

The Obama Presidency



Anti-Americanism



America's Border Fence



Affirmative Action



Gay Marriage Showdowns



Crisis in Darfur



AND MORE...



# ISSUES IN RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND CLASS

SELECTION [REDACTED] RESEARCHER



# ISSUES IN RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND CLASS

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SELECTIONS FROM CQ RESEARCHER




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# Annotated Contents

## **Affirmative Action:**

### **Is It Time to End Racial Preferences?**

Since the 1970s, affirmative action has played a key role in helping minorities get ahead. But many Americans say school and job candidates should be chosen on merit, not race. This November, ballot initiatives in Colorado and Nebraska would eliminate race as a selection criterion for job or school candidates but would allow preferences for those trying to struggle out of poverty, regardless of their race. It's an approach endorsed by foes of racial affirmative action. Big states, meanwhile, including California and Texas, are still struggling to reconcile restrictions on the use of race in college admissions designed to promote diversity. Progress toward that goal has been slowed by a major obstacle: Affirmative action hasn't lessened the stunning racial disparities in academic performance plaguing elementary and high school education. Still, the once open hostility to affirmative action of decades ago has faded. Even some race-preference critics don't want to eliminate it entirely but seek ways to keep diversity without eroding admission and hiring standards.

## **Human Trafficking and Slavery: Are the World's Nations Doing Enough to Stamp It Out?**

From the villages of Sudan to the factories, sweatshops and brothels of India and South Asia, slavery and human trafficking still flourish. Some 27 million people worldwide are held in some form of slavery, forced prostitution or bonded labor. Some humanitarian groups buy captives' freedom, but critics say that only encourages slave traders to seize more victims. Meanwhile, nearly a million people are forcibly trafficked across international borders annually and held

in captivity. Even in the United States, thousands of women and children from overseas are forced to become sex workers. Congress recently strengthened the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, but critics say it is still not tough enough, and that certain U.S. allies that harbor traffickers are treated with “kid gloves” for political reasons.

### **Immigration Debate: Can Politicians Find a Way to Curb Illegal Immigration?**

The number of illegal immigrants in the country has topped 12 million, making immigration once again a central topic of debate. Moreover, with undocumented workers spreading far beyond traditional “gatekeeper” states such as California and Texas, complaints about illegal immigrants have become a daily staple of talk radio. Enacting tougher enforcement policies has become a dominant theme in the 2008 presidential campaign, particularly on the Republican side. Just in the past year, states and localities have passed hundreds of bills to crack down on employers and illegal immigrants seeking public benefits. But Congress has been unable to act, despite a bipartisan deal brokered last year by the Bush administration. A new administration and the next Congress will likely face what has proved so far an impossible task — curbing the number of immigrants without causing labor shortages in key economic sectors such as agriculture and hospitality.

### **Racial Diversity in Public Schools: Has the Supreme Court Dealt a Blow to Integration?**

Fifty years after the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools, a new ruling has raised doubts about how far local school boards can go to integrate classrooms. The court’s 5–4 ruling in cases from Seattle and Louisville bars school districts from using race as a factor in individual pupil assignments. Like many other school districts, the two school systems used racial classifications to promote diversity in the face of segregated housing patterns. But parents argued the plans improperly denied their children their school of choice because of race. Dissenting justices said the ruling was a setback for racial equality. In a pivotal concurrence, however, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said schools still have some leeway to pursue racial diversity. Meanwhile, some experts argue that socioeconomic integration — bringing

low-income and middle-class students together — is a more effective way to pursue educational equity.

### **Reparations Movement: Should Payments Be Made for Historical Wrongs?**

After the Civil War, efforts to compensate former slaves were blocked. Now calls are getting louder for payments to the descendants of slaves to help the nation come to terms with the injustice of slavery. But opponents worry that reparations would only widen the divide between the races. Meanwhile, survivors of the Nazi Holocaust have had considerable success in obtaining restitution from governments and corporations linked to Hitler’s “final solution.” Seeking reparations is not about money, they say, but about winning justice for the victims. But some Jewish Americans argue that the reparations movement has turned a historical tragedy into a quest for money. Other mistreated groups recently have picked up the call for reparations, including World War II “comfort women” and Australian Aborigines.

