused bilingual community, as in NYC, Chicago, or the Southwest [U.S.], points toward a fairly rapid language shift in North Carolina..."

Towards a true pluralistic American experience?

There has undoubtedly been an increase in the incorporation of some aspects of Latin@ culture in mainstream America, especially with regard to food (e.g. eating tacos), music (e.g. listening to Spanish language crossover pop songs), symbolic traditions (e.g. using piñatas at birthday parties) and celebrations (e.g. celebrating Día de los Muertos). However, as we know from the previous experiences of other communities of color, partaking in aspects of culture does not necessarily translate into better racial and ethnic relations. For example, as white Americans were listening to the music of Louis Armstrong in the 1930s and 1940s, most African Americans were suffering from the effects of Jim Crow era racism and segregation. Similarly, as Ritchie Valens' "La Bamba", a rock and roll remake of a traditional Mexican song, became a rare Spanish language crossover hit in the 1950s, Mexican-Americans were being subjected to de facto segregation, deportation regimes such as Operation Wetback, and other forms of

discrimination. There is also the tendency of American mainstream society to "whitewash" Latin@ culture and for corporations to appropriate culture for economic gain, such as the celebration of Cinco de Mayo and more recently, the Disney corporation's attempt to trademark "Day of the Dead" (Flores, 2013).

After the 2024 election, Latin@ representatives now make up approximately 12% of the U.S. House of Representatives (up from 10% from the previous election). Although the increase represents progress, they are still underrepresented as they make up 19% of the total population. There are currently 7 Latin@ Senators. Five were elected and one was appointed by the Governor of California. Four of the Senators are Democrats and 3 are Republicans, reflecting the diversity of political affiliation within the Latin@ electorate. In terms of economic power, according to a Latino USA publication, while Latin@ workers make up 17% of the U.S. labor force, they only make up 4% of company executives (Swerzenski, Tomaskovic, & Hoyt, 2020). They also found difference across metropolitan areas. Miami had the highest percentage of Latin@ executives (25%) and New York had the lowest (4.5%). Houston (10%) and Los Angeles (8%) were in between but closer to New York than Miami. The authors recommend increasing the the percentage of Latin@ workers in mid-level management positions and also "acknowledging blindspots that often exclude [Latin@] workers, such as non-Latin@ employers recognizing unconscious biases in their communication styles and providing opportunities to professionally use their cultural competencies" (Ibid, p. 1).

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Section 6.1: Sex, Gender, Identity, and Expression

Section 6.2: Gender and Gender Inequality

Section 6.3: Sexuality

Section 6.4: Intersectionality of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

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Section 6.1: Sex, Gender, Identity, and Expression

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Define and differentiate between sex and gender
- Define and discuss what is meant by gender identity
- Distinguish the meanings of different sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions



Figure 12.2: While the biological differences between males and females are fairly straightforward, the social and cultural aspects of being a man or woman can be complicated. (Credit: Mapbox Uncharted ERG /flickr)

When filling out a document such as a job application or school registration form, you are often asked to provide your name, address, phone number, birth date, and sex or gender. But have you ever been asked to provide your sex *and* your gender? Like most people, you may not have realized that sex and gender are not the same. However, sociologists and most other social scientists view them as conceptually distinct. Sex refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity. Gender refers to behaviors, personal traits, and social positions that society attributes to being female or male.

A person's sex, as determined by their biology, does not always correspond with their gender. Therefore, the terms *sex* and *gender* are not interchangeable. A baby who is born with male genitalia will most likely be identified as male. As a child or adult, however, they may identify with the feminine aspects of culture. Since the term *sex* refers to biological or physical distinctions, characteristics of sex will not vary significantly between different human societies. Generally, persons of the female sex, regardless of culture, will eventually menstruate and develop breasts that can lactate. Characteristics of gender, on the other hand, may vary greatly between different societies. For example, in U.S. culture, it is considered feminine (or a trait of the female gender) to wear a

dress or skirt. However, in many Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures, sarongs, robes, or gowns are considered masculine. The kilt worn by a Scottish man does not make him appear feminine in that culture.

The dichotomous or binary view of gender (the notion that someone is either male or female) is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. In some cultures gender is viewed as fluid. In the past, some anthropologists used the term *berdache* to refer to individuals who occasionally or permanently dressed and lived as a different gender. The practice has been noted among certain Native American tribes (Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang 1997). Samoan culture accepts what Samoans refer to as a “third gender.” *Fa’afafine*, which translates as “the way of the woman,” is a term used to describe individuals who are born biologically male but embody both masculine and feminine traits. Fa’afafines are considered an important part of Samoan culture. Individuals from other cultures may mislabel their sexuality because fa’afafines have a varied sexual life that may include men and women (Poasa 1992).

Social Policy and Debate: The Legalese of Sex and Gender

The terms *sex* and *gender* have not always been differentiated in the English language. It was not until the 1950s that U.S. and British psychologists and other professionals formally began distinguishing between sex and gender. Since then, professionals have increasingly used the term *gender* (Moi 2005). By the end of the twenty-first century, expanding the proper usage of the term *gender* to everyday language became more challenging—particularly where legal language is concerned. In an effort to clarify usage of the terms *sex* and *gender*, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in a 1994 briefing, “The word *gender* has acquired the new and useful connotation of cultural or attitudinal characteristics (as opposed to physical characteristics) distinctive to the sexes. That is to say, *gender* is to *sex* as *feminine* is to *female* and *masculine* is to *male*” (*J.E.B. v. Alabama*, 144 S. Ct. 1436 [1994]). Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had a different take, however. She freely swapped them in her briefings so as to avoid having the word “*sex*” pop up too often. Ginsburg decided on this approach earlier in her career while she was arguing before the Supreme court; her Columbia Law School secretary suggested it to Ginsburg, saying that when “those nine men” (the Supreme Court justices), “hear that word and their first association is not the way you want them to be thinking” (Block 2020).

More recently, the word “*sex*” was a key element of the landmark Supreme Court case affirming that the Civil Rights Act’s workplace protections applied to LGBTQ people. Throughout the case documents and discussions, the term and its meanings are discussed extensively. In his decision statement, Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote, “It is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating ... based on *sex*” (Supreme Court 2020). Dissenting justices and commentators felt that Gorsuch and the other justices in the majority were recalibrating the original usage of the term. The arguments about the language itself, which occupy much of the Court’s writings on the matter, are further evidence of the evolving nature of the words, as well as their significance.

Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

A person’s sexuality is their capacity to experience sexual feelings and attraction. Studying sexual attitudes and practices is a particularly interesting field of sociology because sexual behavior and attitudes about sexual behavior have cultural and societal influences and impacts. As you will see in the Relationships, Marriage, and Family chapter, each society interprets sexuality and sexual activity in different ways, with different attitudes about premarital sex, the age of sexual consent, homosexuality, masturbation, and other sexual behaviors (Widmer 1998).

A person’s sexual orientation is their physical, mental, emotional, and sexual attraction to a particular sex (male and/or female). Sexual orientation is typically divided into several categories: *heterosexuality*, the attraction to individuals of the other sex; *homosexuality*, the attraction to individuals of the same sex; *bisexuality*, the attraction to individuals of either sex; *asexuality*, a lack of sexual attraction or desire for sexual contact; *pansexuality*, an attraction to people regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression; *omnisexuality*, an attraction to people of all sexes, genders, gender identities, and gender expressions that considers the person’s gender, and *queer*, an umbrella term used to describe sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Other categories may not refer to a sexual attraction, but rather a romantic one. For example, an *aromantic* person does not experience romantic attraction; this is different from asexuality, which refers to a lack of sexual attraction. And some sexual orientations do not refer to gender in their description, though those who identify as having that orientation may feel attraction to a certain gender. For example, *demisexual* refers to someone who feels a sexual attraction to someone only after they form an emotional bond; the term itself doesn’t distinguish among gender identities, but the person may feel attraction based on gender

(PFLAG 2021). It is important to acknowledge and understand that many of these orientations exist on a spectrum, and there may be no specific term to describe how an individual feels. Some terms have been developed to address this—such as *graysexual* or *grayromantic*—but their usage is a personal choice (Asexual Visibility and Education Network 2021).

People who are attracted to others of a different gender are typically referred to as "straight," and people attracted to others of the same gender are typically referred to as "gay" for men and "lesbian" for women. As discussed, above, however, there are many more sexual and romantic orientations, so the term "gay," for example, should not be used to describe all of them. Proper terminology includes the acronyms LGBT and LGBTQ, which stands for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender" (and "Queer" or "Questioning" when the Q is added). In other cases, people and organizations may add "I" to represent Intersex people (described below), and "A" for Asexual or Aromantic people (or sometimes for "Allies"), as well as one "P" to describe Pansexual people and sometimes another "P" to describe Polysexual people. Finally, some people and organizations add a plus sign (+) to represent other possible identities or orientations. Sexuality and gender terminology are constantly changing, and may mean different things to different people; they are not universal, and each individual defines them for themselves (UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center 2020). Finally, a person who does not fully understand all of these terms can still be supportive of people who have those orientations or others; in fact, advocacy and support organizations indicate it is much better to admit you don't know something than to make assumptions or apply an incorrect label to someone (GLAAD 2021).

While the descriptions above are evidence of a vast degree of diversity, the United States and many other countries are heteronormative societies, meaning many people assume heterosexual orientation is biologically determined and is the default or normal type of orientation. While awareness and acceptance of different sexual orientations and identities seems to be increasing, the influence of a heteronormative society can lead LGBTQ people to be treated like "others," even by people who do not deliberately seek to cause them harm. This can lead to significant distress (Boyer 2020). Causes of these heteronormative behaviors and expectations are tied to implicit biases; they can be especially harmful for children and young adults (Tompkins 2017).

There is not a wealth of research describing exactly when people become aware of their sexual orientation. According to current scientific understanding, individuals are usually aware of their sexual orientation between middle childhood and early adolescence (American Psychological Association 2008). They do not have to participate in sexual activity to be aware of these emotional, romantic, and physical attractions; people can be celibate and still recognize their sexual orientation, and may have very different experiences of discovering and accepting their sexual orientation. Some studies have shown that a percentage of people may start to have feelings related to attraction or orientation at ages nine or ten, even if these feelings are not sexual (Calzo 2018). At the point of puberty, some may be able to announce their sexual orientation, while others may be unready or unwilling to make their sexual orientation or identity known since it goes against society's historical norms (APA 2008). And finally, some people recognize their true sexual orientation later in life—in their 30s, 40s, and beyond.

There is no scientific consensus regarding the exact reasons why an individual holds a specific sexual orientation. Research has been conducted to study the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, but there has been no evidence that links sexual orientation to one factor (APA 2008). Alfred Kinsey was among the first to conceptualize sexuality as a continuum rather than a strict dichotomy of gay or straight. He created a six-point rating scale that ranges from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. See the figure below. In his 1948 work *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, Kinsey writes, "Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats ... The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects" (Kinsey 1948). Many of Kinsey's specific research findings have been criticized or discredited, but his influence on future research is widely accepted.

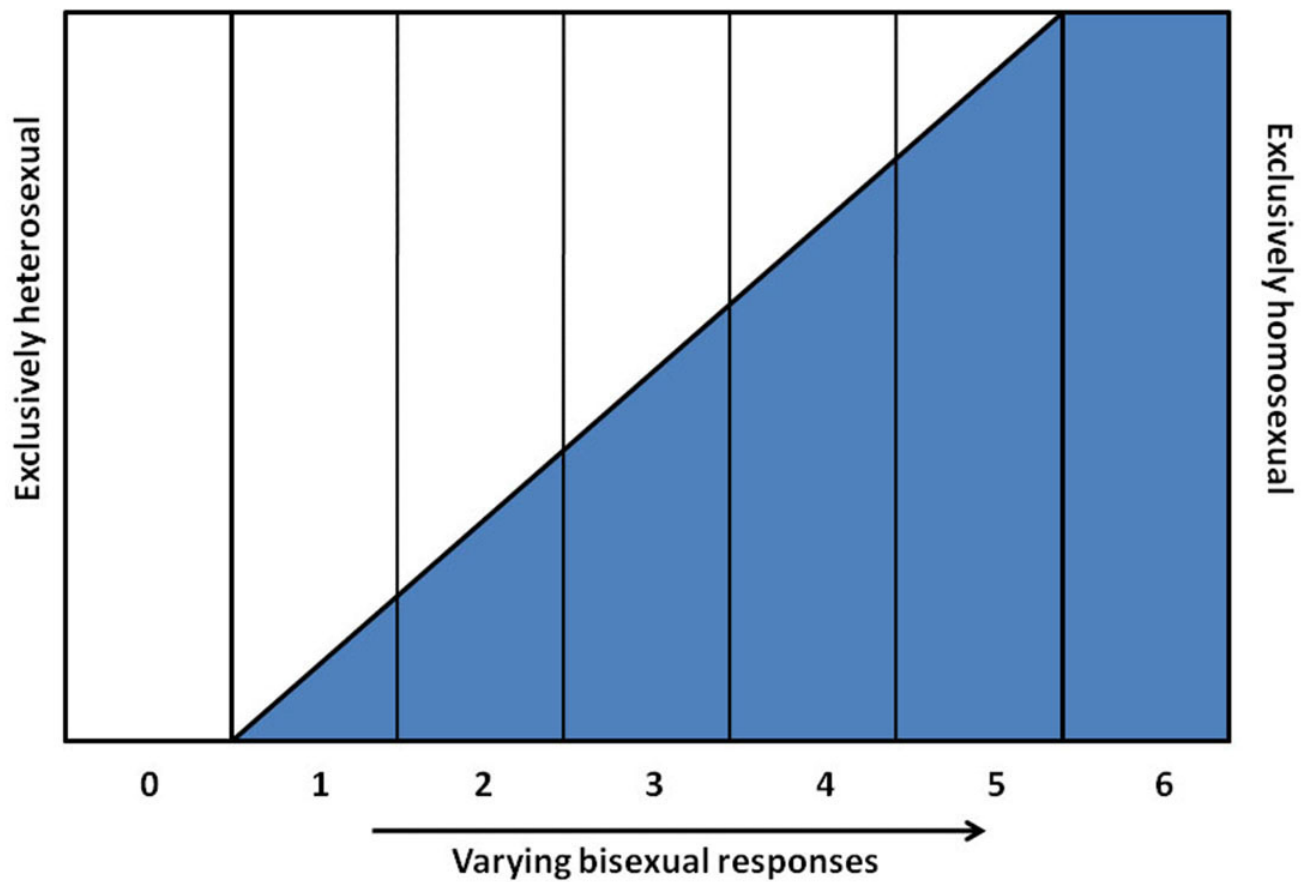


Figure 12.3: The Kinsey scale was one of the first attempts to frame the diversity of human sexual orientation.

Later scholarship by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick expanded on Kinsey's notions. She coined the term "homosocial" to oppose "homosexual," describing nonsexual same-sex relations. Sedgwick recognized that in U.S. culture, males are subject to a clear divide between the two sides of this continuum, whereas females enjoy more fluidity. This can be illustrated by the way women in the United States can express homosocial feelings (nonsexual regard for people of the same sex) through hugging, handholding, and physical closeness. In contrast, U.S. males refrain from these expressions since they violate the heteronormative expectation that male sexual attraction should be exclusively for females. Research suggests that it is easier for women violate these norms than men, because men are subject to more social disapproval for being physically close to other men (Sedgwick 1985).

Because of the deeply personal nature of sexual orientation, as well as the societal biases against certain orientations, many people may question their sexual orientation before fully accepting it themselves. In a similar way, parents may question their children's sexual orientation based on certain behaviors. Simply viewing the many web pages and discussion forums dedicated to people expressing their questions makes it very clear that sexual orientation is not always clear. Feelings of guilt, responsibility, rejection, and simple uncertainty can make the process and growth very challenging. For example, a woman married to a man who recognizes that she is asexual, or a man married to a woman who recognizes that he is attracted to men, may both have extreme difficulty coming to terms with their sexuality, as well as disclosing it to others. At younger ages, similarly challenging barriers and difficulties exist. For example, adolescence can be a difficult and uncertain time overall, and feelings of different or changing orientation or nonconformity can only add to the challenges (Mills-Koonce 2018).

Gender Roles

As we grow, we learn how to behave from those around us. In this socialization process, children are introduced to certain roles that are typically linked to their biological sex. The term gender role refers to society's concept of how men and women are expected to look and how they should behave. These roles are based on norms, or standards, created by society. In U.S. culture, masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression, and dominance, while feminine roles are usually associated with

passivity, nurturing, and subordination. Role learning starts with socialization at birth. Even today, our society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and girls in pink, even applying these color-coded gender labels while a baby is in the womb.

One way children learn gender roles is through play. Parents typically supply boys with trucks, toy guns, and superhero paraphernalia, which are active toys that promote motor skills, aggression, and solitary play. Daughters are often given dolls and dress-up apparel that foster nurturing, social proximity, and role play. Studies have shown that children will most likely choose to play with “gender appropriate” toys (or same-gender toys) even when cross-gender toys are available because parents give children positive feedback (in the form of praise, involvement, and physical closeness) for gender normative behavior (Caldera, Huston, and O’Brien 1998). As discussed in the Socialization chapter, some parents and experts become concerned about young people becoming too attached to these stereotypical gender roles.



Figure 12.4: Childhood activities and instruction, like this father-daughter duck-hunting trip, can influence people's lifelong views on gender roles. (Credit: Tim Miller, USFWS Midwest Region/flickr)

The drive to adhere to masculine and feminine gender roles continues later in life, in a tendency sometimes referred to as “occupational sorting” (Gerdeman 2019). Men tend to outnumber women in professions such as law enforcement, the military, and politics. Women tend to outnumber men in care-related occupations such as childcare, healthcare (even though the term “doctor” still conjures the image of a man), and social work. These occupational roles are examples of typical U.S. male and female behavior, derived from our culture’s traditions. Adherence to these roles demonstrates fulfillment of social expectations but not necessarily personal preference (Diamond 2002); sometimes, people work in a profession because of societal pressure and/or the opportunities afforded to them based on their gender.

