

KEY ISSUE 2

Why Do Ethnicities Have Distinctive Distributions?

- International Migration of Ethnicities
- Internal Migration of African Americans
- Segregation by Ethnicity and Race

Learning Outcome 7.2.1

Describe the patterns of forced and voluntary migration of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans to the United States.

The clustering of ethnicities within the United States is partly a function of the same process that helps geographers to explain the distribution of other cultural factors, such as language and religion—namely migration. In Chapter 3, migration was divided into international (voluntary or forced) and internal (interregional and intraregional). The distribution of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans demonstrates all of these migration patterns.

International Migration of Ethnicities

Most African Americans are descended from Africans forced to migrate to the Western Hemisphere as slaves during the eighteenth century. Most Asian Americans and Hispanics are descended from voluntary immigrants to the United States during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, although some felt compelled for political reasons to come to the United States.

FORCED MIGRATION FROM AFRICA

Slavery is a system whereby one person owns another person as a piece of property and can force that slave to work for the owner's benefit. The first Africans brought to the American colonies as slaves arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, on a Dutch ship in 1619 (Figure 7-12). During the eighteenth century, the British shipped about 400,000 Africans to the 13 colonies that later formed the United States. In 1808 the United States banned bringing in additional Africans as slaves, but an estimated 250,000 were illegally imported during the next half-century.

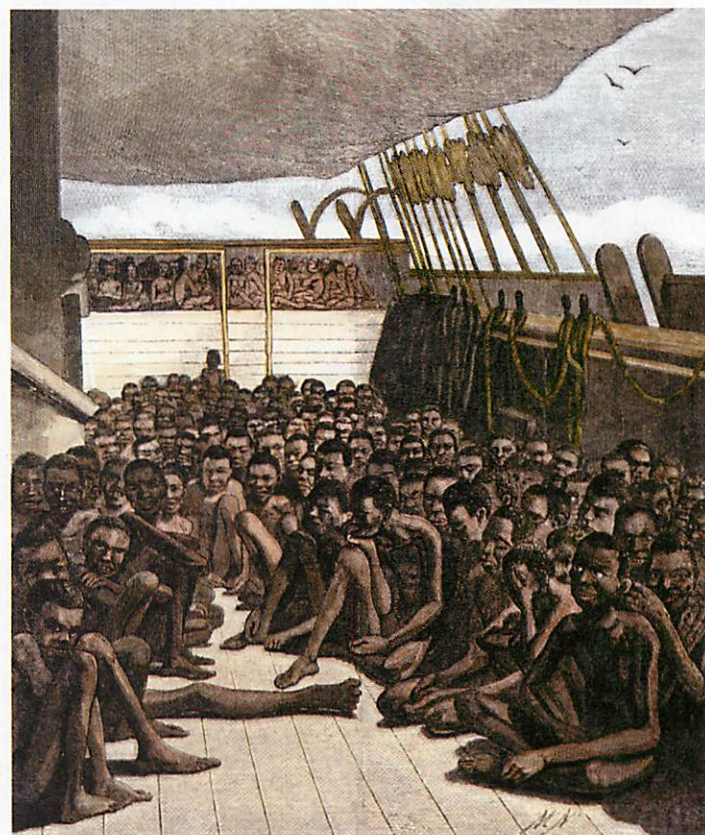
Slavery was widespread during the time of the Roman Empire, about 2,000 years ago. During the Middle Ages,

slavery was replaced in Europe by a feudal system, in which laborers working the land (known as serfs) were bound to the land and not free to migrate elsewhere. Serfs had to turn over a portion of their crops to the lord and provide other services, as demanded by the lord.

