The massive migration of African Americans out of the South transformed race relations in the United States. As Waldo Martin has written, "urbanization has nationalized the locus of African American life and culture" (Martin 1992:354).

Wilson has characterized the period from the late nineteenth century to the post–World War II era as the industrial period of race relations. His description of the transition from preindustrial to industrial parallels van den Berghe’s distinction between paternalistic race relations, which were characteristic of a plantation economy, and competitive race relations, which are found in an urban, industrial setting. In the industrial setting, competition for jobs generated considerable racial antagonism, tension, and conflict. (For a superb analysis of this conflict, see Tuttle 1972, especially Chapter 4.)

The Great Migration of African Americans out of the South ultimately proved to be one of the most important factors underlying the Black Protest Movement that swept the nation during the late 1950s and 1960s. Although discrimination against African Americans in education, employment, housing, and the administration of justice also prevailed in the North, a greater range of opportunities for blacks was available in northern urban areas than in the South. Especially after World War II, increasing numbers of African Americans obtained college educations and found employment in skilled and white-collar occupations. These changes expanded the African American middle class, which provided the primary source of leadership for the Black Protest Movement. The educated and articulate African American middle class played an especially important role in providing legal challenges to the southern Jim Crow system, which culminated in the Supreme Court’s 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision that segregated schools were inherently unequal and therefore unconstitutional. The Brown decision, which overturned the 1896 separate-but-equal doctrine, symbolized the beginning of an era in which the legal basis for the caste system would crumble. In Part 4, we will examine the changing status of African Americans during the post–World War II era, the period that Wilson has characterized as the modern industrial stage of American race relations.

**Hispanic Americans/Latinos**

Hispanic Americans constitute one of the largest and most rapidly growing ethnic categories in contemporary American society. During the 1980s the Hispanic or Latino population grew nearly five times faster than the rest of the population, and their rate of growth has declined only slightly during the 1990s. By 1998 the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the Hispanic population at nearly 30 million, or 11.1 percent of the total population. Recent projections suggest that the Latino population will surpass the African American population by 2010, and total nearly 30 million, or 22 percent of the population, by 2050 (Day 1993). This dramatic increase in the Hispanic population in the United States is the result of both higher Hispanic fertility rates and substantially increased rates of immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico.

The recent growth of the Latino population has produced some dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of many American cities. By 1994 Hispanics outnumbered blacks in four of the nation’s ten largest cities—Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix, and San Antonio, as well as such other major cities as Miami, El Paso, Pittsburgh, and San
Francisco. And, given their higher growth rates, Hispanics are projected to exceed blacks in New York City in the very near future.

As we will see in Part 4, vast social inequalities, poverty, and political repression all influence migration pressures in Latin America. A crucial dimension contributing to these problems is demographic: the recent rapid population growth in both Central and South America. During the 1950s, the total population for all of Latin America was approximately the same as that of the United States—about 150 million. However, by 2025 it is expected to be 845 million, or about three times the projections of the U.S. population (Fallows 1983:45; Davis, Haub, and Willette 1983:39).

The overall economic status of Latinos, which until the 1990s had been consistently higher than that of African Americans, began a steady decline in the early 1980s, which by 1995 resulted in a median family income below that of African Americans. In 1979 Hispanic median family income stood at $29,180 (in 1995 dollars) —71 percent of white median family income; it has never since achieved this level, standing at $24,569 (or 58 percent of white income) in 1995 [see Table 4]. More than one-quarter (27 percent) of Hispanic families lived in poverty. Reflecting the interrelated impact of class, gender, and ethnicity, more than half (53 percent) of poor Hispanic families were headed by women (compared with 30 percent of non-Hispanic white families in poverty) [U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996a; 1996b]. Forty percent of all Hispanic children lived in poverty, and during the 1980s, childhood poverty increased more rapidly among Hispanics than among any other racial or ethnic category [U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996b]. Finally, by 1993 the median net worth of Hispanic households had declined to one-tenth that of white households, approximately the same as that of African Americans [U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997].