Historically, women have had difficulty shedding the expectation that they cannot be a “good mother” and a “good worker” at the same time, which results in fewer opportunities and lower levels of pay (Ogden 2019). Generally, men do not share this difficulty: Since the assumed role of a man as a father does not seem to conflict with their perceived work role, men who are fathers (or who are expected to become fathers) do not face the same barriers to employment or promotion (González 2019). This is sometimes

referred to as the "motherhood penalty" versus the "fatherhood premium," and is prevalent in many higher income countries (Bygren 2017). These concepts and their financial and societal implications will be revisited later in the chapter.

Gender Identity

U.S. society allows for some level of flexibility when it comes to acting out gender roles. To a certain extent, men can assume some feminine roles and women can assume some masculine roles without interfering with their gender identity. Gender identity is a person's deeply held internal perception of one's gender.

Transgender people's sex assigned at birth and their gender identity are not necessarily the same. A transgender woman is a person who was assigned male at birth but who identifies and/or lives as a woman; a transgender man was assigned female at birth but lives as a man. While determining the size of the transgender population is difficult, it is estimated that 1.4 million adults (Herman 2016) and 2 percent of high school students in the U.S. identify as transgender (Johns 2019). The term "transgender" does not indicate sexual orientation or a particular gender expression, and we should avoid making assumptions about people's sexual orientation based on knowledge about their gender identity (GLAAD 2021).



Figure 12.5: Actress Laverne Cox is the first openly transgender person to play a transgender character on a major show. She won a producing Emmy and was nominated four times for the Best Actress Emmy. She is also an advocate for LGBTQ issues outside of her career, such as in this "Ain't I a Woman?" speaking tour. (Credit: modification of work by "KOMUnews_Flickr"/Flickr)

Some transgender individuals may undertake a process of transition, in which they move from living in a way that is more aligned with the sex assigned at birth to living in a way that is aligned with their gender identity. Transitioning may take the form of social, legal or medical aspects of someone's life, but not everyone undertakes any or all types of transition. Social transition may involve the person's presentation, name, pronouns, and relationships. Legal transition can include changing their gender on government or other official documents, changing their legal name, and so on. Some people may undergo a physical or medical transition, in

which they change their outward, physical, or sexual characteristics in order for their physical being to better align with their gender identity (UCSF Transgender Care 2019). Not all transgender individuals choose to alter their bodies; many will maintain their original anatomy but may present themselves to society as another gender. This is typically done by adopting the dress, hairstyle, mannerisms, or other characteristic typically assigned to another gender. It is important to note that people who cross-dress, or wear clothing that is traditionally assigned to a gender different from their biological sex, are not necessarily transgender. Cross-dressing is typically a form of self-expression or personal style, and it does not indicate a person's gender identity or that they are transgender (TSER 2021).



Figure 12.6: The most widely known transgender pride flag was designed by transgender woman and U.S. Navy veteran Monica Helms. Other designers have different interpretation of the transgender flag, and other groups within the LGBTQ community have their own flags and symbols. Interestingly, Gilbert Baker, the designer of the first widely adopted pride flag, made a point to avoid trademark or other limits on the flag, so that it could be reinterpreted and reused by others. (Credit: crudmucosa/flickr)

There is no single, conclusive explanation for why people are transgender. Transgender expressions and experiences are so diverse that it is difficult to identify their origin. Some hypotheses suggest biological factors such as genetics or prenatal hormone levels as well as social and cultural factors such as childhood and adulthood experiences. Most experts believe that all of these factors contribute to a person's gender identity (APA 2008).

Intersex is a general term used to describe people whose sex traits, reproductive anatomy, hormones, or chromosomes are different from the usual two ways human bodies develop. Some intersex traits are recognized at birth, while others are not recognizable until puberty or later in life (interACT 2021). While some intersex people have physically recognizable features that are described by specific medical terms, intersex people and newborns are healthy. Most in the medical and intersex community reject unnecessary surgeries intended to make a baby conform to a specific gender assignment; medical ethicists indicate that any surgery to alter intersex characteristics or traits—if desired—should be delayed until an individual can decide for themselves (Behrens 2021). If a physical trait or medical condition prohibits a baby from urinating or performing another bodily function (which is very rare), then

a medical procedure such as surgery will be needed; in other cases, hormonal issues related to intersex characteristics may require medical intervention. Intersex and transgender are not interchangeable terms; many transgender people have no intersex traits, and many intersex people do not consider themselves transgender. Some intersex people believe that intersex people should be included within the LGBTQ community, while others do not (Koyama n.d.).

Those who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth are often referred to as *cisgender*, utilizing the Latin prefix "cis," which means "on the same side." (The prefix "trans" means "across.") Because they are in the majority and do not have a potential component to transition, many cisgender people do not self-identify as such. As with transgender people, the term or usage of cisgender does not indicate a person's sexual orientation, gender, or gender expression (TSER 2021). And as many societies are heteronormative, they are also *cisnormative*, which is the assumption or expectation that everyone is cisgender, and that anything other than cisgender is not normal.

The language of sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is continually changing and evolving. In order to get an overview of some of the most commonly used terms, explore the Trans Student Educational Resources Online Glossary: <http://openstax.org/r/tsero>

When individuals do not feel comfortable identifying with the gender associated with their biological sex, then they may experience gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a diagnostic category in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) that describes individuals who do not identify as the gender that most people would assume they are. This dysphoria must persist for at least six months and result in significant distress or dysfunction to meet DSM-5 diagnostic criteria. In order for children to be assigned this diagnostic category, they must verbalize their desire to become the other gender. It is important to note that not all transgender people experience gender dysphoria, and that its diagnostic categorization is not universally accepted. For example, in 2019, the World Health Organization reclassified "gender identity disorder" as "gender incongruence," and categorized it under sexual health rather than a mental disorder. However, health and mental health professionals indicate that the presence of the diagnostic category does assist in supporting those who need treatment or help.

People become aware that they may be transgender at different ages. Even if someone does not have a full (or even partial) understanding of gender terminology and its implications, they can still develop an awareness that their gender assigned at birth does not align with their gender identity. Society, particularly in the United States, has been reluctant to accept transgender identities at any age, but we have particular difficulty accepting those identities in children. Many people feel that children are too young to understand their feelings, and that they may "grow out of it." And it is true that some children who verbalize their identification or desire to live as another gender may ultimately decide to live in alignment with their assigned gender. But if a child consistently describes themselves as a gender (or as both genders) and/or expresses themselves as that gender over a long period of time, their feelings cannot be attributed to going through a "phase" (Mayo Clinic 2021).

Some children, like many transgender people, may feel pressure to conform to social norms, which may lead them to suppress or hide their identity. Experts find evidence of gender dysphoria—the long-term distress associated with gender identification—in children as young as seven (Zaliznyak 2020). Again, most children have a limited understanding of the social and societal impacts of being transgender, but they can feel strongly that they are not aligned with their assigned sex. And considering that many transgender people do not come out or begin to transition until much later in life—well into their twenties—they may live for a long time under that distress.

Discrimination Against LGBTQ people

Recall from the chapter on Crime and Deviance that the FBI's hate crime data indicates that crimes against LGBTQ people have been increasing, and that those crimes account for nearly one in five hate crimes committed in the United States (FBI 2020). While the disbanding of anti-LGBTQ laws in the United States has reduced government or law enforcement oppression or abuse, it has not eliminated it. In other countries, however, LGBTQ people can face even more danger. Reports from the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and the International Lesbian, Gay, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) indicate that many countries impose penalties for same-sex relationships, gender nonconformity, and other acts deemed opposed to the cultural or religious observances of the nation. As of 2020, six United Nations members imposed the death penalty for consensual same-sex acts, and another 61 countries penalized same sex acts, through jail time, corporal punishment (such as lashing), or other measures. These countries include prominent United States allies such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (both of which can legally impose the death penalty for same-sex acts). Some nearby nations criminalize same-sex relations: Barbados can impose lifetime imprisonment

for same-sex acts, and Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia have lesser penalties, though Saint Lucia's government indicates it does not enforce those laws (ILGA 2020). Even when the government criminal code does not formalize anti-LGBTQ penalties, local ordinances or government agents may have wide discretion. For example, many people fleeing Central American countries do so as a result of anti-LGBTQ violence, sometimes at the hands of police (Human Rights Watch 2020).

Such severe treatment at the hands of the government is no longer the case in the United States. But until the 1960s and 1970s, every state in the country criminalized same-sex acts, which allowed the military to dishonorably discharge gay veterans (stripping them of all benefits) and law enforcement agencies to investigate and detain people suspected of same-sex acts. Police regularly raided bars and clubs simply for allowing gay and lesbian people to dance together. Public decency laws allowed police to arrest people if they did not wear clothing aligning with the typical dress for their biological sex. Criminalization of same-sex acts began to unravel at the state level in the 1960's and 1970s, and was fully invalidated in a 2003 Supreme Court decision.

Hate crimes and anti-LGBTQ legislation are overt types of discrimination, but LGBTQ people are also treated differently from straight and cisgender people in schools, housing, and in healthcare. This can have effects on mental health, employment and financial opportunities, and relationships. For example, more than half of LGBTQ adults and 70 percent of those who are transgender or gender nonconforming report experiencing discrimination from a health care professional; this leads to delays or reluctance in seeking care or preventative visits, which has negative health outcomes (American Heart Association 2020). Similarly, elderly LGBTQ people are far less likely to come out to healthcare professionals than are straight or cisgender people, which may also lead to healthcare issues at an age that is typically highly reliant on medical care (Foglia 2014).

Much of this discrimination is based on stereotypes and misinformation. Some is based on heterosexism, which Herek (1990) suggests is both an ideology and a set of institutional practices that privilege straight people and heterosexuality over other sexual orientations. Much like racism and sexism, heterosexism is a systematic disadvantage embedded in our social institutions, offering power to those who conform to heterosexual orientation while simultaneously disadvantaging those who do not. *Homophobia*, an extreme or irrational aversion to gay, lesbian, bisexual, or all LGBTQ people, which often manifests as prejudice and bias. *Transphobia* is a fear, hatred, or dislike of transgender people, and/or prejudice and discrimination against them by individuals or institutions.

Fighting discrimination and being an ally



Figure 12.7: Hashtags, pride parades, and other activism are important elements of supporting LGBTQ people, but most experts and advocates agree that some of the most important steps are ones taken internally to better educate ourselves, and on interpersonal levels with friends, coworkers, and family members. (Credit: Lars Verket/flickr)

Major policies to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation have not come into effect until recent years. In 2011, President Obama overturned “don’t ask, don’t tell,” a controversial policy that required gay and lesbian people in the US military to keep their sexuality undisclosed. In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Obberfell vs. Hodges* that the right to civil marriage was guaranteed to same-sex couples. And, as discussed above, in the landmark 2020 Supreme Court decision added sexual orientation and gender identity as categories protected from employment discrimination by the Civil Rights Act. At the same time, laws passed in several states permit some level of discrimination against same-sex couples and other LGBTQ people based on a person's individual religious beliefs or prejudices.

Supporting LGBTQ people requires effort to better understand them without making assumptions. Understand people by listening, respecting them, and by remembering that every person—LGBTQ or otherwise— is different. Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual is not a choice, but the way a person expresses or reveals that reality is their choice. Your experience or knowledge of other LGBTQ people (even your own experience if you are LGBTQ) cannot dictate how another person feels or acts. Finally, as discussed in the Race and Ethnicity chapter, intersectionality means that people are defined by more than their gender identity and sexual orientation. People from different age groups, races, abilities, and experiences within the LGBTQ community have different perspectives and needs.

While each individual has their own perspective, respecting their feelings and protecting their equality and wellbeing does have some common elements. These include referring to a person as they would like to be referred to, including the avoidance of abbreviations or slang terms unless you are sure they accept them. For example, many people and organizations (including those referenced in this chapter) use the abbreviation “trans” to represent transgender people, but a non-transgender person should not use that abbreviation unless they know the person or subject is comfortable with it. Respect also includes people's right to privacy: One person should never out a person to someone else or assume that someone is publicly out. LGBTQ allies can support everyone's rights to be equal and empowered members of society, including within organizations, institutions, and even individual classrooms.

Supporting others may require a change in mindset and practice. For example, if a transgender person wants to be referred to by a different name, or use different pronouns, it might take some getting used to, especially if you have spent years referring to the person by another name or by other pronouns. However, making the change is worthwhile and not overly onerous.

You can learn more about being an ally through campus, government, and organizational resources like the Human Rights Campaign's guide <https://www.hrc.org/resources/being-an-lgbtq-ally>

Language is an important part of culture, and it has been evolving to better include and describe people who are not gender-binary. In many languages, including English, pronouns are gendered. That is, pronouns are intended to identify the gender of the individual being referenced. English has traditionally been binary, providing only “he/him/his,” for male subjects and “she/her/hers,” for female subjects.

This binary system excludes those who identify as neither male nor female. The word “they,” which was used for hundreds of years as a singular pronoun, is more inclusive. As a result, in fact, Merriam Webster selected this use of “they” as Word of the Year for 2019. “They” and other pronouns are now used to reference those who do not identify as male or female on the spectrum of gender identities.

Gender inclusive language has impacts beyond personal references. In biology, anatomy, and healthcare, for example, people commonly refer to organs or processes with gender associations. However, more accurate and inclusive language avoids such associations. For example, *women* do not produce eggs; *ovaries* produce eggs. *Men* are not more likely to be color-blind; those with *XY chromosomes* are more likely to be color blind (Gender Inclusive Biology 2019).

Beyond the language of gender, the language of society and culture itself can be either a barrier or an opening to inclusivity. Societal norms are important sociological concepts, and behaviors outside of those norms can lead to exclusion. By disassociating gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation from the concept of norms, we can begin to eliminate the implicit and explicit biases regarding those realities. In everyday terms, this can take the form of avoiding references to what is normal or not normal in regard to sexuality or gender (Canadian Public Health Association 2019).

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Section 6.2: Gender and Gender Inequality

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Explain the influence of socialization on gender roles in the United States
- Explain the stratification of gender in major American institutions
- Provide examples of gender inequality in the United States
- Describe the rise of feminism in the United States
- Describe gender from the view of each sociological perspective



Figure 12.8: Traditional images of U.S. gender roles reinforce the idea that women should be subordinate to men. (Credit: Sport Suburban/flickr)

Gender and Socialization

The phrase “boys will be boys” is often used to justify behavior such as pushing, shoving, or other forms of aggression from young boys. The phrase implies that such behavior is unchangeable and something that is part of a boy’s nature. Aggressive behavior, when it does not inflict significant harm, is often accepted from boys and men because it is congruent with the cultural script for masculinity. The “script” written by society is in some ways similar to a script written by a playwright. Just as a playwright expects actors to adhere to a prescribed script, society expects women and men to behave according to the expectations of their respective gender roles. Scripts are generally learned through a process known as socialization, which teaches people to behave according to social norms.

Socialization

Children learn at a young age that there are distinct expectations for boys and girls. Cross-cultural studies reveal that children are aware of gender roles by age two or three. At four or five, most children are firmly entrenched in culturally appropriate gender roles (Kane 1996). Children acquire these roles through socialization, a process in which people learn to behave in a particular way as dictated by societal values, beliefs, and attitudes. For example, society often views riding a motorcycle as a masculine activity and, therefore, considers it to be part of the male gender role. Attitudes such as this are typically based on stereotypes, oversimplified notions about members of a group. Gender stereotyping involves overgeneralizing about the attitudes, traits, or behavior patterns of women or men. For example, women may be thought of as too timid or weak to ride a motorcycle.



Figure 12.9: Although our society may have a stereotype that associates motorcycles with men, women make up a sizable portion of the biker community. (Credit: Robert Couse-Baker/flickr)

Gender stereotypes form the basis of sexism. Sexism refers to prejudiced beliefs that value one sex over another. It varies in its level of severity. In parts of the world where women are strongly undervalued, young girls may not be given the same access to nutrition, healthcare, and education as boys. Further, they will grow up believing they deserve to be treated differently from boys (UNICEF 2011; Thorne 1993). While it is illegal in the United States when practiced as discrimination, unequal treatment of women continues to pervade social life. It should be noted that discrimination based on sex occurs at both the micro- and macro-levels. Many sociologists focus on discrimination that is built into the social structure; this type of discrimination is known as institutional discrimination (Pincus 2008).

Gender socialization occurs through four major agents of socialization: family, education, peer groups, and mass media. Each agent reinforces gender roles by creating and maintaining normative expectations for gender-specific behavior. Exposure also occurs through secondary agents such as religion and the workplace. Repeated exposure to these agents over time leads men and women into a false sense that they are acting naturally rather than following a socially constructed role.

Family is the first agent of socialization. There is considerable evidence that parents socialize sons and daughters differently. Generally speaking, girls are given more latitude to step outside of their prescribed gender role (Coltrane and Adams 2004; Kimmel 2000; Raffaelli and Ontai 2004). However, differential socialization typically results in greater privileges afforded to sons. For instance, boys are allowed more autonomy and independence at an earlier age than daughters. They may be given fewer restrictions on appropriate clothing, dating habits, or curfew. Sons are also often free from performing domestic duties such as cleaning or cooking and other household tasks that are considered feminine. Daughters are limited by their expectation to be passive and nurturing, generally obedient, and to assume many of the domestic responsibilities.

Even when parents set gender equality as a goal, there may be underlying indications of inequality. For example, boys may be asked to take out the garbage or perform other tasks that require strength or toughness, while girls may be asked to fold laundry or perform duties that require neatness and care. It has been found that fathers are firmer in their expectations for gender conformity than are mothers, and their expectations are stronger for sons than they are for daughters (Kimmel 2000). This is true in many types of activities, including preference for toys, play styles, discipline, chores, and personal achievements. As a result, boys tend to be particularly attuned to their father's disapproval when engaging in an activity that might be considered feminine, like dancing or singing (Coltrane and Adams 2008). Parental socialization and normative expectations also vary along lines of social class, race, and ethnicity. African American families, for instance, are more likely than Caucasians to model an egalitarian role structure for their children (Staples and Boulin Johnson 2004).

The reinforcement of gender roles and stereotypes continues once a child reaches school age. Until very recently, schools were rather explicit in their efforts to stratify boys and girls. The first step toward stratification was segregation. Girls were encouraged to take home economics or humanities courses and boys to take math and science.

Studies suggest that gender socialization still occurs in schools today, perhaps in less obvious forms (Lips 2004). Teachers may not even realize they are acting in ways that reproduce gender differentiated behavior patterns. Yet any time they ask students to arrange their seats or line up according to gender, teachers may be asserting that boys and girls should be treated differently (Thorne 1993).