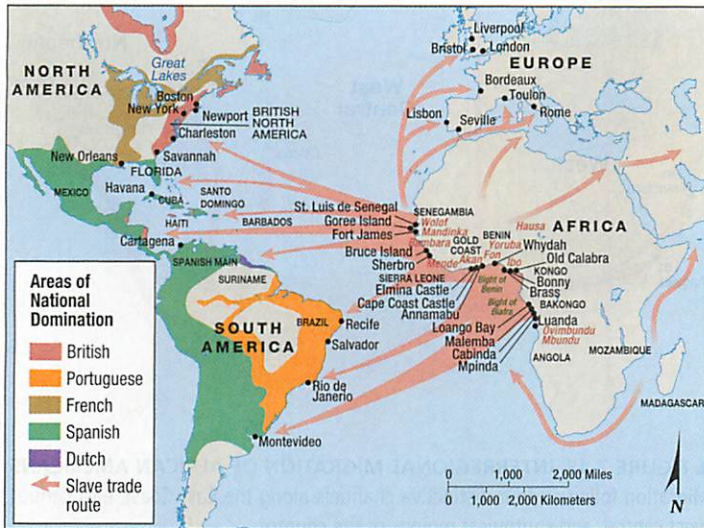
Although slavery was rare in Europe, Europeans were responsible for diffusing the practice to the Western Hemisphere. Europeans who owned large plantations in the Americas turned to African slaves as an abundant source of labor that cost less than paying wages to other Europeans.

At the height of the slave trade between 1710 and 1810, at least 10 million Africans were uprooted from their homes and sent on European ships to the Western Hemisphere for sale in the slave markets. During that period, the British and Portuguese each shipped about 2 million slaves to the Western Hemisphere, with most of the British slaves going to Caribbean islands and the Portuguese slaves to Brazil.

The forced migration began when people living along the east and west coasts of Africa, taking advantage of their superior weapons, captured members of other groups living farther inland and sold the captives to Europeans. Europeans in turn shipped the captured Africans to the Americas, selling them as slaves either on consignment or through auctions. The Spanish and Portuguese first participated in the slave trade in the early sixteenth century, and the British, Dutch, and French joined in during the next century.



▲ **FIGURE 7-12 SLAVE SHIP** This drawing made around 1845 for a French magazine shows the high density and poor conditions of Africans transported to the Western Hemisphere to become slaves.



▲ FIGURE 7-13 ORIGIN AND DESTINATION OF SLAVES Most slaves were transported across the Atlantic from West Africa to the Americas.

Different European countries operated in various regions of Africa, each sending slaves to different destinations in the Americas (Figure 7-13). At the height of the eighteenth-century slave demand, a number of European countries adopted the **triangular slave trade**, an efficient triangular trading pattern (Figure 7-14).

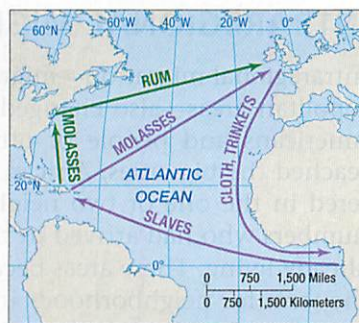
The large-scale forced migration of Africans caused them unimaginable hardship, separating families and destroying villages. Traders generally seized the stronger and younger villagers, who could be sold as slaves for the highest price. The Africans were packed onto ships at extremely high density, kept in chains, and provided with minimal food and sanitary facilities. Approximately one-fourth died crossing the Atlantic.

In the 13 colonies that later formed the United States, most of the large plantations in need of labor were located in the South, primarily those growing cotton as well as tobacco. Consequently, nearly all Africans shipped to the 13 colonies ended up in the Southeast.

Attitudes toward slavery dominated U.S. politics during the nineteenth century. During the early 1800s, when new states were carved out of western territory, anti-slavery northeastern states and pro-slavery southeastern states

► FIGURE 7-14 TRIANGULAR SLAVE TRADE

- Ships left Europe for Africa with cloth and other trade goods, used to buy the slaves.
- They then transported slaves and gold from Africa to the Western Hemisphere, primarily to the Caribbean islands.
- To complete the triangle, the same ships then carried sugar and molasses from the Caribbean on their return trip to Europe.



- Some ships added another step, making a rectangular trading pattern, in which molasses was carried from the Caribbean to the North American colonies and rum from the colonies to Europe.

bitterly debated whether to permit slavery in the new states. The Civil War (1861–1865) was fought to prevent 11 pro-slavery Southern states from seceding from the Union. In 1863, during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the 11 Confederate states. The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, adopted 8 months after the South surrendered, outlawed slavery.