Since 1970 the educational attainments of Hispanic Americans have improved substantially. The proportion of adult Hispanics with less than a fifth-grade education declined. The proportion who were high school graduates increased from less than one-third (32 percent) in 1970 to more than half (53 percent) in 1993; similarly, the proportion who were college graduates doubled, increasing from less than one-twentieth (4.5 percent) in 1970 to nearly one-tenth (9.4 percent) of the adult Hispanic population in 1992 [U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993; 1994]. Nevertheless, Hispanics still lag considerably behind the educational attainments of non-Hispanic whites, Asian Americans, and African Americans. In 1995 only slightly more than half of 18- to 24-year-old Hispanics had graduated from high school, compared with seven-eighths (87 percent) of both blacks and non-Hispanic whites. Moreover, only 21 percent of 18- to 24-year-old Latinos were enrolled in college, compared with 35 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 25 percent of African Americans [Carter and Wilson 1994; 1995].

The Latino political presence in American society has changed substantially in the past quarter century. Between 1972 and 1992 the Latino electorate increased by 162 percent—from 5.6 million to 14.7 million. Reflecting the impact of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the rapidly increasing Hispanic population, in the past two decades Latinos have gained political strength; by 1995, 5,459 Hispanics held public office in the United States. Nevertheless, Hispanics still accounted for only about 1 percent of all elected public officials, far below the nearly 11 percent of the population that they represent (Brinham-Vargas 1994).

One reason for the relatively small number of Latino elected officials figures is that although Latinos have been numerically the fastest-growing ethnic category in
the United States in the past quarter century, Latino political participation—both as voters and as candidates for public office—has not increased proportionately. On the one hand, a substantial portion of the Hispanic population is recent immigrants, who are ineligible for citizenship until they have lived in the country for at least five years. Moreover, Latinos (Mexican Americans, in particular) are characterized by extremely low rates of naturalization. For example, in 1989, only 13 percent of Mexican immigrants who had arrived in the U.S. during the 1970s had become citizens, whereas 55 percent of Asians had. Moreover, the Hispanic population is very young, with a median age of twenty-six, compared with thirty-four for whites, twenty-eight for blacks, and thirty for Asians. Thus a substantial proportion of the Hispanic population is either not yet old enough to vote or among the extremely young voters, whose rates of political participation are typically the lowest. However, as their population ages and increasing numbers of immigrants achieve citizenship, “Latinos remain poised to wield the political power that has remained elusive thus far” (Coleman 1995:28). The increasing impact of Latino political strength was apparent during the 1996 presidential and congressional elections, in which Hispanic voters went to the polls in record numbers, where they overwhelmingly supported President Clinton and contributed to upset victories by several Hispanic congressional candidates.

However, to refer to Spanish-speaking people as a single ethnic category is misleading. The terms Hispanic or Latino, which are of recent origin, obscure the great diversity of historical, cultural, and geographic backgrounds among them. Although Latinos are more likely than the rest of the U.S. population to be Spanish-speaking, Catholic, and poor, they do not constitute a single ethnic category. The category of “Hispanics” includes representatives from more than twenty Latin American and Caribbean nations, as well as from Spain and Portugal. More than three-fourths of Hispanic Americans are of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban descent, but there are also substantial communities of people from the Dominican Republic; Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and several other Caribbean, Central American, and South American nations (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993). These groups also differ in their socioeconomic status and in their regional distribution in the United States. We focus here on the three largest Hispanic groups: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, which together make up more than three-fourths of the Hispanic population.