### **American Indians: Are They Making Meaningful Progress at Last?**

Winds of change are blowing through Indian Country, improving prospects for many of the nation’s 4.4 million Native Americans. The number of tribes managing their own affairs has increased dramatically, and an urban Indian middle class is quietly taking root. The booming revenues of many Indian-owned casinos seem the ultimate proof that Indians are overcoming a history of mistreatment, poverty and exclusion. Yet most of the gambling houses don’t rake in stratospheric revenues. And despite statistical upticks in socioeconomic indicators, American Indians are still poorer, more illness-prone and less likely to be employed than their fellow citizens. Meanwhile, tribal governments remain largely dependent on direct federal funding of basic services — funding that Indian leaders and congressional supporters decry as inadequate. But government officials say they are still providing essential services despite budget cuts.

### **America’s Border Fence: Will It Stem the Flow of Illegal Immigrants?**

America is rushing to build 670 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexican border by the end of the year. The fence — or wall, as critics along the border call it — is to



include 370 miles of fencing intended to stop illegal immigrants on foot and 300 miles of vehicle barriers. To speed construction, the Bush administration is using unprecedented authority granted by Congress to waive environmental-, historic- and cultural-protection laws. No one claims that building physical barriers along roughly a third of America's 2,000-mile Southern border will stem illegal immigration by itself, but supporters believe it is an essential first step in "securing the border," providing a critical line of defense against illegal migration, drug smugglers and even terrorists. Opponents see it as a multibillion-dollar waste that will only shift illegal immigrants toward more dangerous and difficult routes into the country, while doing environmental, cultural and economic damage.

### **China in Africa: Is China Gaining Control of Africa's Resources?**

China is expanding its presence and influence across Africa. Sino-African trade has jumped nearly six-fold in recent years, and some 800 Chinese businesses operate across the continent. After centuries of enslavement, colonization and failed economic policies imposed by the West, Africans are attracted by China's no-strings-attached model of aid and investment. But while China is helping to build new ports and roads, it also is inundating Africa with low-cost goods and labor, resulting in the loss of many African businesses and jobs. Moreover, China's ever-growing demand for oil and other natural resources has led it to invest in oil-rich countries like Sudan, which have been condemned by the West for genocidal practices or human-rights abuses. In response, the United States and other Western nations are playing catch-up in the race for African oil, while scrambling to hold onto their once-historic dominance over Africa's other resources and markets.

### **Anti-Semitism in Europe: Are Israel's Policies Spurring a New Wave of Hate Crimes?**

A wave of anti-Jewish attacks on individuals and synagogues has beset Europe since 2000, when the second Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation began. In France anti-Semitic youth gangs recently abducted and tortured two young Jewish men, one of whom was murdered. European soccer fans routinely taunt Jewish teams with Hitler salutes and chants, such as "Hamas, Hamas,

Jews to the gas!" And while anti-Semitic attacks overall dipped slightly in some countries, violent assaults on individuals spiked last year, reaching a record high in Britain. Some scholars worry that the "new anti-Semitism" incorporates anti-Zionist language, which has become increasingly acceptable — particularly among Palestinian sympathizers in academia and the media. But Israel's critics — some of whom are Jewish — warn that calling people anti-Semitic because they oppose Israel's treatment of the Palestinians confuses the public. If the charge is made too often, they suggest, people will become cynical and won't recognize genocidal evil when it occurs.

### **Anti-Americanism: Is Anger at the U.S. Growing?**

"We are all Americans," a banner headline in *Le Monde* declared after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. But the warm embrace from France and the rest of the global community was short-lived. The U.S. invasion of Iraq has unleashed a torrent of anger at the United States. Often directed at President George W. Bush and his policies, it takes aim at everything from the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison to the mounting death toll in Iraq to U.S. policies on climate change. Before the war, anti-Americanism had seemed the province of leftists who demonized capitalism, or those who resented America's unrelenting cultural influence — what some call the McGlobalization of the world. Now, anti-Americanism seems epidemic, especially in the Muslim world but also in Europe, Asia and Latin America. In European intellectual circles it has even become a badge of honor. Ironically, while resentment of the U.S. simmers, people seeking economic opportunity continue to emigrate to the U.S.