Even in levels as low as kindergarten, schools subtly convey messages to girls indicating that they are less intelligent or less important than boys. For example, in a study of teacher responses to male and female students, data indicated that teachers praised male students far more than female students. Teachers interrupted girls more often and gave boys more opportunities to expand on their ideas (Sadker and Sadker 1994). Further, in social as well as academic situations, teachers have traditionally treated boys and girls in opposite ways, reinforcing a sense of competition rather than collaboration (Thorne 1993). Boys are also permitted a greater degree of freedom to break rules or commit minor acts of deviance, whereas girls are expected to follow rules carefully and adopt an obedient role (Ready 2001).

Mimicking the actions of significant others is the first step in the development of a separate sense of self (Mead 1934). Like adults, children become agents who actively facilitate and apply normative gender expectations to those around them. When children do not conform to the appropriate gender role, they may face negative sanctions such as being criticized or marginalized by their peers. Though many of these sanctions are informal, they can be quite severe. For example, a girl who wishes to take karate class instead of dance lessons may be called a "tomboy" and face difficulty gaining acceptance from both male and female peer groups (Ready 2001). Boys, especially, are subject to intense ridicule for gender nonconformity (Coltrane and Adams 2004; Kimmel 2000).

Mass media serves as another significant agent of gender socialization. In television and movies, women tend to have less significant roles and are often portrayed as wives or mothers. When women are given a lead role, it often falls into one of two extremes: a wholesome, saint-like figure or a malevolent, hypersexual figure (Etaugh and Bridges 2003). This same inequality is pervasive in children's movies (Smith 2008). Research indicates that in the ten top-grossing G-rated movies released between 1991 and 2013, nine out of ten characters were male (Smith 2008).

Television commercials and other forms of advertising also reinforce inequality and gender-based stereotypes. Women are almost exclusively present in ads promoting cooking, cleaning, or childcare-related products (Davis 1993). Think about the last time you saw a man star in a dishwasher or laundry detergent commercial. In general, women are underrepresented in roles that involve leadership, intelligence, or a balanced psyche. Of particular concern is the depiction of women in ways that are dehumanizing, especially in music videos. Even in mainstream advertising, however, themes intermingling violence and sexuality are quite common (Kilbourne 2000).

Social Stratification and Inequality

Stratification refers to a system in which groups of people experience unequal access to basic, yet highly valuable, social resources. There is a long history of gender stratification in the United States. When looking to the past, it would appear that society has made great strides in terms of abolishing some of the most blatant forms of gender inequality (see timeline below) but underlying effects of male dominance still permeate many aspects of society.

- Before 1809—Women could not execute a will
- Before 1840—Women were not allowed to own or control property
- Before 1920—Women were not permitted to vote
- Before 1963—Employers could legally pay a woman less than a man for the same work
- Before 1973—Women did not have the right to a safe and legal abortion (Imbornoni 2009)

The Pay Gap

Despite making up nearly half (49.8 percent) of payroll employment, men vastly outnumber women in authoritative, powerful, and, therefore, high-earning jobs (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Even when a woman's employment status is equal to a man's, she will generally make only 81 cents for every dollar made by her male counterpart (Payscale 2020). Women in the paid labor force also still do the majority of the unpaid work at home. On an average day, 84 percent of women (compared to 67 percent of men) spend time doing household management activities (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). This double duty keeps working women in a subordinate role in the family structure (Hochschild and Machung 1989).

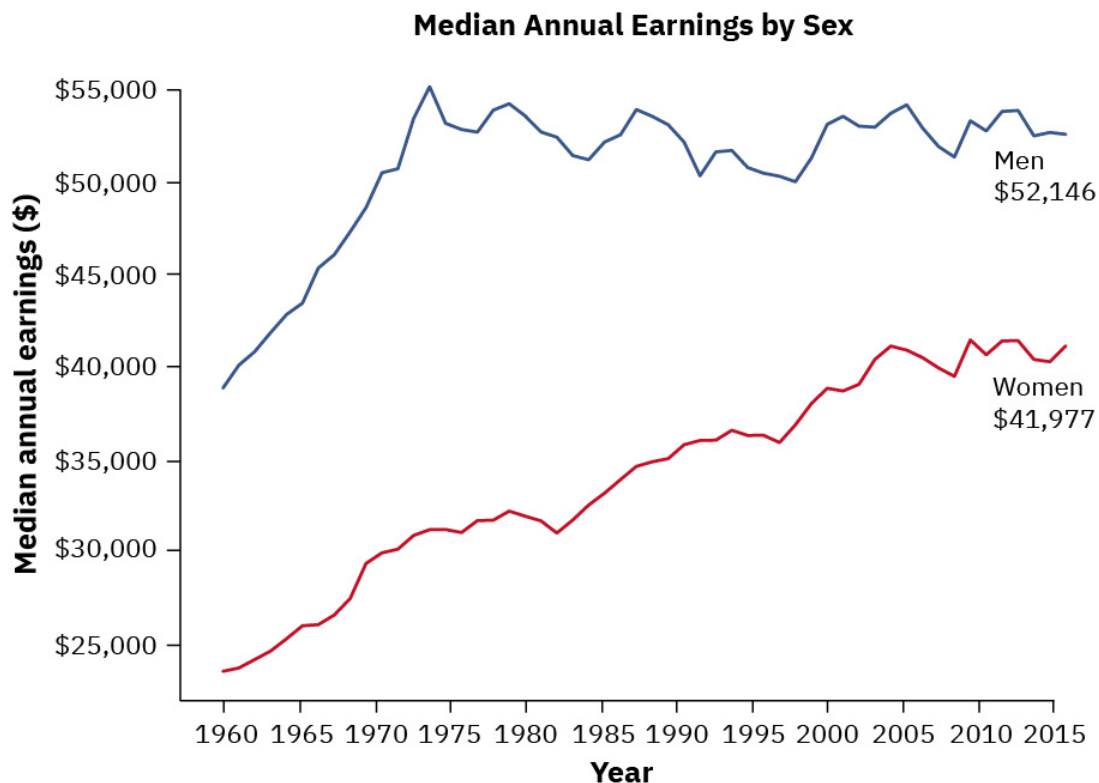


Figure 12.10: In 2017 men's overall median earnings were \$52,146 and women's were \$41,977. This means that women earned 80.1% of what men earned in the United States. (Credit: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor)

Gender stratification through the division of labor is not exclusive to the United States. According to George Murdock's classic work, *Outline of World Cultures* (1954), all societies classify work by gender. When a pattern appears in all societies, it is called a cultural universal. While the phenomenon of assigning work by gender is universal, its specifics are not. The same task is not assigned to either men or women worldwide. But the way each task's associated gender is valued is notable. In Murdock's examination of the division of labor among 324 societies around the world, he found that in nearly all cases the jobs assigned to men were given greater prestige (Murdock and White 1968). Even if the job types were very similar and the differences slight, men's work was still considered more vital.



Figure 12.11: In some cultures, women do all of the household chores with no help from men, as doing housework is a sign of weakness, considered by society as a feminine trait. (Credit: Evil Erin/flickr)

Part of the gender pay gap can be attributed to unique barriers faced by women regarding work experience and promotion opportunities. A mother of young children is more likely to drop out of the labor force for several years or work on a reduced schedule than is the father. As a result, women in their 30s and 40s are likely, on average, to have less job experience than men. This effect becomes more evident when considering the pay rates of two groups of women: those who did *not* leave the workforce and those who did: In the United States, childless women with the same education and experience levels as men are typically paid with closer (but not exact) parity to men. However, women with families and children are paid less: Mothers are recommended a 7.9 percent lower starting salary than non-mothers, which is 8.6 percent lower than men (Correll 2007).

This evidence points to levels of discrimination that go beyond behaviors by individual companies or organizations. As discussed earlier in the gender roles section, many of these gaps are rooted in America's social patterns of discrimination, which involve the roles that different genders play in child-rearing, rather than individual discrimination by employers in hiring and salary decisions. On the other hand, legal and ethical practices demand that organizations do their part to promote more equity among all genders.

The Glass Ceiling

The idea that women are unable to reach the executive suite is known as the glass ceiling. It is an invisible barrier that women encounter when trying to win jobs in the highest level of business. At the beginning of 2021, for example, a record 41 of the world's largest 500 companies were run by women. While a vast improvement over the number twenty years earlier – where only two of the companies were run by women – these 41 chief executives still only represent eight percent of those large companies (Newcomb 2020).

Why do women have a more difficult time reaching the top of a company? One idea is that there is still a stereotype in the United States that women aren't aggressive enough to handle the boardroom or that they tend to seek jobs and work with other women (Reiners 2019). Other issues stem from the gender biases based on gender roles and motherhood discussed above.

Another idea is that women lack mentors, executives who take an interest and get them into the right meetings and introduce them to the right people to succeed (Murrell & Blake-Beard 2017).

Women in Politics

One of the most important places for women to help other women is in politics. Historically in the United States, like many other institutions, political representation has been mostly made up of White men. By not having women in government, their issues are being decided by people who don't share their perspective. The number of women elected to serve in Congress has increased over the years, but does not yet accurately reflect the general population. For example, in 2018, the population of the United States was 49 percent male and 51 percent female, but the population of Congress was 78.8 percent male and 21.2 percent female (Manning 2018). Over the years, the number of women in the federal government has increased, but until it accurately reflects the population, there will be inequalities in our laws.

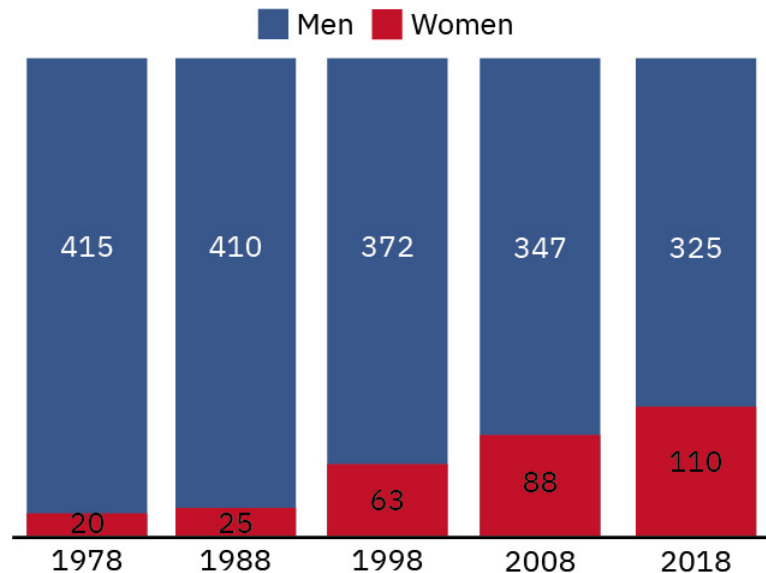


Figure 12.12: Breakdown of Congressional Membership by Gender. 2021 saw a record number of women in Congress, with 120 women serving in the House and 24 serving in the Senate. Gender representation has been steadily increasing over time, but is not close to being equal. (Credit: Based on data from Center for American Women in Politics, Rutgers University)

Movements for Change: Feminism

One of the underlying issues that continues to plague women in the United States is misogyny. This is the hatred of or, aversion to, or prejudice against women. Over the years misogyny has evolved as an ideology that men are superior to women in all aspects of life. There have been multiple movements to try and fight this prejudice.

In 1963, writer and feminist Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in which she contested the post-World War II belief that it was women's sole destiny to marry and bear children. Friedan's book began to raise the consciousness of many women who agreed that homemaking in the suburbs sapped them of their individualism and left them unsatisfied. In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) formed and proceeded to set an agenda for the *feminist movement*. Framed by a statement of purpose written by Friedan, the agenda began by proclaiming NOW's goal to make possible women's participation in all aspects of American life and to gain for them all the rights enjoyed by men.

Feminists engaged in protests and actions designed to bring awareness and change. For example, the New York Radical Women demonstrated at the 1968 Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City to bring attention to the contest's—and society's—exploitation of women. The protestors tossed instruments of women's oppression, including high-heeled shoes, curlers, girdles, and bras, into a "freedom trash can." News accounts incorrectly described the protest as a "bra burning," which at the time was a way to demean and trivialize the issue of women's rights (Gay 2018).

Other protests gave women a more significant voice in a male-dominated social, political, and entertainment climate. For decades, *Ladies Home Journal* had been a highly influential women's magazine, managed and edited almost entirely by men. Men even

wrote the advice columns and beauty articles. In 1970, protesters held a sit-in at the magazine's offices, demanding that the company hire a woman editor-in-chief, add women and non-White writers at fair pay, and expand the publication's focus.

Feminists were concerned with far more than protests, however. In the 1970s, they opened battered women's shelters and successfully fought for protection from employment discrimination for pregnant women, reform of rape laws (such as the abolition of laws requiring a witness to corroborate a woman's report of rape), criminalization of domestic violence, and funding for schools that sought to counter sexist stereotypes of women. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* invalidated a number of state laws under which abortions obtained during the first three months of pregnancy were illegal. This made a nontherapeutic abortion a legal medical procedure nationwide.

Gloria Steinem had pushed through gender barriers to take on serious journalism subjects, and had emerged as a prominent advocate for women's rights. Through her work, Steinem met Dorothy Pittman-Hughes, who had founded New York City's first shelter for domestic violence victims as well as the city's Agency for Child Development. Together they founded *Ms. Magazine*, which avoided articles on homemaking and fashion in favor of pieces on women's rights and empowerment. *Ms.* showcased powerful and accomplished women such as Shirley Chisholm and Sissy Farenthold, and was among the first publications to bring domestic violence, sexual harassment, and body image issues to the national conversation (Pogrebrin 2011).

Many advances in women's rights were the result of women's greater engagement in politics. For example, Patsy Mink, the first Asian American woman elected to Congress, was the co-author of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Title IX of which prohibits sex discrimination in education. Mink had been interested in fighting discrimination in education since her youth, when she opposed racial segregation in campus housing while a student at the University of Nebraska. She went to law school after being denied admission to medical school because of her gender. Like Mink, many other women sought and won political office, many with the help of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). In 1971, the NWPC was formed by Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, Shirley Chisholm, and other leading feminists to encourage women's participation in political parties, elect women to office, and raise money for their campaign.



Figure 12.13: “Unbought and Unbossed”: Shirley Chisholm was the first Black United States Congresswoman, the co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus, and a candidate for a major-party Presidential nomination.

Shirley Chisholm personally took up the mantle of women's involvement in politics. Born of immigrant parents, she earned degrees from Brooklyn College and Columbia University, and began a career in early childhood education and advocacy. In the 1950's she joined various political action groups, worked on election campaigns, and pushed for housing and economic reforms. After leaving one organization over its refusal to involve women in the decision-making process, she sought to increase gender and racial diversity within political and activist organizations throughout New York City. In 1968, she became the first Black woman elected to Congress. Refusing to take the quiet role expected of new Representatives, she immediately began sponsoring bills and

initiatives. She spoke out against the Vietnam War, and fought for programs such as Head Start and the national school lunch program, which was eventually signed into law after Chisholm led an effort to override a presidential veto. Chisholm would eventually undertake a groundbreaking presidential run in 1972, and is viewed as paving the way for other women, and especially women of color, achieving political and social prominence (Emmrich 2019).

Theoretical Perspectives on Gender

Sociological theories help sociologists to develop questions and interpret data. For example, a sociologist studying why middle-school girls are more likely than their male counterparts to fall behind grade-level expectations in math and science might use a feminist perspective to frame her research. Another scholar might proceed from the conflict perspective to investigate why women are underrepresented in political office, and an interactionist might examine how the symbols of femininity interact with symbols of political authority to affect how women in Congress are treated by their male counterparts in meetings.

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism has provided one of the most important perspectives of sociological research in the twentieth century and has been a major influence on research in the social sciences, including gender studies. Viewing the family as the most integral component of society, assumptions about gender roles within marriage assume a prominent place in this perspective.

Functionalists argue that gender roles were established well before the pre-industrial era when men typically took care of responsibilities outside of the home, such as hunting, and women typically took care of the domestic responsibilities in or around the home. These roles were considered functional because women were often limited by the physical restraints of pregnancy and nursing and unable to leave the home for long periods of time. Once established, these roles were passed on to subsequent generations since they served as an effective means of keeping the family system functioning properly.

When changes occurred in the social and economic climate of the United States during World War II, changes in the family structure also occurred. Many women had to assume the role of breadwinner (or modern hunter-gatherer) alongside their domestic role in order to stabilize a rapidly changing society. When the men returned from war and wanted to reclaim their jobs, society fell back into a state of imbalance, as many women did not want to forfeit their wage-earning positions (Hawke 2007).

Conflict Theory

According to conflict theory, society is a struggle for dominance among social groups (like women versus men) that compete for scarce resources. When sociologists examine gender from this perspective, we can view men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. Consider the Women's Suffrage Movement or the debate over women's "right to choose" their reproductive futures. It is difficult for women to rise above men, as dominant group members create the rules for success and opportunity in society (Farrington and Chertok 1993).

Friedrich Engels, a German sociologist, studied family structure and gender roles. Engels suggested that the same owner-worker relationship seen in the labor force is also seen in the household, with women assuming the role of the proletariat. This is due to women's dependence on men for the attainment of wages, which is even worse for women who are entirely dependent upon their spouses for economic support. Contemporary conflict theorists suggest that when women become wage earners, they can gain power in the family structure and create more democratic arrangements in the home, although they may still carry the majority of the domestic burden, as noted earlier (Risman and Johnson-Sumerford 1998).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities. Radical feminism, in particular, considers the role of the family in perpetuating male dominance. In patriarchal societies, men's contributions are seen as more valuable than those of women. Patriarchal perspectives and arrangements are widespread and taken for granted. As a result, women's viewpoints tend to be silenced or marginalized to the point of being discredited or considered invalid.

Sanday's study of the Indonesian Minangkabau (2004) revealed that in societies some consider to be matriarchies (where women comprise the dominant group), women and men tend to work cooperatively rather than competitively regardless of whether a job is

considered feminine by U.S. standards. The men, however, do not experience the sense of bifurcated consciousness under this social structure that modern U.S. females encounter (Sanday 2004).