**Mexican Americans**

Mexican Americans, or Chicanos (from the Spanish Mexicanos), are the largest Hispanic group and (after African Americans) the second largest ethnic minority in American society. Today nearly 18 million people of Mexican ancestry live in the United States, about 90 percent of them in the five southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California. Next to the North American Indians, with whom they share a common ancestry, they represent the oldest ethnic category in American society. The Mexican American people are the biological and cultural descendants of the Spanish military and religious conquest of the native peoples of northern Central America. From the early 1600s to the mid-1800s, Spain, and, later, Mexico, colonized and exerted political, economic, and cultural dominance over the region. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Mexican culture, a mixture of Spanish and American Indian influences, was well established throughout what is today the southwestern United States.
The process of contact between Mexicans and the Anglo immigrants who settled in Texas in increasing numbers during the early nineteenth century provides another opportunity to test Noel’s model of the emergence of ethnic stratification. Initially Anglos and Mexicans coexisted, although each viewed the other warily and with antipathy and distrust that had grown out of two centuries of English and Spanish competition for world dominance. Mutual ethnocentrism between the two peoples occurred from the start, with Anglos regarding the darker-skinned Mexicans as “racially” and culturally inferior, and with Mexicans seeing in the growing encroachment of the Americans confirmation of their stereotypes of Yankee aggressiveness and greed. Anglos and Mexicans also differed in religion and class structure. To ensure the loyalty of early-nineteenth-century Anglo colonists, most of whom were Protestants, the Mexican government required that they become Roman Catholics as well as Mexican citizens. Even more offensive to the sensibilities of Anglo settlers, many of whom had emigrated from the American South and were slaveholders, was the Mexican prohibition of slavery. Although slavery was illegal, Mexican society was highly stratified, with a small, wealthy upper class and a large class of the very poor. Anglo-Americans, literate and middle-class in outlook, developed a perception of the Mexican people as indolent and lazy [McLemore 1973].

Despite these differences, Anglo and Mexican Texans initially coexisted, cooperated, and in the Texas Revolt of 1835-36 together fought a common enemy, the Mexican central government controlled by Santa Ana. Both Anglos and Mexicans died fighting Santa Ana in the Alamo. After Santa Ana’s defeat, however, competition between Anglo and Mexican for land in the newly independent Texas Republic became increasingly intense. In 1845 the United States granted statehood to Texas, and a year later the United States and Mexico were engaged in a war that would result in the loss of over half of Mexico’s previous territory. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, in which Mexico ceded to the United States most of the land of the present-day Southwest, signaled the triumph of Anglo power. Although the treaty guaranteed legal and property rights to Mexican citizens in the newly acquired territories, Mexican Americans soon became the object of persistent discrimination. Anglos, especially in Texas, established a system of caste relations, which ensured Chicano political, social, and economic subordination. By the eve of the Civil War, the American military conquest of Mexican lands in the Southwest had been completed. In the ensuing years those Mexicans who chose to remain in the annexed territories were largely dispossessed of both their land and the prominence they had occupied in Mexican society. By the turn of the twentieth century, Mexicans had been “relegated to a lower-class status, [in which] they were overwhelmingly dispossessed landless laborers, politically and economically impotent,” which was justified by notions of racial inferiority [Estrada et al. 1981:109]. For this reason, Álvarez (1973) has argued that the subjugation of this “creation generation” after the Mexican War was formative, in much the same sense that Bryce-Laporte (1969) has characterized slavery as “the contextual baseline of Black American experience.”

The vast territory incorporated into the United States as a result of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was at the time extremely sparsely settled, with those identifying themselves as Mexican [as opposed to various American Indian identities] numbering only about 60,000. However, as American settlement increased throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, the Mexican presence dwindled and their political and economic influence declined.
Whereas the earliest Mexican American population became an American minority through the annexation of Mexican lands by the United States, the primary source of the majority of the Chicano population in the United States has been immigration, both legal and undocumented.

Although a substantial proportion of the contemporary Chicano population is derived from the migrant generation that followed that surge of European immigration into the United States during the early twentieth century, the situation of Mexican immigrants differed substantially from that of European immigrant groups because Mexican immigrants entered a society that had already adopted a clearly defined lower-caste role for them as a result of the mid-nineteenth-century conquest patterns of subordination.

This immigration, most of which has occurred during the twentieth century, has been instrumental in the economic development of the American Southwest. Mexican immigrants provided a readily available and exploitable source of cheap labor, especially for the expansion of the railroad industry, mining, and above all, agriculture (Estrada et al. 1981). Indeed, Mexican labor played an integral role in the dramatic expansion of agribusiness interests in the Southwest. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, many Mexicans fled to the United States from the upheavals of the Mexican Revolution. As European immigration to the United States was curtailed by the outbreak of World War I and the passage of the restrictive legislation of the 1920s, Mexican labor filled the growing demand for agricultural workers to replace those who had left for jobs in the nation’s industrial sector. The defense employment boom generated by World War II produced a shift of the Chicano population away from rural areas and agricultural pursuits, while at the same time the bracero program, which ran from 1942 to 1965, ensured a continuing source of cheap agricultural labor from Mexico. As Massey (1986b; Massey et al. 1987) and Rouse (Article 25) have pointed out, the general migration of Mexicans to work in the United States earlier in the twentieth century and in the bracero program, in particular, played a major role in establishing the circular migration networks that sustain Mexican migration to the United States today.