### **Crisis in Darfur: Is There Any Hope for Peace?**

More than two years after government and rebel fighters signed a peace agreement in Sudan, violence is still rampant in Darfur. At least 2.4 million people have been displaced and up to 400,000 have died since 2003. And observers say the situation is getting worse. Rebel groups have splintered into more than a dozen warring factions, bandits are attacking relief workers, and drought threatens to make next year among the deadliest in Darfur's history. Despite pressure from religious and human-rights groups, the international community seems unable — or unwilling — to find a lasting solution. A year after the

U.N. authorized the world's largest peacekeeping force in Darfur, only 37 percent of the authorized personnel have been deployed, and no military helicopters have been provided. The International Criminal Court is considering genocide charges against Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, but some fear an indictment would trigger more violence than justice. Some say China, Sudan's largest trading partner and arms supplier, should pressure Sudan to end the violence.

### **The Obama Presidency: Can Barack Obama Deliver the Change He Promises?**

As the 44th president of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama confronts a set of challenges more daunting perhaps than any chief executive has faced since the Great Depression and World War II. At home, the nation is in the second year of a recession that Obama warns may get worse before the economy starts to improve. Abroad, he faces the task of withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq, reversing the deteriorating conditions in Afghanistan and trying to ease the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Still, Obama begins his four years in office with the biggest winning percentage of any president in 20 years and a strong Democratic majority in both houses of Congress. In addition, as the first African-American president, Obama starts with a reservoir of goodwill from Americans and people and governments around the world. But he began encountering criticism and opposition from Republicans in his first days in office as he filled in the details of his campaign theme: "Change We Can Believe In."

### **Middle-Class Squeeze: Is More Government Aid Needed?**

Millions of families who once enjoyed the American dream of home ownership and upward financial mobility are sliding down the economic ladder — some into poverty. Many have been forced to seek government help for the first time. The plunging fortunes of working families are pushing the U.S. economy deeper into recession as plummeting demand for goods and services creates a downward economic spiral. A consumption binge and growing consumer debt beginning in the 1990s contributed to the middle-class squeeze, but the bigger culprits were exploding prices for necessities such as housing, medical care and college tuition, cuts in employer-funded benefits and, some say, government policies that favored

the wealthy. President Barack Obama has promised major aid for the middle class, and some economists are calling for new programs — most notably national health coverage — to assist working Americans.

### **Women's Rights: Are Violence and Discrimination Against Women Declining?**

Women around the world have made significant gains in the past decade, but tens of millions still face significant and often appalling hardship. Most governments now have gender-equality commissions, electoral gender quotas and laws to protect women against violence. But progress has been mixed. A record number of women now serve in parliaments, but only 14 of the world's 193 countries currently have elected female leaders. Globalization has produced more jobs for women, but they still constitute 70 percent of the world's poorest inhabitants and 64 percent of the illiterate. Spousal abuse, female infanticide, genital mutilation, forced abortions, bride-burnings, acid attacks and sexual slavery remain pervasive in some countries, and rape and sexual mutilation have reached epic proportions in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo. Experts say without greater economic, political and educational equality, the plight of women will not improve, and society will continue suffering the consequences.

### **Gay Marriage Showdowns: Will Voters Bar Marriage for Same-Sex Couples?**

The California Supreme Court gave gay rights advocates a major victory in May, ruling the state's constitution guarantees same-sex couples the same marriage rights as opposite-sex pairs. Thousands of same-sex couples from California and around the country have already taken advantage of the decision to obtain legal recognition from California for their unions. Opponents, however, have placed on the state's Nov. 4 ballot a constitutional amendment that would deny marriage rights to same-sex couples by defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Similar proposals are on the ballot in Arizona and Florida. The ballot-box showdowns come as nationwide polls indicate support for some legal protection for same-sex couples, but not necessarily marriage equality. In California, one early poll showed support for the ballot measure, but more recently it has been trailing. Opposing groups expect to spend about \$20 million each before the campaign ends.





# Preface

Is it time to end racial preferences? Can politicians find a way to curb illegal immigration? Are Israel's policies spurring a new wave of hate crimes? Are violence and discrimination against women declining? Will voters bar marriage for same-sex couples? Can Barack Obama deliver the change he promises? These questions and many more are addressed in a unique selection of articles for debate focused on race, ethnicity, gender and class offered exclusively through *CQ Researcher*, CQ Press and SAGE. This collection aims to promote in-depth discussion, facilitate further research, and help students formulate their own positions on crucial issues.