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism aims to understand human behavior by analyzing the critical role of symbols in human interaction. This is certainly relevant to the discussion of masculinity and femininity. Imagine that you walk into a bank hoping to get a small loan for school, a home, or a small business venture. If you meet with a male loan officer, you may state your case logically by listing all the hard numbers that make you a qualified applicant as a means of appealing to the analytical characteristics associated with masculinity. If you meet with a female loan officer, you may make an emotional appeal by stating your good intentions as a means of appealing to the caring characteristics associated with femininity.

Because the meanings attached to symbols are socially created and not natural, and fluid, not static, we act and react to symbols based on the current assigned meaning. The word *gay*, for example, once meant “cheerful,” but by the 1960s it carried the primary meaning of “homosexual.” In transition, it was even known to mean “careless” or “bright and showing” (Oxford American Dictionary 2010). Furthermore, the word *gay* (as it refers to a person), carried a somewhat negative and unfavorable meaning fifty years ago, but it has since gained more neutral and even positive connotations. When people perform tasks or possess characteristics based on the gender role assigned to them, they are said to be doing gender. This notion is based on the work of West and Zimmerman (1987). Whether we are expressing our masculinity or femininity, West and Zimmerman argue, we are always “doing gender.” Thus, gender is something we do or perform, not something we are.

In other words, both gender and sexuality are socially constructed. The social construction of sexuality refers to the way in which socially created definitions about the cultural appropriateness of sex-linked behavior shape the way people see and experience sexuality. This is in marked contrast to theories of sex, gender, and sexuality that link male and female behavior to biological determinism, or the belief that men and women behave differently due to differences in their biology.

Sociological Research: Being Male, Being Female, and Being Healthy

In 1971, Broverman and Broverman conducted a groundbreaking study on the traits mental health workers ascribed to males and females. When asked to name the characteristics of a female, the list featured words such as unaggressive, gentle, emotional, tactful, less logical, not ambitious, dependent, passive, and neat. The list of male characteristics featured words such as aggressive, rough, unemotional, blunt, logical, direct, active, and sloppy (Seem and Clark 2006). Later, when asked to describe the characteristics of a healthy person (not gender specific), the list was nearly identical to that of a male.

This study uncovered the general assumption that being female is associated with being somewhat unhealthy or not of sound mind. This concept seems extremely dated, but in 2006, Seem and Clark replicated the study and found similar results. Again, the characteristics associated with a healthy male were very similar to that of a healthy (genderless) adult. The list of characteristics associated with being female broadened somewhat but did not show significant change from the original study (Seem and Clark 2006). This interpretation of feminine characteristic may help us one day better understand gender disparities in certain illnesses, such as why one in eight women can be expected to develop clinical depression in her lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health 1999). Perhaps these diagnoses are not just a reflection of women’s health, but also a reflection of society’s labeling of female characteristics, or the result of institutionalized sexism.

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Section 6.3: Sexuality

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Differentiate among attitudes associated with sex and sexuality
- Describe sex education issues in the United States
- Discuss theoretical perspectives on sex and sexuality



Figure 12.14: Sexual practices can differ greatly among groups. Recent trends include the finding that married couples have sex more frequently than do singles and that 27 percent of married couples in their 30s have sex at least twice a week (NSSHB 2010). (Credit: epSos.de/flickr)

Sexual Attitudes and Practices

In the area of sexuality, sociologists focus their attention on sexual attitudes and practices, not on physiology or anatomy. As mentioned earlier, sexuality is viewed as a person's capacity for sexual feelings. Studying sexual attitudes and practices is a particularly interesting field of sociology because sexual behavior is a cultural universal. Throughout time and place, the vast majority of human beings have participated in sexual relationships (Broude 2003). Each society, however, interprets sexuality and sexual activity in different ways. At the same time, sociologists have learned that certain norms are shared among most societies. The incest taboo is present in every society, though which relative is deemed unacceptable for sex varies widely from culture to culture. For example, sometimes the relatives of the father are considered acceptable sexual partners for a woman while the relatives of the mother are not. Likewise, societies generally have norms that reinforce their accepted social system of sexuality.

What is considered "normal" in terms of sexual behavior is based on the mores and values of the society. Societies that value monogamy, for example, would likely oppose extramarital sex. Individuals are socialized to sexual attitudes by their family,

education system, peers, media, and religion. Historically, religion has been the greatest influence on sexual behavior in most societies, but in more recent years, peers and the media have emerged as two of the strongest influences, particularly among U.S. teens (Potard, Courtois, and Rusch 2008). Let us take a closer look at sexual attitudes in the United States and around the world.

Sexuality around the World

Cross-national research on sexual attitudes in industrialized nations reveals that normative standards differ across the world. For example, several studies have shown that Scandinavian students are more tolerant of premarital sex than are U.S. students (Grose 2007). A study of 37 countries reported that non-Western societies—like China, Iran, and India—valued chastity highly in a potential mate, while Western European countries—such as France, the Netherlands, and Sweden—placed little value on prior sexual experiences (Buss 1989).

Even among Western cultures, attitudes can differ. For example, according to a 33,590-person survey across 24 countries, 89 percent of Swedes responded that there is nothing wrong with premarital sex, while only 42 percent of Irish responded this way. From the same study, 93 percent of Filipinos responded that sex before age 16 is always wrong or almost always wrong, while only 75 percent of Russians responded this way (Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998). Sexual attitudes can also vary within a country. For instance, 45 percent of Spaniards responded that homosexuality is always wrong, while 42 percent responded that it is never wrong; only 13 percent responded somewhere in the middle (Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998).

Of industrialized nations, several European nations are thought to be the most liberal when it comes to attitudes about sex, including sexual practices and sexual openness. Sweden, for example, has very few regulations on sexual images in the media, and sex education, which starts around age six, is a compulsory part of Swedish school curricula. Switzerland, Belgium, Iceland, Denmark, and The Netherlands have similar policies. Their more open approach to sex has helped countries avoid some of the major social problems associated with sex. For example, rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease are among the world's lowest in Switzerland and the Netherlands – lower than other European countries and far lower than the United States (Grose 2007 and Dutch News 2017). It would appear that these approaches are models for the benefits of sexual freedom and frankness. However, implementing their ideals and policies regarding sexuality in other, more politically conservative, nations would likely be met with resistance.

Sexuality in the United States

The United States prides itself on being the land of the “free,” but it is rather restrictive when it comes to its citizens’ general attitudes about sex compared to other industrialized nations. In an international survey, 25 percent of U.S. respondents stated that premarital sex is always wrong, while the average among the 24 countries surveyed was 17 percent, with less than ten percent of respondents from France, Germany, and Spain saying premarital sex was unacceptable (Chamie 2018). Similar discrepancies were found in questions about the condemnation of sex before the age of 16, extramarital sex, and homosexuality, with total disapproval of these acts being 12, 13, and 11 percent higher, respectively, in the United States, than the study’s average (Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998). U.S. culture is particularly restrictive in its attitudes about sex when it comes to women and sexuality.

It is widely believed that men are more sexual than are women. In fact, there was a popular notion that men think about sex every seven seconds. Research, however, suggests that men think about sex an average of 19 times per day, which is closer to once an hour, compared to 10 times per day for women (Fisher, Moore, and Pittenger 2011).

Belief that men have—or have the right to—more sexual urges than women creates a double standard. Ira Reiss, a pioneer researcher in the field of sexual studies, defined the *double standard* as prohibiting premarital sexual intercourse for women but allowing it for men (Reiss 1960). This standard has evolved into allowing women to engage in premarital sex only within committed love relationships, but allowing men to engage in sexual relationships with as many partners as they wish without condition (Milhausen and Herold 1999). Due to this double standard, a woman is likely to have fewer sexual partners in her life time than a man. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey, the average thirty-five-year-old woman has had three opposite-sex sexual partners while the average thirty-five-year-old man has had twice as many (Centers for Disease Control 2011).

The future of a society’s sexual attitudes may be somewhat predicted by the values and beliefs that a country’s youth expresses about sex and sexuality. Data from the most recent National Survey of Family Growth reveals that 70 percent of boys and 78 percent of girls ages fifteen to nineteen said they “agree” or “strongly agree” that “it’s okay for an unmarried female to have a

child" (National Survey of Family Growth 2013). In a separate survey, 65 percent of teens stated that they "strongly agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that although waiting until marriage for sex is a nice idea, it's not realistic (NBC News 2005). This does not mean that today's youth have given up traditional sexual values such as monogamy. Nearly all college men (98.9 percent) and women (99.2 percent) who participated in a 2002 study on sexual attitudes stated they wished to settle down with one mutually exclusive sexual partner at some point in their lives, ideally within the next five years (Pedersen et al. 2002).

Sex Education

One of the biggest controversies regarding sexual attitudes is sexual education in U.S. classrooms. Unlike many other countries, sex education is not required in all public school curricula in the United States. The heart of the controversy is not about whether sex education should be taught in school (studies have shown that only seven percent of U.S. adults oppose sex education in schools); it is about the *type* of sex education that should be taught.

Much of the debate is over the issue of abstinence as compared to a comprehensive sex education program. Abstinence-only programs focus on avoiding sex until marriage and/or delaying it as long as possible. So they do not focus on other types of prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. As a result, according to the Sexuality and Information Council of the United States, only 38 percent of high schools and 14 percent of middle schools across the country teach all 19 topics identified as critical for sex education by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Janfaza 2020).

Research suggests that while government officials may still be debating about the content of sexual education in public schools, the majority of U.S. adults are not. Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans say education about safer sexual practices is more effective than abstinence-only education in terms of reducing unintended pregnancies. A slightly higher percentage—69 percent—say that emphasizing safer sexual practices and contraception in sexuality education is a better way to reduce the spread of STIs than is emphasizing abstinence (Davis 2018).

Even with these clear majorities in favor of comprehensive education, the Federal government offers roughly \$85 million per year to communities that will drive abstinence-only sex education (Columbia Public Health 2017 a). The results, as stated earlier, are relatively clear: the United States has nearly four times the rate of teenage pregnancy than a country like Germany, which has a comprehensive sex education program.

In a similar educational issue not necessarily related to sexuality, researchers and public health advocates find that young girls feel underprepared for puberty. Ages of first menstruation (menarche) and breast development are continually declining in the United States, but education about these changes typically doesn't begin until middle school, which is generally too late. Young people indicate concerns about misinformation and discomfort during the informal conversations about the topics with friends, sisters, or mothers (Columbia Public Health 2017 b)

Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Sexuality

Sociologists representing all three major theoretical perspectives study the role sexuality plays in social life today. Scholars recognize that sexuality continues to be an important and defining social location and that the manner in which sexuality is constructed has a significant effect on perceptions, interactions, and outcomes.

Structural Functionalism

When it comes to sexuality, functionalists stress the importance of regulating sexual behavior to ensure marital cohesion and family stability. Since functionalists identify the family unit as the most integral component in society, they maintain a strict focus on it at all times and argue in favor of social arrangements that promote and ensure family preservation.

Functionalists such as Talcott Parsons (1955) have long argued that the regulation of sexual activity is an important function of the family. Social norms surrounding family life have, traditionally, encouraged sexual activity within the family unit (marriage) and have discouraged activity outside of it (premarital and extramarital sex). From a functionalist point of view, the purpose of encouraging sexual activity in the confines of marriage is to intensify the bond between spouses and to ensure that procreation occurs within a stable, legally recognized relationship. This structure gives offspring the best possible chance for appropriate socialization and the provision of basic resources.

In this context, the functionalist perspective does not take into account the increasing legal acceptance of same-sex marriage, or the rise in LGBTQ couples who choose to bear and raise children through a variety of available resources.

Conflict Theory

From a conflict theory perspective, sexuality is another area in which power differentials are present and where dominant groups actively work to promote their worldview as well as their economic interests.

For conflict theorists, there were two key dimensions to the debate over marriage equality—one ideological and the other economic. Dominant groups wish for their worldview—which embraces traditional marriage and the nuclear family—to win out over what they see as the intrusion of a secular, individually driven worldview. On the other hand, many LGBTQ activists argue that legal marriage is a fundamental right that cannot be denied based on sexual orientation and that, historically, there already exists a precedent for changes to marriage laws: the 1960s legalization of formerly forbidden interracial marriages is one example.

From an economic perspective, activists in favor of same-sex marriage point out that legal marriage brings with it certain entitlements, many of which are financial in nature, like Social Security benefits and medical insurance (Solmonese 2008). Denial of these benefits to same-sex couples is wrong, they argue. Conflict theory suggests that as long as people struggle over these social and financial resources, there will be some degree of conflict.

Symbolic Interactionism

Interactionists focus on the meanings associated with sexuality and with sexual orientation. Since femininity is devalued in U.S. society, those who adopt such traits are subject to ridicule; this is especially true for boys or men. Just as masculinity is the symbolic norm, so too has heterosexuality come to signify normalcy. Prior to 1973, the American Psychological Association (APA) defined homosexuality as an abnormal or deviant disorder. Interactionist labeling theory recognizes the impact this has made. Before 1973, the APA was powerful in shaping social attitudes toward homosexuality by defining it as pathological. Today, the APA cites no association between sexual orientation and psychopathology and sees homosexuality as a normal aspect of human sexuality (APA 2008).

Recall Cooley's "looking-glass self," which suggests that self develops as a result of our interpretation and evaluation of the responses of others (Cooley 1902). Constant exposure to derogatory labels, jokes, and pervasive homophobia would lead to a negative self-image, or worse, self-hate. The CDC reports that homosexual youths (as referred to in the study) who experience high levels of social rejection are six times more likely to have high levels of depression and eight times more likely to have attempted suicide (CDC 2011).

Queer Theory

Queer Theory is an interdisciplinary approach to sexuality studies that identifies Western society's rigid splitting of gender into specific roles and questions the manner in which we have been taught to think about sexual orientation. According to Jagose (1996), Queer [Theory] focuses on mismatches between anatomical sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, not just division into male/female or homosexual/heterosexual. By calling their discipline "queer," scholars reject the effects of labeling; instead, they embraced the word "queer" and reclaimed it for their own purposes. The perspective highlights the need for a more flexible and fluid conceptualization of sexuality—one that allows for change, negotiation, and freedom. This mirrors other oppressive schemas in our culture, especially those surrounding gender and race (Black versus White, man versus woman).

Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argued against U.S. society's monolithic definition of sexuality and its reduction to a single factor: the sex of someone's desired partner. Sedgwick identified dozens of other ways in which people's sexualities were different, such as:

- Even identical genital acts mean very different things to different people.
- Sexuality makes up a large share of the self-perceived identity of some people, a small share of others'.
- Some people spend a lot of time thinking about sex, others little.
- Some people like to have a lot of sex, others little or none.
- Many people have their richest mental/emotional involvement with sexual acts that they don't do, or don't even want to do.
- Some people like spontaneous sexual scenes, others like highly scripted ones, others like spontaneous-sounding ones that are nonetheless totally predictable.
- Some people experience their sexuality as deeply embedded in a matrix of gender meanings and gender differentials. Others do not (Sedgwick 1990).

Thus, theorists utilizing queer theory strive to question the ways society perceives and experiences sex, gender, and sexuality, opening the door to new scholarly understanding.

Throughout this chapter we have examined the complexities of gender, sex, and sexuality. Differentiating between sex, gender, and sexual orientation is an important first step to a deeper understanding and critical analysis of these issues. Understanding the sociology of sex, gender, and sexuality will help to build awareness of the inequalities experienced by people outside the dominant groups.

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Section 6.4: Intersectionality of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

As you might recall, the intersectional approach in sociology focuses on the intersection of race, social class, gender and sexuality - all of which are embedded in the institutional structure of society. According to this framework of analysis, there is a **matrix of domination** which implies that there are several types of social categories that create an overlap of oppression and discrimination. Therefore, our binary thinking and analysis, such as only focusing on gender or race when looking at the distribution of important societal resources misses the complexity of social reality.

The following are examples of intersectionality experienced by Latin@ communities that highlight the unique forms of discrimination and stratification experienced by those who have overlapping of social characteristics, especially related to gender and sexuality.

Latina Income and Wealth Gap and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Espinoza (2021) and Gould et al (2020) reported that Latinas were making progress prior to the COVID-19 pandemic along various socioeconomic dimensions such as business ownership and net worth. However, due to what the author refers to as the "triple-threat" confronted by Latinas in particular - higher infection rates, economic losses, and family/work conflict - they were impacted to a much higher degree than Latinos and white women. For instance, the unemployment rate for Latinas reached 20% in April 2020 and was still had not returned to pre-pandemic levels a year after the onset of the pandemic, which amounted to approximately 1 million less Latinas employed. Although the national average for business losses was 22% in 2020, there was a decline of 30% of Latina-owned businesses (and even higher for Latina non-citizens). Latinas were also more likely to report food, housing, and health care insecurity during the first year of the pandemic. Latinas were also more likely to report having lost work opportunities due to child care responsibilities compared to Latinos, white women, or white men.

Latinx LGBTQ Adults in the U.S.

Wilson et al (2021) found that approximately 2.2 million U.S. adults identified as Latinx and LGBTQ, making up about 5.6% of the overall Latinx population. Along some social background characteristics, this group had some statistical advantages over their non-LGBTQ counterparts. For instance, they had higher college completion rates and were more likely to have U.S. citizenship. However, with regard to economic characteristics they were more likely to be unemployed and experience food insecurity. With regard to depression, Latinx LGBTQ adults are twice as likely to have been diagnosed with depression. They are also more likely to report feeling unsafe and about three-quarters reported having experienced everyday discrimination in the prior year. On a positive note, about two-thirds of Latinx LGBTQ adults reported feeling connected to the LGBT community.

Latinx, Undocumented, and LGBTQ

Carrie Hart (2015) explores the identity and work of Undocuqueer Artist, [Julio Salgado](#). By embracing both a queer and undocumented identity, Salgado creates "an anti-assimilationist, radical way that critiques the oppression of people on the basis of race, ethnicity, and citizenship as well as gender and sexuality" (Hart, 2015, p. 3) He also rejects the term 'illegal' because it "suggests a fixed identity, employs racist overtones, and shares a history with racially exclusionary policy and ideology, such as its origin in 1882 with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act" (Hart, 2015). Salgado considers this term to be inherently dehumanizing and instead prefers to be undocumented, which can be more "strategic... and/or resistant" (Hart, 2015).