Several indicators reveal that Mexican Americans lag considerably behind the mainstream of American society in socioeconomic status. Despite some evidence of improvement among younger generations, Mexican American educational attainment is less than that of both whites and African Americans. However, they tend to be found primarily in low-paying blue-collar and semiskilled occupations that have been especially hard hit by the decline of manufacturing and by the downsizing of economic sectors, such as military-related jobs, that have contributed to rising Hispanic unemployment during a period of economic growth (1992–1998) in which overall unemployment declined. As Table 4 indicates, in 1995 median family income for Mexican Americans was only 58 percent of white median family income; more than one-fourth (28 percent) of Mexican American families had incomes below the poverty level (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995).

Although Chicanos still comprise a substantial proportion of the nation’s migratory farmworkers, today they are overwhelmingly—more than 80 percent—urban residents, especially in the major urban areas of the Southwest. Indeed, today more people of Mexican descent live in Los Angeles than in any other city except Mexico City and Guadalajara. As their numbers and their concentration in urban areas has increased, Mexican Americans, like other Hispanic groups, have also become an increasingly
TABLE 4  Median Family Income, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Income in Dollars</th>
<th>Percent of White Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All races</td>
<td>40,612</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>42,646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>25,970</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>24,569</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>23,485</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>22,121</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>32,471</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central &amp; South American</td>
<td>26,915</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic*</td>
<td>26,826</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Includes those who identified themselves as from Spain or as Hispanic, Spanish, Spanish American, Hispanic, or Latino.

salient force in American politics, especially because of their substantial presence in the electorally significant states of Texas and California.

The other major groups of Spanish-speaking people are relatively recent immigrant groups who have settled primarily in urban areas on the East coast since the end of World War II. Although the number of immigrants from countries throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America has increased markedly during this period, the two Caribbean islands of Puerto Rico and Cuba have been the primary sources of this influx of Spanish-speaking peoples. These two groups provide an interesting contrast in backgrounds and adaptations to American society.

Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans, who, unlike other immigrants, are American citizens, began migrating to the mainland primarily after World War II. Today nearly two-thirds of the more than 2 million Puerto Ricans on the mainland live in New York City, which has been the principal magnet for these immigrants. This migration to the mainland has been prompted primarily by economic pressures among the impoverished lower strata of Puerto Rican society.

Among Hispanic groups, Puerto Ricans have a unique relationship with the United States. The island of Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in 1898 after the United States defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War. Despite changes in the twentieth century, the status of Puerto Rico has in many respects continued to resemble that of a colonial dependency. Although Puerto Ricans were granted American citizenship in 1917, they have retained their language and cultural traditions, which are different from the dominant language and culture of the United States. Puerto Ricans' determination to maintain their cultural distinctiveness has been an important element in the continuing debate over whether the island should become
an independent nation, become the fifty-first American state, or retain its present commonwealth status.

Numbering 2.3 million people on the mainland, Puerto Ricans are today the largest Hispanic group outside the Southwest. Puerto Rican residents began migrating to the United States early in the twentieth century, but it was not until the advent of relatively cheap commercial air travel after World War II that they began to arrive in substantial numbers, settling primarily in New York City. Today about 40 percent of all Puerto Ricans live on the mainland, and because of the ease of travel to and from the island and the personal networks that it has facilitated, it has been estimated that half of all island Puerto Ricans have at some time shared the mainland experience (Levine 1987:95). Although Puerto Ricans continue to reside primarily on the East coast, especially in New York City, increasing numbers have recently begun to settle in midwestern and far western cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles.