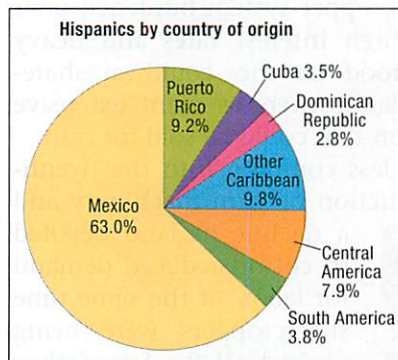
VOLUNTARY MIGRATION FROM LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA

Until the late twentieth century, quotas limited the number of people who could immigrate to the United States from Latin America and Asia, as discussed in Chapter 3. After the immigration laws were changed during the 1960s and 1970s, the population of Hispanics and Asian Americans in the United States increased rapidly. Initially, most Hispanics and Asian Americans were recent immigrants who came to the United States in search of work, but in the twenty-first century most Americans who identify themselves as Hispanics or Asian Americans are children or grandchildren of immigrants.

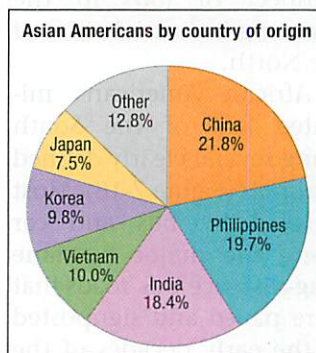
The rapid growth of Hispanics in the United States beginning in the 1970s was fueled primarily by immigration from Mexico and Puerto Rico (Figure 7-15).

Chinese comprise the largest share of Asian Americans, followed by Indians, Filipinos, Koreans, and Vietnamese (Figure 7-16). Most Asian Americans are either immigrants who arrived in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries or their offspring.

◀ FIGURE 7-15 HISPANICS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Mexicans comprise nearly two-thirds of Hispanics in the United States.



◀ FIGURE 7-16 ASIAN AMERICANS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians comprise one-fifth each of Asian Americans in the United States.



Internal Migration of African Americans

Learning Outcome 7.2.2

Describe the patterns of migration of African Americans within the United States.

African Americans have displayed two distinctive internal migration patterns within the United States during the twentieth century:

- Interregional migration from the U.S. South to northern cities during the first half of the twentieth century.
- Intraregional migration from inner-city ghettos to outer city and inner suburban neighborhoods during the second half of the twentieth century.

INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION

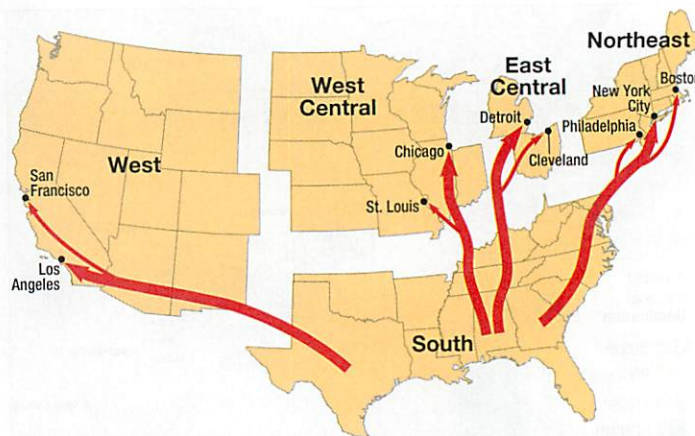
At the close of the Civil War, most African Americans were concentrated in the rural South. Today, as a result of interregional migration, many African Americans live in cities throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and West as well. Freed as slaves, most African Americans remained in the rural South during the late nineteenth century, working as sharecroppers (Figure 7-17). A **sharecropper** works fields rented from a landowner and pays the rent by turning over to the landowner a share of the crops. To obtain seed, tools, food, and living quarters, a sharecropper gets a line of credit from the landowner and repays the debt with yet more crops. The sharecropper system burdened poor African Americans with high interest rates and heavy debts. Instead of growing food that they could eat, sharecroppers were forced by landowners to plant extensive areas of crops such as cotton that could be sold for cash.

Sharecropping became less common into the twentieth century, as the introduction of farm machinery and a decline in land devoted to cotton reduced demand for labor. At the same time sharecroppers were being pushed off the farms, they were being pulled by the prospect of jobs in the booming industrial cities of the North.

African Americans migrated out of the South along several clearly defined channels (Figure 7-18). Most traveled by bus and car along the major two-lane long-distance U.S. roads that were paved and signposted in the early decades of the



▲ **FIGURE 7-17 SHARECROPPERS**
Thirteen-year-old African American sharecropper plowing, 1937.