In combining both terms and embracing the **Undocuqueer** identity, Salgado expresses a unwillingness to separate his undocumented and queer experiences and identities. His goal as an artist and activist is to give visibility to people who are both undocumented and part of the LGBTQ community. Both of these communities have experienced systematic discrimination and oppression in U.S. society.



"Queer Butterfly" by Julio Salgado. (Courtesy of the artist)

Figure Section6.4.2: "Queer Butterfly" by Julio Salgado. (With the kind permission of the [Artist](#))



Video Section6.4.3: How Julio Salgado Utilizes Art to Express Life As a Queer, Undocumented Man | SEEN | NowThis. (Close-captioning and other YouTube settings will appear once the video starts.) (Fair Use; [NowThis Entertainment](#) via [YouTube](#))

As an Undocuqueer Activist, Salgado is building upon the tradition of other Latinx activists such as Judy Baca who use the combination of art and activism to think outside the bounds of dominant modes of representation in the interests of liberation for themselves and their communities (Hart, 2015). Similarly, self-proclaimed chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patlache, poet, writer, and cultural theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa (1942 –2004) was best known for her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, loosely-based on her life growing up on the Mexico–Texas border, incorporating her lifelong experiences of social and cultural marginalization. This excerpt from *Borderlands/La Frontera* captures her spiritual activism:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian--our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Social Institutions- Legal, Economic, Health Care, Political, Family, Religion,

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Section 7.1: Legal System

Extrajudicial killings

As a significant segment of the Latin@ population has Indigenous ancestry, the historical genocide against groups native to the Americas, including the United States, is relevant to their experience. In addition, although the lynchings of African Americans in American history have been better documented, there is also the lesser known history of extrajudicial and unlawful killings of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, especially in the Southwestern part of the United States. For instance, historians William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb (2003) documented and analyzed hundreds of such extrajudicial killings that occurred between 1848 and 1928. In their research titled "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928", they cataloged 597 lynchings of persons of Mexican origin in the United States, which they consider a conservative estimate. The lynchings were concentrated in Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico and were mostly carried out in the 30-year period immediately after the end of the Mexican-American War, which they described as a period of "unparalleled danger from mob violence" for people of Mexican origin.

In her book titled "Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands", Hernandez describes the extrajudicial killing of Antonio Rodriguez that led to widespread protests and rioting in Mexico. According to the author, it was the 448th such murder on record, there was no official record of an arrest, "the local coroner's report said that Rodriguez's body was found 'burned to a crisp, lying in the ashes' ... and a local judge ruled that 'Rodriguez came to his death at the hands of parties unknown.'" (Hernandez, 2022)

The Bracero Program

According to the Aguirre & Turner (2007), in the period after the Mexican-American war, the Mexican population in the United States experienced a significant loss of social, political, and economic status and was thus relegated to a source of cheap and expendable labor for the growing labor-intensive industries - agriculture, mining, and railroads -especially in the Southwestern part of the United States. One consequence of this increase demand for Mexican labor is that immigration policies were not restrictive between 1870 and 1930, allowing Mexican workers to enter the United States to freely. However, this changed during the Great Depression in the 1930s and there was a rising tension and an increase in anti-Mexican sentiment. As a result, a repatriation movement began to expel Mexican nationals (as well as U.S. citizens of Mexican descent) from the United States, and over 500,000 people were repatriated between 1929 and 1935 (Aguirre & Turner, 2007).

During the **Bracero Program**, which was a labor contract between the United States and Mexico that operated from 1942-1964, Congress gave authorization for the Border Patrol to initiate "Operation Wetback." This gave the U.S. Border Patrol wide discretion to stop and search people who "looked Mexican" and who deport anyone who did not have the proper paperwork identifying themselves as participants in the Bracero Program. Between 1954 and 1959, approximately 3.8 million people were returned to Mexico (Aguirre & Turner, 2007).

Additionally, approximately 5 million Mexican workers were granted temporary work visas throughout the course of the program, which operated from 1942-1964. Employers were required to pay prevailing local wages and provide workers with minimal worker protections and conditions. However, the program was fraught with problems including terrible work conditions, abuse, and many workers were not paid for their work. (Aguirre and Turner, 2007)



Figure **Section7.1.1**: Braceros in Oregon. (CC BY-SA 2.0; [Oregon State University](#) via [Flickr](#))

Deportation Regimes

In more recent history, there have been deportation regimes and ballot efforts to target and deport undocumented Latin@ immigrants, such as Proposition 187 (California - 1994), Senate Bill 1070 (Arizona - 2010), House Bill 56 (Alabama - 2011), and the Trump administration's 2017 Executive Order 13767 ("Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements"), and his recent threats to conduct a mass deportation regime in his upcoming term. Sociologist Douglas Massey (2006) suggests that although historically the average standard of living in Mexico may be lower than in the United States, it is not so low as to make permanent migration the goal of most Mexicans. However, the strengthening of the border that began with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and more recent policies has made one-way migration the rule for most Mexicans. Massey argues that the rise of undocumented one-way immigration of Mexicans is a direct outcome of the laws and policies that were intended to reduce it.

According the USDA, in 2016 over 70% of the farm worker labor force in the United States was foreign-born, mostly from Latin America. Approximately 21% of the farm worker labor force were authorized immigrants with permanent residency or green cards and 48% of the farm worker labor force was made up of unauthorized immigrant workers. As we know from other research studies, such as Milkman et al (2010), undocumented workers are more susceptible to workplace violations, low wages, and threats from employers.



Figure Section7.1.2: "Farm workers picking cucumbers." (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; Bread for the World via Flickr)

Segregation

An example of de jure segregation relates to the education of Mexican American children in California in the early 1900s. Moll & Ruiz (2002) argue that two methods of social control were employed at this time to undermine the educational attainment and social mobility of the Mexican population: 1) exclusion from schooling, and 2) control over the content and purpose of schooling. The latter was done mainly through the official segregation of schooling by placing Mexican kids into "Mexican schools". In the important court case *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947), Sylvia Mendez was denied entry into the neighborhood school in Orange County, California and was instead assigned to the "Mexican school" by school officials. Her parents sued the school district, organized with other parents and filed a class action law suit against several districts, and the case made its way to the U.S. District Court. The District Court judge agreed with the Mendez family and ordered that the school districts to cease their discriminatory practices against students of Mexican origin in their public schools. Several organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), filed amicus briefs (friends of the court briefs) in support of the Mendez family. Eight years later, its author Thurgood Marshall would present to the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), a case that would help to end school segregation throughout the United States.

Sylvia Mendez's First Day of School

Ten years before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ended school segregation nationally, 8-year-old Sylvia Mendez walked into 17th Street Elementary School in Westminster and was told that she couldn't enroll because she was dark-skinned and had a Hispanic surname. In *Mendez v. Westminster School District*, a federal appeals court ruled in 1947 that segregating students into separate "Mexican schools" was unlawful. The following year, Gov. Earl Warren stopped segregation in all California public schools. Later, as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Warren cited the Mendez case in writing the *Brown* ruling.



Figure **Section7.1.3**: "Sylvia Mendez's First Day of School." (CC BY 2.0; YoTuT via Flickr)

More recently, demographers have found that Latin@-white residential segregation, as measure by the dissimilarity index, has remained constant over the decades. Furthermore, De la Roca et al (2018) found clear quantitative evidence that residential segregation in metropolitan areas has a strong, negative association with the educational outcomes and labor market attainment of native-born Latin@ people and Black Americans. Among the Latin@ groups, they found residential segregation has a more significant negative outcomes for young adults of Puerto Rican and Dominican ancestry.

Incarceration

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, in 2023 Latino men were overrepresented among California prisoners. While they make up 38% of adult Californians, they make up 46% of the all male prisoners in the state system. Similarly, although there has been an improvement in the disparity of youth in juvenile facilities, Latin@ youth are still 16% more likely to be incarcerated than their white peers, nationwide.

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Section 7.2: Economy and Labor Market

Economy and Household Income

Figure [Section7.2.1](#) shows that the disparity between the real median household income (adjusted to 2016 dollars) of Latin@ families and white families has actually increased since 1970. In 1970, the disparity was about \$12,000 and by 2016 the disparity had increased to over \$17,000. Human Capital theorists would attribute this income disparity to lower average levels of educational attainment and job skills that translates into lower occupational status and income. Beyond human capital, the differences in income may also be explained by immigrant background, concentration in certain low-paying industries, and also gender and racial discrimination. More recently, Krogstad (2020) found that Latin@ families are among the most impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic in terms of reductions in pay and also job losses.

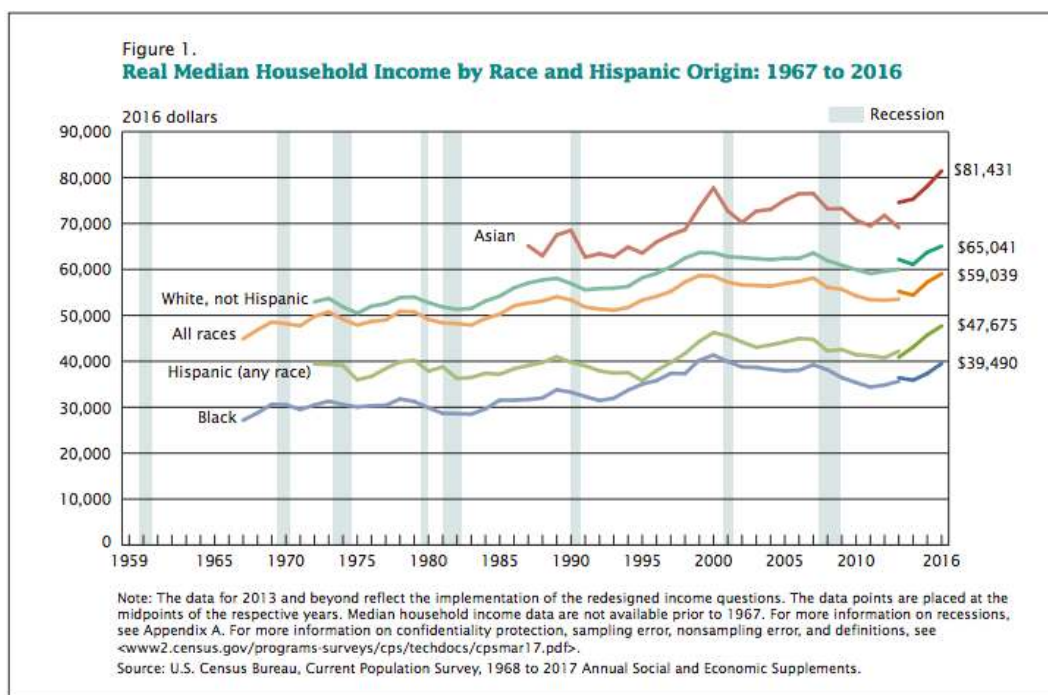


Figure [Section7.2.1](#): Real median household income by race and Hispanic origin: 1967 to 2016. (CC PDM 1.0; via [U.S. Census Bureau](#))

Economic Hardship and Wealth Disparities

Considering the income disparities described above, it should come as no surprise that Latin@ families continue to experience economic hardships and wealth disparities compared the general U.S. population. Sherer and Mayol-Garcia (2022) found that with the exception of Colombian-origin families, Latin@ families report higher levels of food hardships, housing hardships, and bill-paying hardships. They also found that net worth vary considerably across Latin@ subgroups. Although Cuban-origin families have the highest average net worth among Latin@ subgroups, their net worth is still less than half of the non-Latin@ median.

Latin@ Business Ownership: Positive Trends but Continued Challenges

According to the 2023 Stanford Annual Report on Latino Entrepreneurship, there are positive trends with regard to Latin@ Owned Businesses (LOBs) in the United States with continued challenges, especially for women and immigrant owners. The authors report that among the 63 million Latin@s in the U.S. (now making up 19% of the total population), the total economic output was \$3.2 trillion dollars. The total number of businesses now numbers 5 million and total revenue from LOBs is now \$800 billion. dollars.

They also found that among tech-centric businesses, LOBs actually outperformed their white counterparts in "revenue growth and adoption of Artificial Intelligence", which represents an unexpected positive trend. However, when they analyzed the gender of business owners, they found that Latina-owned businesses have lower revenue compared to their male counterparts and lower rates of loan approval from national and local banks. This demonstrates that Latinas experience discrimination at the institutional level and provides yet another example of intersectional inequality.

The authors of this report also found mixed results when looking at immigrant owned businesses among Latin@s. Although a majority of LOBs (52%) were actually owned by immigrants, they faced disadvantages such as reporting lower revenue compared to their U.S. born Latin@ counterparts and subsequent generations.

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Section 7.3: Political System

Political System

For decades, the Latinx population was referred to as "the sleeping giant" of politics in the United States because of its potential to significantly impact both local and national elections. In his book *Harvest of Empire*, Juan Gonzalez refers to the decade of the 1990s as a turning point for the Latinx population, when the organizing and voter registration efforts of Latinx political organizations such as the Southwest Voter Registration Project (SVREP) and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) really began to move the needle on Latinx voter registration and turnout. He refers to the period after 1995 as the rise of the "Third Force" in American politics, breaking away from the Black/white dichotomy and assumptions of previous eras.

In terms of the eligible voter population, the Latinx population accounts for 39% of the increase between 2000 and 2018. In comparison, the white population accounts for 24%, African Americans account for 17%, and Asian-American account for 14%.

Most of the growth in the electorate since 2000 has come from Hispanic, Black and Asian eligible voters

U.S. eligible voter population change, 2000 to 2018

	2018 eligible voter population	Change, 2000- 2018	% of total increase
Hispanic	29,831,000	15,544,000	39%
Black	29,210,000	6,884,000	17%
Asian	10,302,000	5,663,000	14%
Other	6,793,000	2,431,000	6%
White	157,538,000	9,774,000	24%
Total	233,675,000	40,298,000	

Note: Eligible voters are adult U.S. citizens. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Differences between numbers and percentage increases are computed before the underlying estimates are rounded.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2018 American Community Survey and 2000 decennial census.

"The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate"

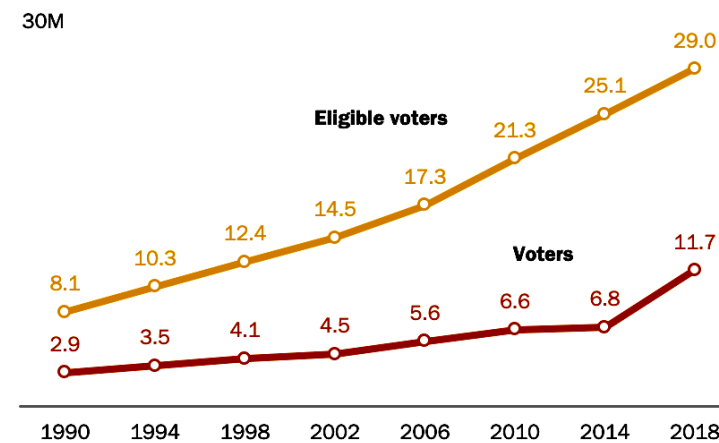
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure [Section7.3.4](#):The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate. (Used with permission; [Pew Research Center](#))

Figure 8.4.x shows that significant increase in Latinx voter turnout for a midterm election. While in 2014, 6.8 out of 25.1 million (27%) Latinx eligible voters turned out to voter, in 2018 this increased to 11.7 million out of 29 million (40%). This represents a 13% increase in voter turnout.

Latino voter turnout in 2018 reached a record high for a midterm election year

In millions



Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Voters are eligible voters who say they voted. Latinos are of any race.
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the Current Population Survey, November Supplements for 1990-2018.

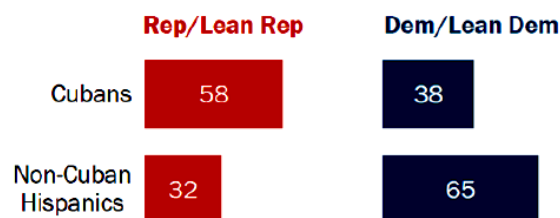
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Figure **Section7.3.5**: Latino Voter Turnout in 2018 reached a record high for a midterm election year. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center)

With regard to political affiliation, Cuban-American registered voters are much more likely to identify as Republicans. Figure 8.4.6 shows that 58% of Cubans identified as Republicans compared to only 32% of non-Cuban Latinx people. Conversely, only 38% of Cubans identified as Democrats compared to 65% of their non-Cuban counterparts.

A majority of Cuban American voters affiliate with the GOP in 2020

% of Hispanic registered voters who identify or lean ...



Note: Based on Hispanic registered voters. Share who did not lean toward a party not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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Figure **Section7.3.6**: Most Cuban Americans voters identify as Republican in 2020. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center)

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Section 7.4: The Family/La Familia

Family Dynamics

Familism refers a sense of closeness and obligation to the family unit and even placing the interests and needs of the family unit ahead of individual needs and desires. There may be positive and negative consequences of high rates of familism. One negative consequence with regard to educational attainments may include discouraging youths from pursuing a higher education in order to provide for the family unit. There are also positive consequences which include the availability of family networks, emotional support during times of crisis, financial assistance, caring for the young and the elderly, and cultural and linguistic maintenance. In their comprehensive study on Latin@ family structure, Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan (2006) found that Latin@ families do have higher rates of variables associated with "familism" such as intact families, lower rates of divorce and cohabitation, and more likely to care for their elderly relatives compared to their white and African-American counterparts. However, they also found difference across Latin@ subgroups and declining rates of "familism" across Latin@ generations.

Machismo and **marianismo** are terms related to gender identity and expectations and commonly linked to gender and family dynamics in Latin American societies. In Latin@ families, machismo is a form of traditional masculinity that, on the one hand, may include more positive aspects such as taking responsibility for the family, chivalry, and protector. Gill & Vasquez (1996) describe this side of machismo as *el caballero* ("the gentleman") often personified in film and television, who protects his wife and family from dangers and is chivalrous but still afflicted by machismo. On the other hand, machismo is also associated with negative and harmful aspects such as sexual domination, aggressiveness, and expectation of submissiveness for women and children (Gill and Vasquez, 1996). Marianismo is the complementary female role for Latin@ women, who are expected to personify the ideals of true femininity, such as being modest, virtuous and abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage. The term derives from the paradoxical beliefs of the Virgin Mary and most likely originated during the Spanish Colonial Period in Latin America. Gill and Vasquez (2006) write that marianismo is about "dispensing care and pleasure, not receiving them", suffering the negative consequences of machismo and marianismo in silence, and submission to patriarchal forces and family dynamics.