The Puerto Rican migration to the mainland must be seen in the context of the economic and political relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, which Levine (1987) has characterized as "imperial development." The migration was prompted primarily by extremely high unemployment in Puerto Rico, and it has fluctuated in response to economic opportunities in the United States. Given the historic underdevelopment of the Puerto Rican economy, Puerto Rican immigrants to the United States have been overwhelmingly unskilled and have experienced difficulties in an increasingly technological society. Concentrated in blue-collar semiskilled and unskilled occupations and subjected to racial discrimination, Puerto Ricans are, as Bean and Tienda (Article 10) point out, "the most socially and economically disadvantaged of Hispanic origin groups with poverty, labor force participation and unemployment rates and average earnings comparable to those of Native Americans and blacks." As Table 4 indicates, Puerto Rican median family income (in 1995, 52 percent of white median family income) is the lowest, and their poverty rate (36 percent) is among the highest among American ethnic groups.

Cuban Americans

Although Cuban immigrants to the United States have been recorded as early as the 1870s, the Cuban American community today is composed primarily of relatively recent political refugees. Approximately 750,000 Cubans have entered the United States since Fidel Castro's rise to power in 1959, and today they number more than one million. In contrast to most previous immigrations to the United States (with the notable exception of the Huguenots during the colonial period and those fleeing from Nazi Germany during the 1930s), the initial Cuban émigrés tended to be drawn mainly from the upper social and economic strata of Cuban society. Drawn disproportionately from well-educated middle-class and upper-class professional and business backgrounds, they brought skills (educational, occupational, business, and managerial), entrepreneurial values, and substantial amounts of financial capital that enabled them to prosper and achieve relatively rapid socioeconomic success. Assisted by federal government programs that facilitated their adjustment to American society, in the thirty years since their initial migration, Cubans have become the most affluent of all Hispanic groups and are an integral part of the economies of a number of American
cities, especially Miami, Florida, which they have transformed into a major international business and commercial center with ties throughout Latin America. Nevertheless, in 1995 Cuban family income was still only three-fourths (76 percent) of non-Hispanic white income, and the Cuban poverty rate was 16 percent compared with the overall white rate of 11 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995).

The most recent influx of Cubans—those who left Cuba during the so-called Freedom Flotilla or Mariel Boatlift of 1980—numbered about 125,000. A substantial proportion of this recent migration was people of working-class and lower-class origins (Davis, Haub, and Willette 1983:23).

Asian Americans

Asians are an extremely diverse category, differing in linguistic, cultural, historical, national, and class backgrounds. Historically the Chinese, the Japanese, and, later, the Filipinos, have been the most prominent Asian groups; most Koreans, Asian Indians, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians are more recent arrivals. Compared with the many millions of Europeans who have migrated to the United States, Asian immigration has, until recently, been modest. At no time until the past two decades did the numbers of Asian immigrants ever approximate those from Europe. For example, Chinese immigration reached its peak during the decade from 1873 to 1882, when 161,000 Chinese entered the country (a period during which nearly half a million Irish and nearly a million German immigrants were received). Peak Japanese immigration occurred during the decade between 1900 and 1909, when 139,000 entered (at the same time that nearly 2 million immigrants from Italy and more than 1.5 million from what later became the Soviet Union were admitted). In contrast, between 1840 and 1920 there were thirty-one different years when the number of immigrants from a single European country alone exceeded 150,000. As Figure 3 on page 98 reveals, the total number of immigrants from Asia, in general, and Japan and China, in particular, have been insubstantial when considered in the context of American immigration as a whole. What is significant, however, is the response that the presence of Asian immigrants generated, and the subsequent adaptation of Asian peoples to discrimination in the United States, which we will discuss later.

However, partly as a result of changes in American immigration laws, which before 1965 had virtually excluded them, Asians are today proportionately the nation’s fastest-growing racial category. Since 1970, Asians have constituted more than one-third (35 percent) of all legal immigrants, and the Asian population of the United States has increased by 648 percent, compared with increases by Hispanics of 219 percent, by American Indians of 179 percent, by African Americans of 50 percent, and by European Americans of 24 percent. By 1998 Asians numbered 10.2 million, which represented 3.8 percent of the American people. The rapid growth of the Asian American population is expected to continue during the twenty-first century, reaching over 40 million (or 10 percent of the population) by 2050 (Day 1993). Although almost all states have experienced substantial increases in Asian residents during the last quarter of the twentieth century, almost 40 percent of Asian Americans live in California, where they make up 10 percent of the state’s population (Barringer 1991; U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census online 1997).