▲ **FIGURE 7-18 INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS**
Migration followed four distinctive channels along the East Coast, east central, west central, and southwest regions of the country.

twentieth century and have since been replaced by interstate highways:

- **East Coast.** From the Carolinas and other South Atlantic states north to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and other northeastern cities, along U.S. Route 1 (parallel to present-day I-95).
- **East central.** From Alabama and eastern Tennessee north to either Detroit, along U.S. Route 25 (present-day I-75), or Cleveland, along U.S. Route 21 (present-day I-77).
- **West central.** From Mississippi and western Tennessee north to St. Louis and Chicago, along U.S. routes 61 and 66 (present-day I-55).
- **Southwest.** From Texas west to California, along U.S. routes 80 and 90 (present-day I-10 and I-20).

Southern African Americans migrated north and west in two main waves, the first in the 1910s and 1920s before and after World War I and the second in the 1940s and 1950s before and after World War II. The world wars stimulated expansion of factories in the 1910s and 1940s to produce war materiel, while the demands of the armed forces created shortages of factory workers. After the wars, during the 1920s and 1950s, factories produced steel, motor vehicles, and other goods demanded in civilian society.

INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION

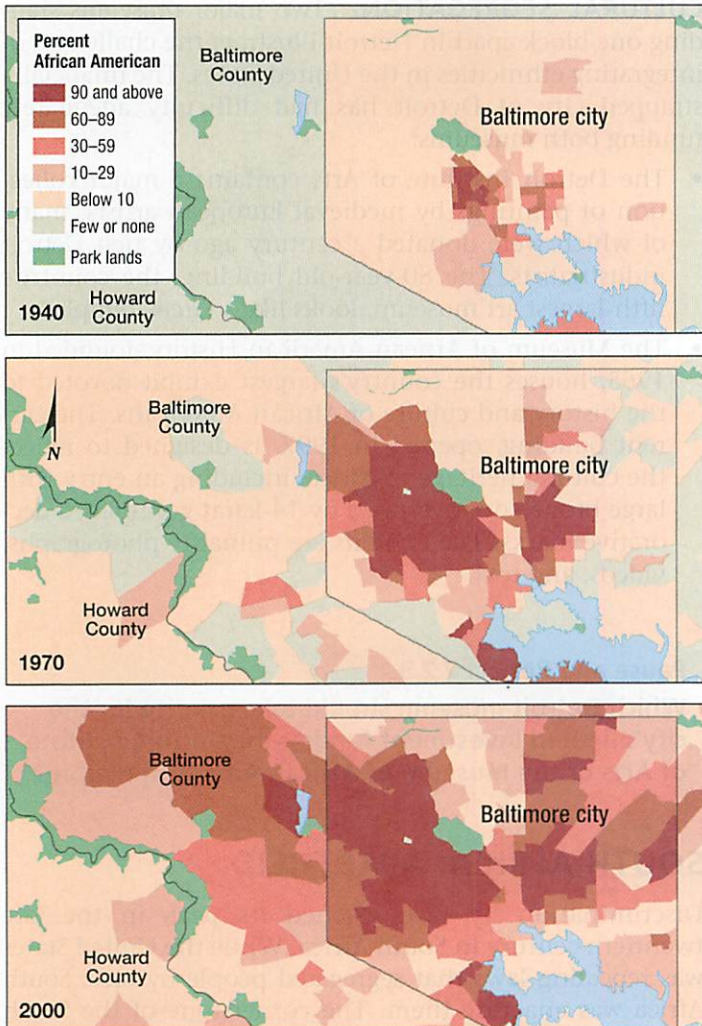
Intraregional migration—migration within cities and metropolitan areas—also changed the distribution of African Americans and people of other ethnicities. When they reached the big cities, African American immigrants clustered in the one or two neighborhoods where the small numbers who had arrived in the nineteenth century were already living. These areas became known as ghettos, after the term for neighborhoods in which Jews were forced to live in the Middle Ages (see Chapter 6).

EXPANSION OF THE GHETTO. African Americans moved from the tight ghettos into immediately adjacent neighborhoods during the 1950s and 1960s. Expansion of

the ghetto typically followed major avenues that radiated out from the center of the city.