Figure Section7.4.8.1: "El Machismo Mata.(Trans. "Machismo Kills") (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; lorena pajares via Flickr)

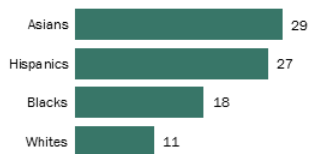
Despite the existence of evidence of cultural dynamics such as familism and machismo in Latin@ families, it is important to not reduce the behaviors and experiences of ethnic groups entirely to culture. This is referred to as **cultural essentialism** and may lead to a "culture of deficiency" approach to defining and analyzing the social experiences of Latin@ and other racial/ethnic groups. Also, cultural essentialism may also prevent one from considering the importance of other important social forces, such as social class or racial discrimination. Gonzalez-Lopez & Vidal-Ortiz (2008) remind researchers that such cultural paradigms are not used when studying non-Latin@ groups but with Latin@ groups they have become "uncritically accepted - and they have become shorthand to explain gender inequality from a culture-blaming perspective" (p. 312).

Latin@ Intermarriage

Regarding racial and ethnic intermarriage, in 2015 approximately 27% of Latin@ newlyweds were intermarried, the second highest rate among the four major racial and ethnic groups. This has also led to an increase in the percentage of multiracial babies in the United States. In 2015, 14% of all babies under the age of 1 living with two parents were multiracial or multiethnic. Among the 14%, a large percentage (42%) were babies with one Latin@ parent and one white parent and 22% had multiracial or multiethnic parents. A lower percentage of multiracial babies had one Latin@ parent and one Black parent (5%) and one Latin@ parent and one Asian parent (4%).

About three-in-ten Asian newlyweds in the U.S. are intermarried

% of newlyweds who are intermarried



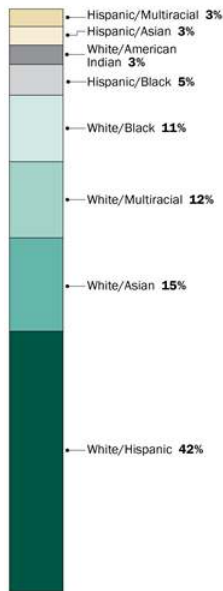
Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey (IPUMS).
"Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

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Figure 8.2.48.2.4: About three-in-ten Asian newlyweds in the U.S are intermarried. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

About four-in-ten U.S. intermarried couples include one Hispanic and one white spouse

% of opposite-sex newlywed intermarried couples that include each combination



Note: Racial and ethnic combinations with values of less than 2% are not shown. Whites, blacks, Asians and American Indians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

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Figure 8.3.58.2.5: The growing share of multiracial and multiethnic babies in the U.S. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.)

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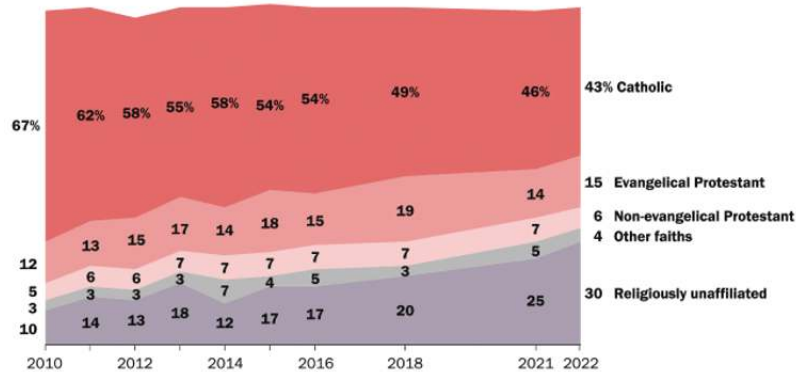
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Section 7.5: Religion

Religious Affiliation Over Time

Steady decline in share of U.S. Latinos who identify as Catholic

% of U.S. Latino adults who identify as ...



Note: Respondents who did not answer the question are not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center's National Survey of Latinos, 2010-2016, 2018, 2021-2022. The survey of Latino adults was conducted by telephone through 2018 and subsequently moved online to the American Trends Panel. Data for 2021 and 2022 are weighted to targets drawn from the previous year's National Public Opinion Reference Survey.

"Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith"

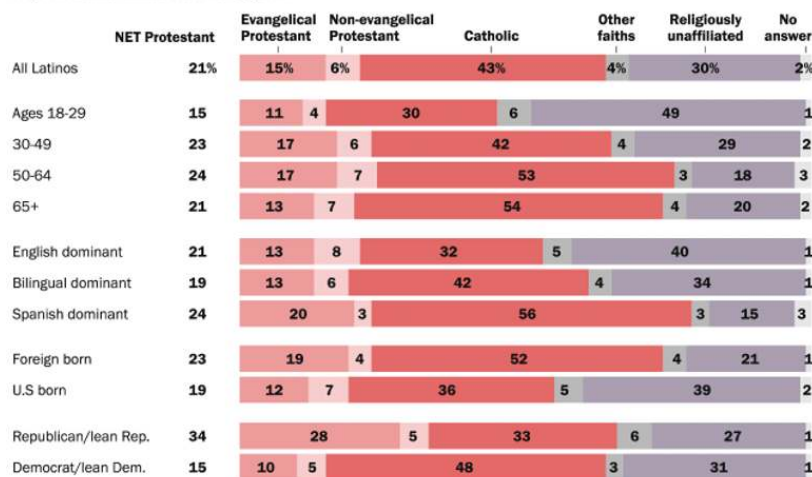
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Figure 8.6.1 Steady Decline in share of U.S. Latinos who identify as Catholic. Pew Center.

According to a Pew Research Center 2023 survey (see Figure 8.6.1), although Catholics remain the largest religious group among U.S. Latin@ adults, their percentage has dropped from 67% to 43% since 2010. Following the trend among the majority of Americans, the percentage of U.S. Latin@ adults who identify as "Unaffiliated" has tripled since 2010 (from 10% to 30%) and is now similar to all U.S. adults.

Young U.S. Hispanics are less Catholic and more likely to be religiously unaffiliated than older Hispanics

% of U.S. Latino adults who identify as ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Religious affiliation for Latinos is weighted to targets drawn from the 2021 National Public Opinion Reference Survey.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Aug. 1-14, 2022.

"Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith"

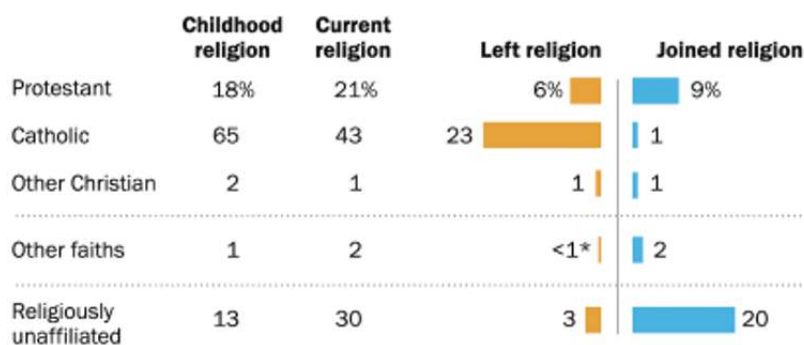
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Figure 8.6.2. Young US Hispanics are less Catholic and more likely to be religiously unaffiliated than older Hispanics. Pew Center

These trends are more even more pronounced among young U.S. adults (see Figure 8.6.2). For example, nearly half (49%) of 18-29 year olds are religiously unaffiliated. Not surprisingly, U.S. born and English-dominant Latinos are much more likely to identify themselves as religiously unaffiliated. Although the percentage of Protestants has remained relatively stable, Catholicism has seen the greatest decrease. Not surprisingly, nearly one quarter (23%) of adult U.S. Latinos are former Catholics (see Figure 8.6.3).

Nearly one-in-four U.S. Latinos are former Catholics

Religious switching among U.S. Latino adults



* Does not include respondents who moved between non-Christian faiths.

Note: Protestant respondents are not further divided into evangelical and non-evangelical, because respondents were not asked to report childhood evangelical/born-again status.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Aug. 1-14, 2022.

"Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith"

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Figure 8.6.3. Nearly one-in-four US Latinos are former Catholics. Pew Center.

Contributor:

Carlos Ramos, Long Beach City College

Sources:

Pew Center Report (2023). Among US Latinos Catholicism Continues to Decline but is still the Largest Faith. Pew Research Center.

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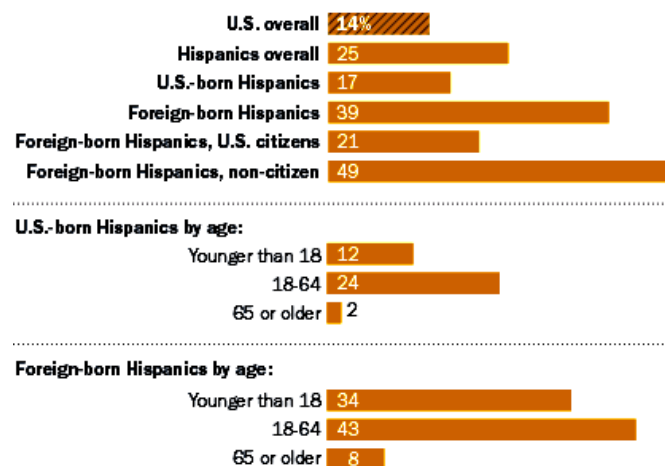
Section 7.6: Health Care System

Health and Healthcare System

According to the Pew Center, in 2014 a quarter of the Latinx population did not have health insurance compared to 14% of the overall U.S. population. The disparity grows when you take into account immigration and citizenship status. For instance, for the U.S.-born Latinx population the health insurance gap with the overall U.S. population is reduced to 3 percentage points (17% to 14%, respectively) while this gap increases considerably for the foreign-born Latinx population (39% to 14%, respectively). Considering that most of the American population accesses health insurance through their employers, this gap is largely related to the occupational status of immigrant workers who are concentrated in occupations that do not provide work-related health insurance. The lack of access to healthcare is also associated with limited regular checkups, preventative medical practices, early detection of illness or disease, and overall worse health outcomes. This disparity is also evident among different age groups. For instance, 34% of the foreign-born Latinx population is uninsured compared to 12% of the U.S.-born Latinx population. These numbers show that the Latinx population, especially immigrant families, would benefit from health coverage mandates for employers or a universal health care system (Krogstad & Lopez, 2014).

Hispanic Immigrants More Likely than U.S.-born To Lack Health Insurance

Percent without health insurance in 2014



Note: Respondents were asked if they currently had health insurance.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of March 2014 Current Population Survey
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Figure **Section7.6.3**: Hispanic Immigrants More Likely than U.S.-born to Lack Health Insurance 2014. (Used with permission; Pew Research Center)

Report Findings:

"Suicides among non-Elderly Adult Hispanics, 2010-2020"

LINK: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10900-022-01123-2.pdf>

"Transnational Motherhood: Health of Hispanic Mothers in the US who are separated from children"

LINK: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5222880/>

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Section 7.7: Social Institutions and Intersectionality

As you might recall, the intersectional approach in sociology and this textbook focuses on the intersection of race, social class, gender and sexuality - all of which are embedded in the institutional structure of society. According to this framework of analysis, there is a **matrix of domination** which implies that there are several types of social categories that create an overlap of oppression and discrimination. Therefore, our binary thinking and analysis, such as only focusing on gender or race when looking at the distribution of important societal resources misses the complexity of social reality.

The following are examples of intersectionality experienced by Latin@ communities that highlight the unique forms of discrimination and stratification experienced by those who have overlapping of social characteristics.

The Persistence of Racialized Gender Wage Gaps

According to the Eileen Patten (2016), despite some progress over time, the racial and gender wage gaps persist today. For example, Patten found that Latin@ men make 69% of the earnings compared to their white counterparts. However, Latin@ women experience an even greater disparity, earning only 58% of the median earnings of white men. Even after controlling for education, white men with college degrees earned a median hourly wage of \$32, compared to \$26 for Latin@ man and \$22 for Latin@ women. Although some of the differences can be explained by labor force experience and types of industries, the unexplained variance may be attributed to discrimination. Black and Latin@ workers are much more likely to report unfair treatment and that their race and gender have made it more difficult to succeed in survey data than their white counterparts.

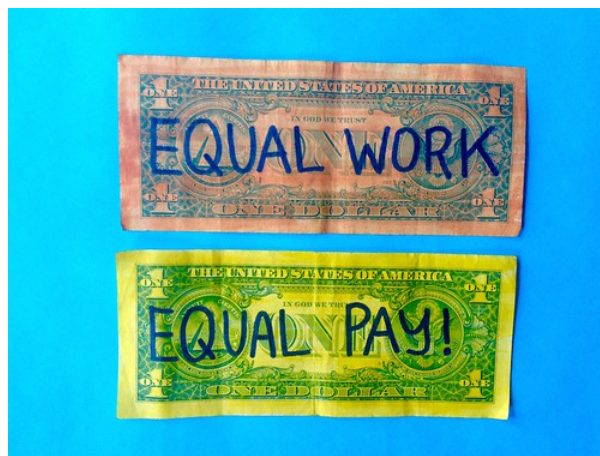


Figure **Section7.7.1**: "Equal Pay for Equal Work" (CC BY-NC 2.0; Sarah Mirk via Flickr)

Driven by lower pre-pandemic wages, income, and wealth combined with the disproportionate lack of health care, Latinx workers have suffered greater economic distress than their white counterparts through the COVID-19 crisis. As the pandemic has spread, another symptom of this labor market disempowerment—inadequate workplace safety—has loomed particularly large for the Latin@ population. Latinas have experienced the highest unemployment rates during COVID-19, as they are disproportionately employed in service occupations which have been hard hit by the pandemic (Gould, Perez, & Wilson, 2020).

Latinx, Undocumented, and LGBTQ

Carrie Hart (2015) explores the identity and work of Undocuqueer Artist, [Julio Salgado](#). By embracing both a queer and undocumented identity, Salgado creates "an anti-assimilationist, radical way that critiques the oppression of people on the basis of race, ethnicity, and citizenship as well as gender and sexuality" (Hart, 2015, p. 3). He also rejects the term 'illegal' because it "suggests a fixed identity, employs racist overtones, and shares a history with racially exclusionary policy and ideology, such as its origin in 1882 with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act" (Hart, 2015). Salgado considers this term to be inherently dehumanizing and instead prefers to be undocumented, which can be more "strategic... and/or resistant" (Hart, 2015).

In combining both terms and embracing the **Undocuqueer** identity, Salgado expresses a unwillingness to separate his undocumented and queer experiences and identities. His goal as an artist and activist is to give visibility to people who are both

undocumented and part of the LGBTQ community. Both of these communities have experienced systematic discrimination and oppression in U.S. society.



"Queer Butterfly" by Julio Salgado. (Courtesy of the artist)

Figure Section 7.7.2: "Queer Butterfly" by Julio Salgado. (With the kind permission of the [Artist](#))



Video Section 7.7.3: How Julio Salgado Utilizes Art to Express Life As a Queer, Undocumented Man | SEEN | NowThis. (Close-captioning and other YouTube settings will appear once the video starts.) (Fair Use; [NowThis Entertainment](#) via [YouTube](#))

As an Undocuqueer Artist, Salgado is building upon the tradition of other Latinx artists such as Judy Baca who use the combination of art and activism to think outside the bounds of dominant modes of representation in the interests of liberation for themselves and their communities (Hart, 2015). Similarly, self-proclaimed chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patlache, poet, writer, and cultural theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa (1942 –2004) was best known for her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, loosely-based on her life growing up on the Mexico–Texas border, incorporating her lifelong experiences of social and cultural marginalization. This excerpt from *Borderlands/La Frontera* captures her spiritual activism:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian--our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

Latinx, Gender, and Undocumented Status

In their study on workplace violations among low-wage workers in Los Angeles County, Milkman, Gonzalez, & Narro (2010) found significant evidence of labor law violations such as minimum wage mandates, overtime pay requirements, working off-the-clock or during breaks. They also found instances of delayed payments, tip stealing, and employer retaliation. Among the 1,815 workers surveyed and interviewed for this study, 73% were Latin@, 52% were woman, and 56% were undocumented. They also found that the intersectionality of workers either increased or decreased the likelihood of experiencing workplace violations. For

example, minimum wage violations were greater for women than men and greater for immigrants than their U.S.-born counterparts. However, women who were unauthorized immigrants (the majority of whom were Latin@) experienced the highest rate of minimum wage violations among all subgroups. Well over half of this group reported a minimum wage violation in the previous week.



Figure [Section 7.7.4](#): Immigration Reform Action in Burbank. (CC BY-NC 2.0; SEIU Local 99 Education Workers United via Flickr)

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8: Education- Historical and Contemporary Trends

Historical Trends

Solorzano and Solorzano (1995) identified at least 4 different frameworks used historically to explain the lower educational attainment rates of Latin@s, especially in terms of high school completion and college degree attainment.

1) Genetic Determinist Model – according to this model, lower attainment rates were explained by biological and genetic factors, such as lower group level intelligence. In her book on the historic case of Mendez v. Westminster, Phillipa Strum (2010) documents the biological explanations provided by school administrators and researchers at that time. And these racist and now debunked theories became the basis and justification for having segregated Mexican schools in California (and other states).

“Mexican children have ‘different mental characteristics’ than Anglo children, ‘showed and stronger sense of rhythm’, and ‘are primarily interested in action and emotion but grow listless under purely mental effort’.”

Grace Stanley, California Educator
“Special School for Mexicans” Survey, 1920

“Mexican students have 58.1% of the ‘Americans’ ability to pursue academic courses, but ‘90% as good ability to do manual work’.”

Merton Hill, Doctoral dissertation
University of Southern California, 1928

“The average Spanish child has an intelligence quotient of .79 compared with 1.00 for the average Anglo child.”

B.F. Haught, Educator, 1931

“Economically they have been beneficial to southern California and their welfare and progress should be protected. However ... Mexicans seem to possess some undesirable attitudes and characteristics. Normal school progress which may be expected of the white children is above the ability of the average Mexican...the test intelligence of the average Mexican is below that of the average white child...it seem[s] probable that a separate curriculum adjusted to them is advisable.”