This first edition includes fifteen up-to-date reports by *CQ Researcher*, an award-winning weekly policy brief that brings complicated issues down to earth. This book is intended to supplement core courses in the sociology curriculum focused on race, ethnicity, gender and class. The contents are modeled after our text by Joseph F. Healey titled *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class, Fifth Edition (Election Update)*, and is similar to all of the mainstream texts in this area. This collection was carefully crafted to cover a range of issues, including affirmative action, immigration, hate crimes, women's rights, gay marriage, the Obama presidency and much more. This reader will help your students gain a deeper, more critical perspective of timely and important race, ethnicity, gender and class issues.

## **CQ RESEARCHER**

*CQ Researcher* was founded in 1923 as *Editorial Research Reports* and was sold primarily to newspapers as a research tool. The magazine

was renamed and redesigned in 1991 as *CQ Researcher*. Today, students are its primary audience. While still used by hundreds of journalists and newspapers, many of which reprint portions of the reports, the *Researcher's* main subscribers are now high school, college and public libraries. In 2002, *Researcher* won the American Bar Association's coveted Silver Gavel award for magazine excellence for a series of nine reports on civil liberties and other legal issues.

*Researcher* staff writers — all highly experienced journalists — sometimes compare the experience of writing a *Researcher* report to drafting a college term paper. Indeed, there are many similarities. Each report is as long as many term papers — about 11,000 words — and is written by one person without any significant outside help. One of the key differences is that writers interview leading experts, scholars and government officials for each issue.

Like students, staff writers begin the creative process by choosing a topic. Working with the *Researcher's* editors, the writer identifies a controversial subject that has important public policy implications. After a topic is selected, the writer embarks on one to two weeks of intense research. Newspaper and magazine articles are clipped or downloaded, books are ordered and information is gathered from a wide variety of sources, including interest groups, universities and the government. Once the writers are well informed, they develop a detailed outline, and begin the interview process. Each report requires a minimum of ten to fifteen interviews with academics, officials, lobbyists and people working in the field. Only after all interviews are completed does the writing begin.

## CHAPTER FORMAT

Each issue of *CQ Researcher*, and therefore each selection in this book, is structured in the same way. Each begins with an overview, which briefly summarizes the areas that will be explored in greater detail in the rest of the chapter. The next section chronicles important and current debates on the topic under discussion and is structured around a number of key questions. These questions are usually the subject of much debate among practitioners and scholars in the field. Hence, the answers presented are never conclusive but detail the range of opinion on the topic.

Next, the "Background" section provides a history of the issue being examined. This retrospective covers

important legislative measures, executive actions and court decisions that illustrate how current policy has evolved. Then the "Current Situation" section examines contemporary policy issues, legislation under consideration and legal action being taken. Each selection concludes with an "Outlook" section, which addresses possible regulation, court rulings and initiatives from Capitol Hill and the White House over the next five to ten years.

Each report contains features that augment the main text: two to three sidebars that examine issues related to the topic at hand, a pro versus con debate between two experts, a chronology of key dates and events and an annotated bibliography detailing major sources used by the writer.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank many people for helping to make this collection a reality. Tom Colin, managing editor of *CQ Researcher*, gave us his enthusiastic support and cooperation as we developed this edition. He and his talented staff of editors and writers have amassed a first-class library of *Researcher* reports, and we are fortunate to have access to that rich cache. We also wish to thank our colleagues at CQ Press, a division of SAGE and a leading publisher of books, directories, research publications and Web products on U.S. government, world affairs and communications. They have forged the way in making these readers a useful resource for instruction across a range of undergraduate and graduate courses.

Some readers may be learning about *CQ Researcher* for the first time. We expect that many readers will want regular access to this excellent weekly research tool. For subscription information or a no-obligation free trial of *CQ Researcher*, please contact CQ Press at [www.cqpress.com](http://www.cqpress.com) or toll-free at 1-866-4CQ-PRESS (1-866-427-7737).

We hope that you will be pleased by this edition of *Issues in Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class: Selections From CQ Researcher*. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future editions. Please direct comments to David Repetto, Sr. Acquisitions Editor, Pine Forge Press, an Imprint of SAGE Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, or [david.repetto@sagepub.com](mailto:david.repetto@sagepub.com).

—The Editors of SAGE



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