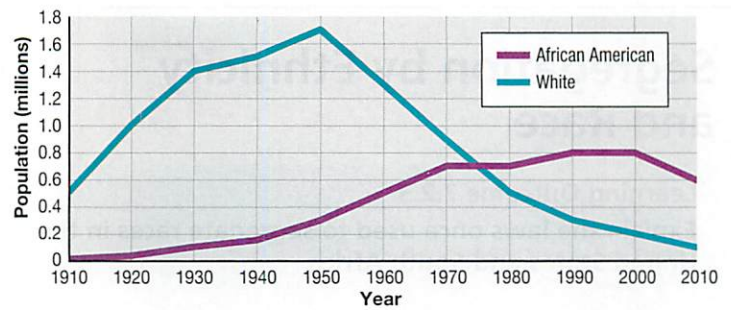
In Baltimore, for example, most of the city's quarter-million African Americans in 1950 were clustered in a 3-square-kilometer (1-square-mile) neighborhood northwest of downtown (Figure 7-19). The remainder were clustered east of downtown or in a large isolated housing project on the south side built for black wartime workers in port industries. Densities in the ghettos were high, with 40,000 inhabitants per square kilometer (100,000 per square mile) common. Contrast that density with the current level found in typical American suburbs of 2,000 inhabitants per square kilometer (5,000 per square mile). Because of the shortage of housing in the ghettos, families were forced to live in one room. Many dwellings lacked bathrooms, kitchens, hot water, and heat.

Baltimore's west side African American ghetto expanded from 3 square kilometers (1 square mile) in 1950 to 25 square kilometers (10 square miles) in 1970, and a



▲ FIGURE 7-19 EXPANSION OF THE GHETTO IN BALTIMORE

In 1950, most African Americans in Baltimore lived in a small area northwest of downtown. During the 1950s and 1960s, the African American area expanded to the northwest, along major radial roads, and a second node opened on the east side. The south-side African American area was an isolated public housing complex built for wartime workers in the nearby port industries.



▲ FIGURE 7-20 ETHNIC POPULATION CHANGE IN DETROIT

Between 1950 and 2010, the white population of Detroit declined from 1.7 million to 100,000 today, whereas the African American population increased from 300,000 to 600,000.

5-square-kilometer (2-square-mile) area on the east side became mainly populated by African Americans. Expansion of the ghetto continued to follow major avenues to the northwest and northeast in subsequent decades.

“WHITE FLIGHT.” The expansion of the black ghettos in American cities was made possible by “white flight,” the emigration of whites from an area in anticipation of blacks immigrating into the area. Rather than integrate, whites fled.

Detroit provides a clear example. African Americans poured into Detroit in the early twentieth century. Many found jobs in the rapidly growing auto industry (Figure 7-20). Immigration into Detroit from the South subsided during the 1950s, but as legal barriers to integration crumbled, whites began to emigrate out of Detroit. Detroit's white population dropped by about 1 million between 1950 and 1975 and by another half million between 1975 and 2000. As a result, the overall population of Detroit declined from a historic peak of nearly 2 million in 1950 to around 700,000 in the early twenty-first century.

White flight was encouraged by unscrupulous real estate practices, especially blockbusting. Under **blockbusting**, real estate agents convinced white homeowners living near a black area to sell their houses at low prices, preying on their fears that black families would soon move into the neighborhood and cause property values to decline. The agents then sold the houses at much higher prices to black families desperate to escape the overcrowded ghettos. Through blockbusting, a neighborhood could change from all-white to all-black in a matter of months, and real estate agents could start the process all over again in the next white area.

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, wrote in 1968 that U.S. cities were divided into two separate and unequal societies, one black and one white. A half-century later, despite serious efforts to integrate and equalize the two, segregation and inequality persist.

Pause and Reflect 7.2.2

Referring to Figure 7-20, which figure is higher in Detroit since 1950: the increasing number of African Americans or the decreasing number of whites?

Segregation by Ethnicity and Race

Learning Outcome 7.2.3

Explain the laws once used to segregate races in the United States and South Africa.