James L. Kent
Superintendent, Garden Grove Schools, 1941

Phillipa Strum "Mendez v. Westminster" CSPAN Talk (2010) Link:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?295471-1/mendez-v-westminster>

2) Cultural Determinist Model – according to this model, the lower educational attainment rates of Latin@s can be attributed to cultural characteristics that are not conducive to academic success. Oftentimes educators or school officials will assume a cultural belief or practice is to blame for the lower achievement of Latin@ students in the classroom. For example, they may assume that Latin@ parents do not “value education” and more concerned about work so they are less concerned about their children’s academic progress and success. In another example, they may assume that a cultural emphasis on “familialism” interferes with schoolwork and academic achievement by putting the needs of the family first at the expense of the student’s progress.

In her influential work on cultural capital and community cultural wealth, Tara Yasso (2005) critiques deficiency models (that include both biological and cultural determinist models) using a critical race theory lens and turns these assumptions and explanations about Latin@ students on its head. Instead of focusing on the *perceived deficiencies* of students of color, educators and school administrators should instead focus on the forms of cultural and community capital that students of color bring with them into the classroom and build upon these forms of educational capital to create more inclusive curricula and learning environments. For instance, instead of assuming that "familialism" is an impediment to the schooling process, schools should instead intentionally include and incorporate the parents of children in the schooling and educational process, perhaps by initiating "noche de la familia" (family night) on campus in order to make the parents feel welcome in a school setting with the ultimate goal of making them partners in the schooling of their children.

3) School/Institutional Determinist Model – proponents of this model assume that the schools that students attend will determine their educational outcomes. For instance, schools may have unequal access to school safety, educational and academic resources, books, counselors, and other material items that may negatively impact the educational experiences and outcomes of their students.

4) Social/Cultural Reproduction Models – assume that schools tend to reproduce the social and cultural inequalities that exist in the larger societies. Researchers such as Bowles and Gintis argue that working-class students attend very different schools and receive a curriculum that will prepare them for working class labor. On the other hand, upper class students will attend high schools that will emphasize critical and abstract thinking and prepare them to attend top universities and careers in professional occupations. Similarly, teachers and school officials help to reproduce inequalities by favoring those students who grew up in upper class social circles and present themselves accordingly using certain gestures, mannerism, and forms of speech.

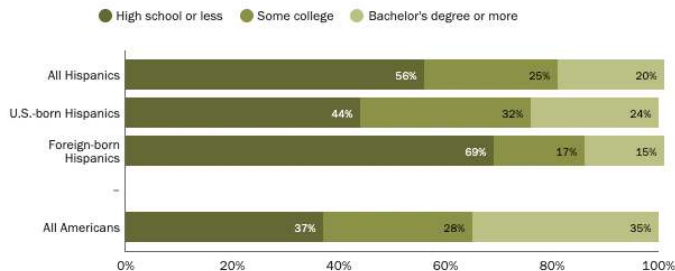
The main critique of genetic/biological and cultural deficiency models is that they blame the students (and their families) themselves for lower educational attainment rates. The critique of the school and social reproduction models is that while they do provide a warranted analysis of the structural factors that impact educational attainment outcomes, such as social class, family income, and school-level inequalities, they do not allow for the role of agency and resistance on the part of the students themselves.

Contemporary Educational Trends

Educational attainment of Hispanic population in the U.S., 2021

Educational attainment of Hispanic population in the U.S., 2021

% of those age 25 and older, by educational attainment



Note: Hispanics are of any race. "High school" includes persons who have attained a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. "Some college" includes those who have an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a bachelor's degree.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2021 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

According the Pew Center (Figure 10.1.1), in 2021 approximately 56% of the entire adult Latinx population attained a high school degree or less, significantly higher than the rate of the American population at 37%. The percentage of those who earned a two-year degree or some college was 3 percentage points lower and the 4-year college degree attainment rate was 15 percentage points lower than that of the entire American population. However, some of the educational attainment gaps are reduced or disappear when comparing only the U.S.-born Latinx adult population to the entire American adult population. The high school or less gap is reduced to 8 percentage points and the 4-year college degree attainment gap is reduced to 11 percentage points. The U.S. born Latinx adult population actually has a higher percentage of people who have attained a 2-year degree or some college.

Demographers and social scientists such as Dowell Myers and David Hayes-Bautista have commented on the social gap between the aging white baby boomer population in states like California and the growing, mostly Latinx population under the age of 18. In many societies, this social gap oftentimes make the aging population less likely to fund education and social programs if they feel that the younger generations is "not like them". They argue that it is actually in their best interest to ensure that the young, mostly Latinx youth have access to quality education and that the educational gaps, especially college education completion, are closed. As college-educated, tax-paying adults, the growing Latinx population will contribute to medical, retirement, and social services and they will most likely purchase the homes of retiring baby boomers once they decide to sell or downsize.

Contributors and Attributions

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Social Change, Power, and Resistance Movements

[Section 9.1: Social Change](#)

[Section 9.2: Power and Resistance Movements](#)

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Section 9.1: Social Change

Social Change

Social change refers to change in society created through collective behavior or social movements (as seen in Section 9.2). This change may also occur through external factors such as global advancements in technology or the changing environment. Changes in population due to shifting demographic factors such as immigration, different fertility rates across social groups, and interracial relationships. The following are examples of demographic-related social changes that will have a significant impact on the Latin@ population as well as the entire United States.

Demographic Change

The changing demographic composition of the United States will impact race relations and the experiences of the Latin@ population. According to the U.S. Census projections, by 2060 the Latin@ population will increase to 29% (from 17% in 2014) of the U.S. population and the non-Hispanic white population is projected to drop to 44% (from 62% in 2014). Moreover, their share will be higher for children under the age of 18 (34%) will be nearly equal to the non-Hispanic white population - 36% (Colby and Ortman, 2015). On the one hand, the increase in the Latin@ population will increase their political power and increase their influence as a major voting bloc at the local, state, and national levels. On the other hand, Aguirre and Turner would argue that an increase in the size of a racialized people of color may increase the sense of threat by the majority group and may lead to holding on to negative beliefs stereotypes, discrimination, and racial tension.

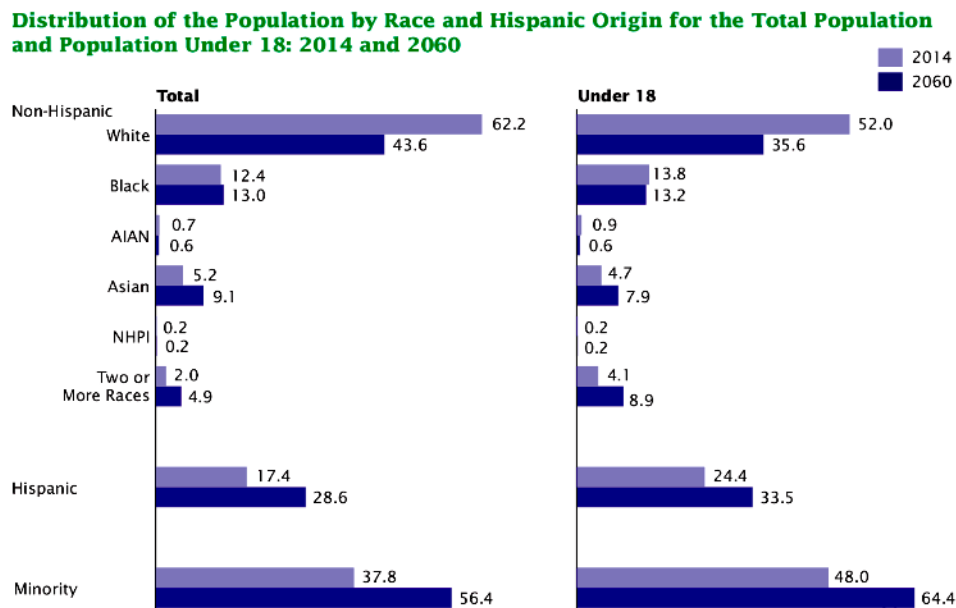


Figure **Section9.1.1**: Distribution of the Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for the Total Population and Population under 18: 2014-2060 (CC PDM 1.0; via U.S. Census Bureau (2015))

Multiracial families, Identity, and Racialization

Since the 1967 Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court Case (discussed earlier in [Chapter 1.4](#)), which overturned anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, intermarriage rates have steadily increased. Today, nearly 20% of all newlyweds are married to someone of a different race or ethnicity, up from 3% in 1967. Overall, about 11 million (about 10%) of all married people have a spouse of a different race or ethnicity. Asian-Americans have the highest rate of intermarriage among newlyweds (29%) and Latin@ have the second highest rate (27%) while African-Americans have the third highest (18%) and white Americans have the lowest at 11%.

Latin@ newlywed men and women are just as likely to intermarry while African-Americans and Asian-Americans have significant gender disparities in intermarriage rates. With regard to educational attainment, Latin@ with a bachelor's degree have the highest rate of intermarriage (46%) across the four major racial/ethnic groups. And lastly, about 42% of all intermarried couples involve one Latinx and one white spouse and an identical percentage of all multiracial or multiethnic babies have one Latin@ parent and one white parent (Livingston & Brown, 2017).

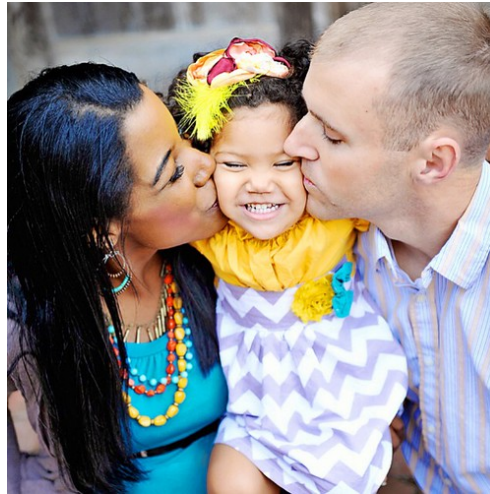


Figure **Section9.1.2**: "Can you believe less than 50 years ago our interracial marriage would have been illegal in 16 states?" (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; Jennifer Borget via Flickr)

What does this mean for the future of the Latin@ population in the United States? According to assimilation theorists, the increase in intermarriage rates is a reflection of the integration of the Latin@ population into the mainstream American society. Theorists like Park and Gordon predicted that this would occur over time, although perhaps at a slower pace for certain racialized groups. However, other social scientists would argue that the increase in intermarriage and interracial babies does not necessarily portend or guarantee racial equality in the United States. For example, Kimberly DaCosta is skeptical that intermarriage will address the larger societal issues of structural racism and racialization:

"While the possibility exists that the greater visibility of multiracial families will lead to more acceptability of all kinds of relations across racial boundaries - beginning with intimate and familial ones and corresponding with spatial and social ones - this does not mean, of course, that the problem that defined America in the twentieth century - the color line - has not followed us into the twenty-first" (Da Costa, 2005).

Also, in their study using multigenerational survey data, Ortiz & Telles (2012) found that the children of Mexican-white marriages continue to have a Mexican identification or identity. Further, they also found that more educated Mexican-Americans experienced more stereotyping and racial discrimination than their less-educated counterparts and those who reported having greater contact with whites experienced more stereotyping and racial discrimination. They concluded that these "results are indicative of the ways in which Mexican-Americans are racialized in the United States." Their findings also challenge the assumption that interracial marriages or contact with the white majority will lead to racial equality or a more multiracial or pluralistic America.

Contributors and Attributions

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Section 9.2: Power and Resistance Movements

Social movements

Social movements are "purposeful, organized groups that strive to work toward a common social goal" (OpenStax, 2022) Many of us learned about social movements in our history courses but we often take for granted the important and fundamental changes they made for everyone. This includes the labor movement that led to a 40 hour work week, overtime pay, and other labor rights or the civil rights movement that led to more access to the vote, housing, and education. Below you will find an historical timeline of the many examples of significant events that led to social change and also social movements that Latin@s have participated in since the early 1900s, contributing to the more expansive access to labor, civil, education, political, and legal rights that Latin@s have today. Although the struggle for inclusion and equality continues today, it is important to recognize the efforts of those who have fought before us.

The sociologist David Aberle (1966) identified different categories of social movements based on what they want to change in society and the extent of the societal change. An **alternative movement** is focused on self-improvement and limited to individual beliefs and behavior such as Alcoholics Anonymous. A **redemptive movement** has a "meaning seeking" or spiritual element and seeks to promote spiritual growth or inner change. This would include converting to a charismatic Christian sect. A **reform movement** seeks to change something specific about the larger social structure. An example would be the DREAMer movement to open a path to citizenship for undocumented youth brought to the U.S. as children. And the goal of a **revolutionary movement** is to completely change every aspect of society. An example of this would be the Cuban Revolution that toppled the Bautista government in 1959.

Juan Gonzalez has divided up the modern Latin@ political era into the following periods:

- The Integration Period (1950 - 1964)
- The Radical Nationalist Period (1965 - 1974)
- The Voting Rights Period (1975 - 1984)
- The Rainbow Period (1985 - 1994)
- The Third Force Period (1995 - Present)

Historical Timeline of Social Change and Latin@ Resistance Movements

1900s

1903 In Oxnard, Calif., more than 1,200 Mexican and Japanese farm workers organize the first farm worker union, the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association (JMLA). Later, it will be the first union to win a strike against the California agricultural industry, which already has become a powerful force.



Figure **Section9.2.3**: A Japanese-American farm worker. Nyssa, Oregon, July 1942. (CC PDM 1.0; Britt Fuller via Flickr)

1904 The U.S. establishes the first border patrol as a way to keep Asian laborers from entering the country by way of Mexico.

1905 Labor organizer Lucy Gonzales Parsons, from San Antonio, Texas, helps found the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World.



Figure **Section9.2.4**: "iww-capitalist-pyramid_0" (CC BY-NC 2.0; Der_Hut_Geist via Flickr)

1910s

1910 The Mexican Revolution forces Mexicans to cross the border into the United States, in search of safety and employment.



Figure **Section9.2.5**: The Taking of Zacatecas (1926-1993). (CC BY-SA 3.0; Ángel Boliver via [Wikimedia](#))

1911 The first large convention of Mexicans to organize against social injustice, El Primer Congreso Mexicanista, meets in Laredo, Texas.

1912 New Mexico enters the union as an officially bilingual state, authorizing funds for voting in both Spanish and English, as well as for bilingual education. Article XII of the state constitution also prohibits segregation for children of "Spanish descent." At the state's constitutional convention six years earlier, Mexican American delegates mandated Spanish and English be used for all state business.

1914 The Colorado militia attacks striking coal miners in what becomes known as the Ludlow Massacre. More than 50 people are killed, mostly Mexican Americans, including 11 children and three women.

1917 Factories in war-related industries need more workers, as Americans leave for war. Latinos from the Southwest begin moving north in large numbers for the first time. They find ready employment as machinists, mechanics, furniture finishers, upholsterers, printing press workers, meat packers and steel mill workers.

1917 The U.S. Congress passes the [Jones Act](#), granting citizenship to Puerto Ricans under U.S. military rule since the end of the Spanish-American War.

1920s

1921 San Antonio's Orden Hijos de América (Order of the Sons of America) organizes Latino workers to raise awareness of civil rights issues and fight for fair wages, education and housing.

1921 The Immigration Act of 1921 restricts the entry of southern and eastern Europeans. Agricultural businesses successfully oppose efforts to limit the immigration of Mexicans.

1927 In Los Angeles, the Confederación de Uniones Obreras Mexicanas (Federation of Mexican Workers Union-CUOM) becomes the first large-scale effort to organize and consolidate Mexican workers.

1928 [Octaviano Larrazolo](#) of New Mexico becomes the first Latino U.S. Senator.

1929 Several Latino service organizations merge to form the [League of United Latin American Citizens](#) (LULAC). The group organizes against discrimination and segregation and promotes education among Latinos. It's the largest and longest-lasting Latino civil rights group in the country.

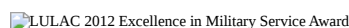


Figure **Section9.2.6**: LULAC 2012 Excellence in Military Service Award. (CC BY 2.0; [Army Medicine](#) via [Flickr](#))

1930s

1931 The country's first labor strike incited by a cultural conflict happens in Ybor City (Tampa), Fla., when the owners of cigar factories attempt to get rid of the lectores, people who read aloud from books and magazines as a way to help cigar rollers pass the time. The owners accuse the lectores of radicalizing the workers and replace them with radios. The workers walk out.

1932 Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, a Sephardic Jew, becomes the first Latino named to the U.S. Supreme Court.

1933 Latino unions in California lead the El Monte Strike, possibly the largest agricultural strike at that point in history, to protest the declining wage rate for strawberry pickers. By May 1933, wages dropped to nine cents an hour. In July, growers agreed to a settlement including a wage increase to 20 cents an hour, or \$1.50 for a nine-hour day of work.



Figure **Section9.2.7**: Mexican Workers in the 1930's. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; Jimmy Smith via Flickr)

1938 On December 4, El Congreso del Pueblo de Habla Española (The Spanish-Speaking Peoples Congress) holds its first conference in Los Angeles. Founded by Luisa Moreno and led by Josefina Fierro de Bright, it's the first national effort to bring together Latino workers from different ethnic backgrounds: Cubans and Spaniards from Florida, Puerto Ricans from New York, Mexicans and Mexican Americans from the Southwest.

1939 Novelist John Steinbeck publishes *The Grapes of Wrath*, calling attention to the plight of migrant workers in the California grape-growing industry.

1940s

1941 The U.S. government forms the Fair Employment Practices Committee to handle cases of employment discrimination. Latino workers file more than one-third of all complaints from the Southwest.

1942 The Bracero Program begins, allowing Mexican citizens to work temporarily in the United States. U.S. growers support the program as a source of low-cost labor. The program welcomes millions of Mexican workers into the U.S. until it ends in 1964.

1942 Hundreds of thousands of Latinos serve in the armed forces during World War II.

1943 Los Angeles erupts in the Zoot Suit Riots, the worst race riots in the city to date. For 10 nights, American sailors cruise Mexican American neighborhoods in search of "zoot-suiters" -- hip, young Mexican teens dressed in baggy pants and long-tailed coats. The military men drag kids -- some as young as 12 years old -- out of movie theaters and cafes, tearing their clothes off and viciously beating them.