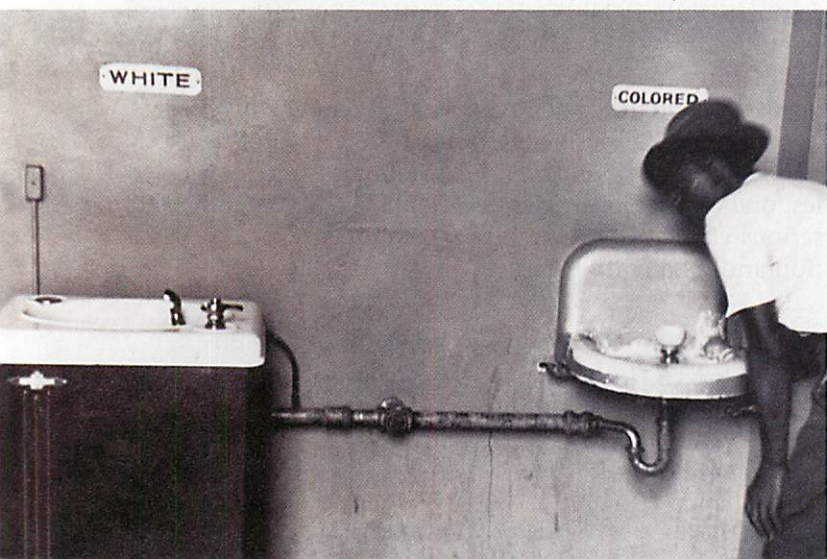
In explaining spatial regularities, geographers look for patterns of spatial interaction. A distinctive feature of ethnic relations in the United States and South Africa has been the strong discouragement of spatial interaction—in the past through legal means and today through cultural preferences or discrimination.

UNITED STATES: “SEPARATE BUT EQUAL”

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1896 upheld a Louisiana law that required black and white passengers to ride in separate railway cars. In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court stated that Louisiana’s law was constitutional because it provided separate, but equal, treatment of blacks and whites, and equality did not mean that whites had to mix socially with blacks.

SEGREGATION LAWS. Once the Supreme Court permitted “separate but equal” treatment of the races, southern states enacted a comprehensive set of laws to segregate blacks from whites as much as possible (Figure 7-21). These were called “Jim Crow” laws, named for a nineteenth-century song-and-dance act that depicted blacks offensively. Blacks had to sit in the backs of buses, and shops, restaurants, and hotels could choose to serve only whites. Separate schools were established for blacks and whites. This was equal, after all, white southerners argued, because the bus got blacks sitting in the rear to the destination at the same time as the whites in the front, some commercial

▼ **FIGURE 7-21 SEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES** Until the 1960s in the U.S. South, whites and blacks had to use separate drinking fountains, as well as separate restrooms, bus seats, hotel rooms, and other public facilities.



establishments served only blacks, and all of the schools had teachers and classrooms.

Throughout the country, not just in the South, house deeds contained restrictive covenants that prevented the owners from selling to blacks, as well as to Roman Catholics or Jews in some places. Restrictive covenants kept blacks from moving into an all-white neighborhood. And because schools, especially at the elementary level, were located to serve individual neighborhoods, most were segregated in practice, even if not by legal mandate.

U.S. segregation laws were eliminated during the 1950s and 1960s. The landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in 1954, found that having separate schools for blacks and whites was unconstitutional because no matter how equivalent the facilities, racial separation branded minority children as inferior and therefore was inherently unequal. A year later, the Supreme Court further ruled that schools had to be desegregated “with all deliberate speed.”

CULTURAL SEGREGATION. Two major museums standing one block apart in Detroit illustrate the challenges of integrating ethnicities in the United States. The financially strapped city of Detroit has had difficulty adequately funding both museums:

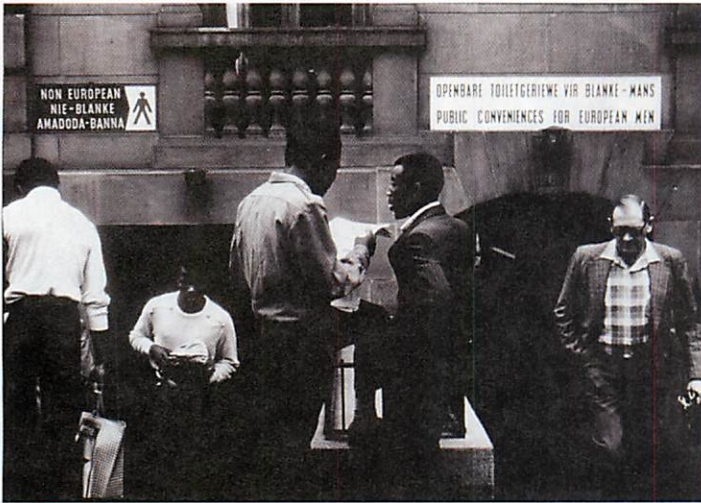
- The Detroit Institute of Arts contains a major collection of paintings by medieval European artists, many of which were donated a century ago by rich Detroit industrialists. The 80-year-old building, the country’s fifth-largest art museum, looks like a Greek temple.
- The Museum of African American History, founded in 1965, houses the country’s largest exhibit devoted to the history and culture of African Americans. The current building, opened in 1997, is designed to reflect the cultural heritage of Africa, including an entry with large bronze doors topped by 14-karat gold-plated decorative masks. The exhibits are primarily photographs, videos, and text.

Pause and Reflect 7.2.3

Which Detroit museum should take priority for the city’s limited investment funds—the Detroit Institute of Arts or the Museum of African American History?

SOUTH AFRICA: APARTHEID

Discrimination by race reached its peak in the late twentieth century in South Africa. While the United States was repealing laws that segregated people by race, South Africa was enacting them. The cornerstone of the South African policy was the creation of a legal system called apartheid (Figure 7-22). **Apartheid** was the physical separation of different races into different geographic areas. Although South Africa’s apartheid laws were repealed during the 1990s, it will take many years to erase the impact of those policies.



▲ **FIGURE 7-22 APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA** South Africa's apartheid laws were designed to spatially segregate races as much as possible. This 1984 image of City Hall in Johannesburg shows that whites and nonwhites were required to use separate bathrooms.

In South Africa, under apartheid, a newborn baby was classified as being one of four races—black, white, colored (mixed white and black), or Asian. Under apartheid, each of the four races had a different legal status in South Africa. The apartheid laws determined where different races could live, attend school, work, shop, and own land. Blacks were restricted to certain occupations and were paid far lower wages than were whites for similar work. Blacks could not vote or run for political office in national elections. The apartheid system was created by descendants of whites who arrived in South Africa from the Netherlands in 1652 and settled in Cape Town, at the southern tip of the territory. They were known either as Boers, from the Dutch word for “farmer,” or Afrikaners, from the word “Afrikaans,” the name of their language, which is a dialect of Dutch.

The British seized the Dutch colony in 1795 and controlled South Africa's government until 1948, when the Afrikaner-dominated Nationalist Party won elections. The Afrikaners gained power at a time when colonial rule was being replaced in the rest of Africa by a collection of independent states run by the local black population. The Afrikaners vowed to resist pressures to turn over South Africa's government to blacks, and the Nationalist Party created the apartheid laws in the next few years to perpetuate white dominance of the country. To ensure geographic isolation of different races, the South African government designated 10 so-called homelands for blacks (Figure 7-23). The white minority government expected every black to become a citizen of one of the homelands and to move there. More than 99 percent of the population in the 10 homelands was black.

The white-dominated government of South Africa repealed the apartheid laws in 1991. The principal anti-apartheid organization, the African National Congress, was legalized, and its leader, Nelson Mandela, was released



▲ **FIGURE 7-23 SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID HOMELANDS** As part of its apartheid system, the government of South Africa designated 10 homelands, expecting that ultimately every black would become a citizen of one of them. South Africa declared 4 of these homelands to be independent states, but no other country recognized the action. With the end of apartheid and the election of a black majority government, the homelands were abolished, and South Africa was reorganized into 9 provinces.

from jail after more than 27 years of imprisonment. When all South Africans were permitted to vote in national elections for the first time, in 1994, Mandela was overwhelmingly elected the country's first black president.

Now that South Africa's apartheid laws have been dismantled and the country is governed by its black majority, other countries have reestablished economic and cultural ties. However, the legacy of apartheid will linger for many years: South Africa's blacks have achieved political equality, but they are much poorer than white South Africans. Average income among white South Africans is about 10 times higher than that of blacks.

CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 2

Why Do Ethnicities Have Distinctive Distributions?

- ✓ Ancestors of African Americans immigrated to the United States primarily as slaves.
- ✓ Large numbers of African Americans migrated from the South to the North and West during the early twentieth century.
- ✓ In the United States, as well as in South Africa, segregation of races was legal for much of the twentieth century.