Figure *Section9.2.8*: "Zoot Suit Riots" (CC BY 2.0; Gareth Simpson via Flickr)

1944 Senator Dennis Chávez of New Mexico introduces the first Fair Employment Practices Bill, which prohibits discrimination because of race, creed or national origin. The bill fails, but is an important predecessor for the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

1945 Latino veterans return home with a new feeling of unity. Together, they seek equal rights in the country they defended. They use their G.I. benefits for personal advancement, college educations and buying homes. In 1948, they will organize the American G.I. Forum in Texas to combat discrimination and improve the status of Latinos; branches eventually form in 23 states.

1945 Mexican-American parents sue several California school districts, challenging the segregation of Latino students in separate schools. The California Supreme Court rules in the parents' favor in *Mendez v. Westminster*, arguing segregation violates children's constitutional rights. The case is an important precedent for *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.



Figure *Section9.2.9*: Mendez vs. Westminster Commemorative Stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service on September 13, 2007. (CC BY 2.0; USDAgov via Flickr)

1950s

1953 During "Operation Wetback" from 1953 and 1958, the U.S. Immigration Service arrests and deports more than 3.8 million Latin Americans. Many U.S. citizens are deported unfairly, including political activist Luisa Moreno and other community leaders.

1954 *Hernandez v. Texas* is the first post-WWII Latino civil rights case heard and decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The *Hernandez* decision strikes down discrimination based on class and ethnic distinctions.

1960s

1962 Air flights between the U.S. and Cuba are suspended following the [Cuban Missile Crisis](#). Prior to the Crisis, more than 200,000 of Cuba's wealthiest and most affluent professionals fled the country fearing reprisals from Fidel Castro's communist

regime. Many believed Castro would be overthrown and they would soon be able to return to Cuba.

1963 Miami's Coral Way Elementary School offers the nation's first bilingual education program in public schools, thanks to a grant from the Ford Foundation.

1965 Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta found the [United Farm Workers](#) association, in Delano, Calif., which becomes the largest and most important farm worker union in the nation. Huerta becomes the first woman to lead such a union. Under their leadership, the UFW joins a strike started by Filipino grape pickers in Delano. The [Grape Boycott](#) becomes one of the most significant social justice movements for farm workers in the United States.



Figure [Section9.2.10](#): San Jose Chicano Rights Marches California. (CC BY-SA 2.0; [San José Public Library](#) via [Flickr](#))

1965 Luis Valdez founds the world-famous El Teatro Campesino, the first farm worker theatre, in Delano, Calif. Actors entertain and educate farm workers about their rights.

1966 Congress passes the Cuban American Adjustment Act allowing Cubans who lived in America for at least one year to become permanent residents. No other immigrant group has been offered this privilege before, or since.

1968 Latino high school students in Los Angeles stage citywide walkouts protesting unequal treatment by the school district. Prior to the walkouts, Latino students were routinely punished for speaking Spanish on school property, not allowed to use the bathroom during lunch, and actively discouraged from going to college. Walkout participants are subjected to police brutality and public ridicule; 13 are arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and conspiracy. However, the walkouts eventually result in school reform and an increased college enrollment among Latino youth.

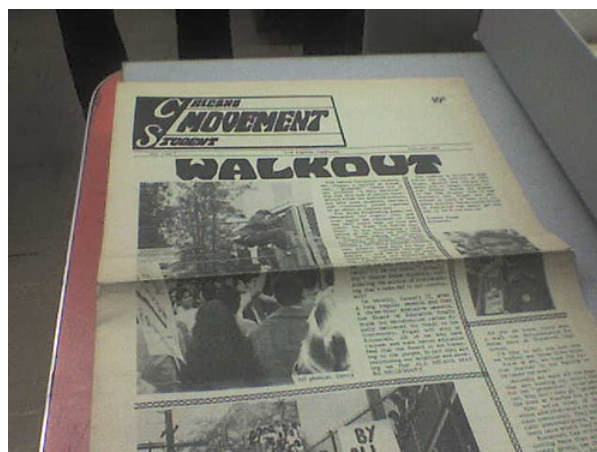


Figure [Section9.2.11](#): Chicano Student Movement Walkout Feb 1969. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; [Andy Sternberg](#) via [Flickr](#))

1968 The [Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) opens its doors, becoming the first legal fund to pursue protection of the civil rights of Mexican Americans.

1969 Faced with slum housing, inadequate schools and rising unemployment, Puerto Rican youth in Chicago form the [Young Lords Organization](#), inspired in part by the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. An outgrowth of the Young Lords street

gang, the YLO becomes a vibrant community organization, creating free breakfast programs for kids and community health clinics. Modeled after the Black Panthers, the YLO uses direct action and political education to bring public attention to issues affecting their community. The group later spreads to New York City.

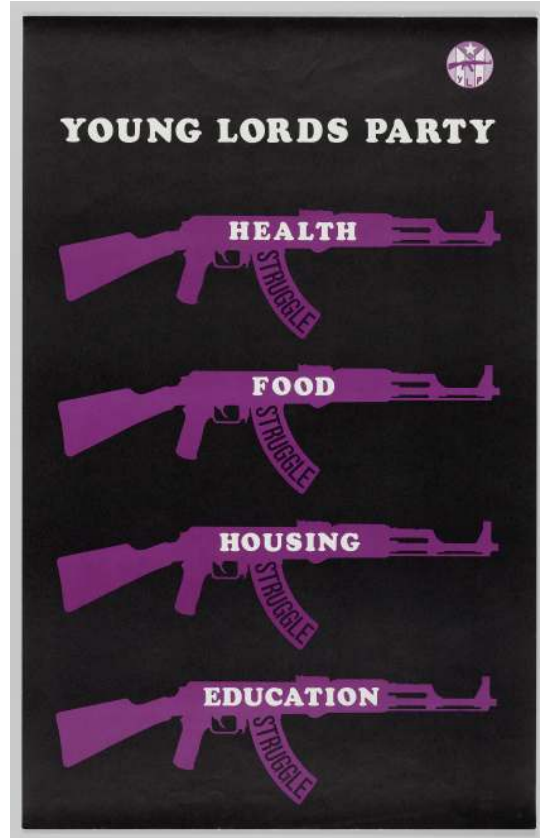


Figure *Section9.2.12*: Young Lords Party: Health, Food, Housing, Education. (CC PDM 1.0; via [Smithsonian Institution](#))

1970s

Throughout the 1970s, progressive organizations based in Mexican, Filipino, Arab and other immigrant communities begin organizing documented and undocumented workers. Together, they work for legalization and union rights against INS raids and immigration law enforcement brutality.

1970 The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare issues a memorandum saying students cannot be denied access to educational programs because of an inability to speak English.

1974 In the case *Lau v. Nichols*, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms the 1970 memorandum, ruling students' access to, or participation in, an educational program cannot be denied because of their inability to speak or understand English. The lawsuit began as a class action by Chinese-speaking students against the school district in San Francisco, although the decision benefited other immigrant groups, as well.

1974 Congress passes the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 to make bilingual education more widely available in public schools.

1974 The first major Latino voter registration organization, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project begins, registering more than two million Latino voters in the first 20 years.

1975 After non-English speakers testify about the discrimination they face at the polls, Congress votes to expand the U.S. Voting Rights Act to require language assistance at polling stations. Native Americans, Asian Americans, Alaska Natives and Latinos benefit most from this provision. The original Act, passed in 1965, applied only to Blacks and Puerto Ricans. The Voting Rights Act leads to the increasing political representation of Latinos in U.S. politics.

1980s

1985 National religious organizations provide support for the first "National Consultation on Immigrant Rights." Immediately the group calls for a National Day of Action for Justice for Immigrants and Refugees, "to call attention to issues and to dramatize the positive role of immigrants in shaping U.S. society." More than 20 cities participate in the event.

1986 On November 6, Congress approves the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), providing legalization for certain undocumented workers, including agricultural workers. The Act also sets employer sanctions in place, making it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers.

1988 President Ronald Reagan appoints Dr. Lauro Cavazos as Secretary of Education. He becomes the first Latino appointed to a presidential cabinet.

1989 Miami's Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Cuban American, becomes the first Latino woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

1990s

1990 The California Delegation Against Hate Violence documents the increasing human rights abuses by INS agents and private citizens against migrants in the San Diego-Tijuana border area.

1992 The Los Angeles Police Department cracks down on Latino immigrants during the "Los Angeles rebellion," after the "not guilty" verdict in the Rodney King police brutality case.

1994-1995 The fight over California's Proposition 187 brings the debate over immigration --particularly undocumented immigration -- to the front pages of the national press. The ballot initiative galvanizes students across the state, who mount a widespread campaign in opposition. Voters approve the measure preventing undocumented immigrants from obtaining public services like education and health care.



Figure Section9.2.13: March Against Prop 187 in Fresno California 1994. (CC BY-SA 2.0; David Prasad via Flickr)

1997 A U.S. District Court judge overturns California's Prop 187, ruling it unconstitutional.

1999 After sixty years of U.S. Navy exercise-bombings on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, civil rights leaders in both Puerto Rican and African American communities respond with a non-violent protest galvanizing the island's 9,300 residents. Triggered by the accidental death of a Puerto Rican naval base employee during live ammunition exercises, Puerto Ricans unite in outrage, protesting the proximity of the exercises to civilians, years of environmental destruction and resulting health problems. The Navy failed to honor historical agreements to treat the island and its people respectfully. The protests culminate in lawsuits and the arrest of more than 180 protesters, with some serving unnecessarily harsh sentences. The Navy promises to stop bombing the island by 2003.

1999 The Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project coordinates nationwide activities on Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. Public displays of crosses, representing those who died crossing the border, capture public and media attention.

2000s

2001 Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Arab Americans and others of Middle Eastern descent experience a backlash in the United States, as hate crimes, harassment and police profiling sharply increase. Based in rising fears over "border security," the stigma spreads to other immigrant groups. Some politicians call for building a wall between the United States and Mexico. During the next five years, Latino immigrants face a surge in discrimination and bias.

2003 Latinos are pronounced the nation's largest people of color --- surpassing African Americans --- after new Census figures show the U.S. Latino population at 37.1 million. The number is expected to triple by the year 2050.

2004 The Minuteman Project begins to organize anti-immigrant activists at the U.S./Mexico border. The group considers itself a citizen's border patrol, but several known white supremacists are members. During the next two years, the Minuteman Project gains widespread press coverage. Immigrant rights supporters conduct counter-rallies in public opposition to the Minuteman Project's tactics and beliefs.

2005 Just as key provisions of the Voting Rights Act are about to expire, English-only conservatives oppose its renewal because of the expense of bilingual ballots. In August 2006, President George W. Bush will reauthorize the Act. The reauthorized Act will be named the "Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, and Cesar Chavez Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006."

2006 Immigrants -- mostly Latinos -- and their allies launch massive demonstrations in cities and towns across the country in support of immigrant rights and to protest the growing resentment toward undocumented workers.

2006 High school students, mostly but not exclusively Latino, stage walkouts in Los Angeles, Houston and other cities, boycotting schools and businesses in support of immigrant rights and equality. Schools issue suspensions and truancy reports to students who participate, and several students are arrested.

2006 On May 1, hundreds of thousands of Latino immigrants and others participate in the [Day Without Immigrants](#), boycotting work, school and shopping, to symbolize the important contributions immigrants make to the American economy.



Figure **Section9.2.14**: "11.Immigrant.March1.WDC.1may06" (CC BY 2.0; Elvert Barnes via Flickr)

2006 The U.S. Congress debates legislation that would criminalize undocumented immigrants. Immigrant rights organizations support alternative legislation offering a pathway to citizenship. The legislation stalls, and Congress decides instead to hold hearings across the country during the summer and fall of 2006, to gain public input on how to handle the immigration issue.

2010s

2012 After sustained protest and direct action, immigrant rights activists and supporters pressure Obama to pass DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). This executive order provides protection for undocumented young people who were brought to the United States as children. They were also able to apply for a driver's license, work permit, and relief from deportation proceedings.



Figure Section9.2.15: UWD Leaders block an intersection in front of the White House. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; [unitedwedream](#) via [Flickr](#))



Figure Section9.2.16: Immigrant Rights. (CC BY 2.0; [ep_jhu](#) via [Flickr](#))

2020s

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: The Future of Latin@ in the U.S.

Section 10.1: Future Prospects of Latin@s in the U.S.

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Section 10.1: Future Prospects of Latin@s in the U.S.

Demographic Projections

The changing demographic composition of the United States will impact race relations and the experiences of the Latin@ population. According to Pew Center and U.S. Census projections, by 2050 the Latin@ population will increase to 29% (from 14% in 2005) of the U.S. population and the non-Hispanic white population is projected to drop to 47% (from 67% in 2005). Moreover, their share will be higher for children under the age of 18 (35%) will be only five percentage points less than the non-Hispanic white population - 40% (Passel and Cohn, 2008). Another significant trend is that the percentage of foreign-born Latin@s will continue to drop over the next three decades, from a high of 40% in 2005 and will be projected to be 33% in 2050. On the one hand, the increase in the Latin@ population will most likely increase their electoral and political power and increase their influence as a major voting bloc at the local, state, and national levels. On the other hand, Aguirre and Turner would argue that an increase in the size of a racialized people of color may increase the sense of threat by the majority group and may lead to holding on to negative beliefs stereotypes, discrimination, and racial tension.

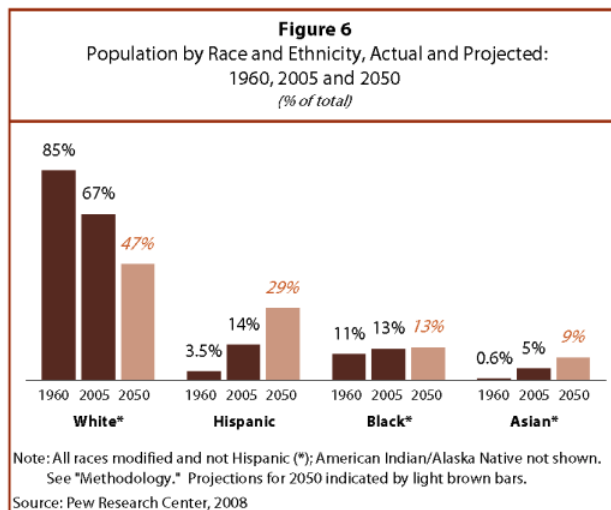
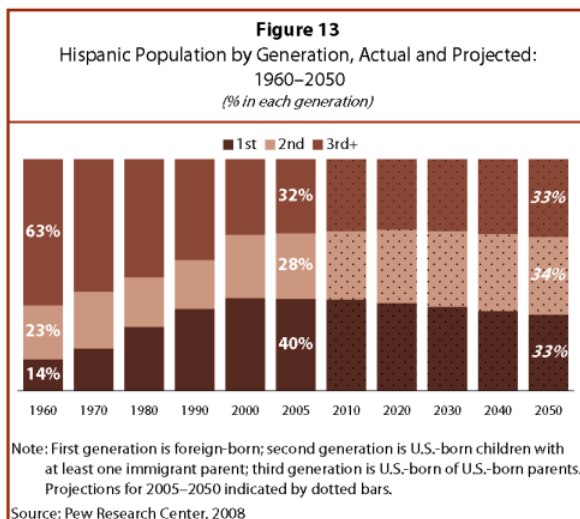


Figure. 10.1.1. Population by Race and Ethnicity, Actual and Projected: 1960, 2005, 2050. Pew Center.



10.1.2. Hispanic Population by Generation, Actual and Projected: 1960 - 2050. Pew Center.

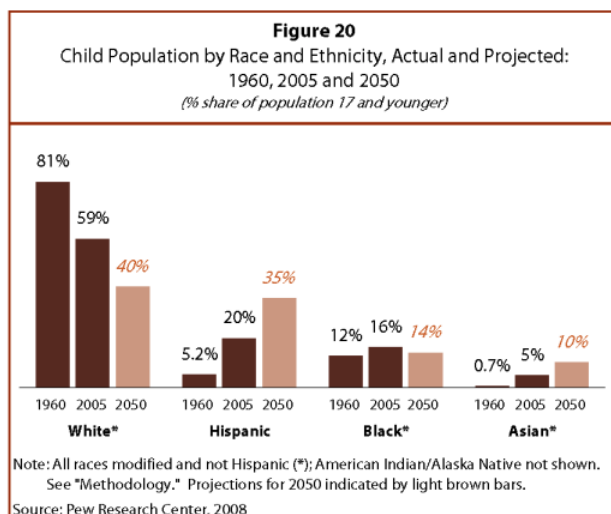


Figure 10.1.3. Child Population by Race and Ethnicity, Actual and Projected: 1960, 2005, 2050. Pew Center.

Integration of the Immigrant Population

The future of the Latin@ population in the United States will also be determined by the path that the U.S. government chooses to take with regards to the integration and incorporation of undocumented immigrants. As of this writing, the incoming Trump administration is threatening to conduct mass deportation regimes, despite the fact a UCLA LPPI study found that providing citizenship to undocumented workers would generate an additional \$1.5 trillion in Gross Domestic Product over 10 years. In addition to the taxes they currently pay into the system, Hinojosa et al (2021) also estimated that they would pay an additional \$367 billion in taxes and create an additional 371,000 new jobs over the following decade. Similarly, according to a 2023 survey of DACA recipients conducted by the Center for American Progress and the UC San Diego Immigration Policy Center found that over 90% of them were employed, nearly a third purchased their first home in 2023, and average annual earnings was over \$67,000. They also estimated that the approximately 544,000 active DACA recipients earned \$27.9 billion in wages and contributed nearly \$2.1 billion to Social Security and Medicare. Despite the very real success of DACA and the overwhelming evidence that a path to citizenship for unauthorized workers would provide a mutually beneficial policy, there is little hope that this will occur over the next 4 years, to the detriment of the entire society.

Contributors:

Carlos Ramos, Long Beach City College

Hinojosa-Ojeda, R. et al (2021). A Path to Prosperity: The Macroeconomic Benefits of Four Immigrant Regularization Scenarios. UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative Report.

Passel, J. & Cohn, D. (2008). U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050. Pew Research Center Report.

Wong, R. et al (2024). 2023 Survey of DACA Recipients Highlights Economic Advancement, Continued Uncertainty Amid Legal Limbo. Center for American Progress Report.

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