

**A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed., Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, David W. Blight, Howard P. Chudacoff, Fredrik Logevall, Beth Bailey, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle, Jr., MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. [13- ]**

[861, 864-867]

### **The New Politics of Identity**

By the end of the 1960s, as divisions continued to deepen among the American people, movements for social justice and racial equality had become stronger, louder, and often more radical. The civil rights movement, begun in a quest for equal rights and integration, splintered as many young African Americans turned away from the tactics of nonviolence, rejected integration for separatism, and embraced a distinct African American culture. Mexican Americans and Native Americans, inspired by the civil rights movement to struggle against their own marginalization in American society, had created powerful "Brown Power" and "Red Power" movements by the early 1970s. Like young African Americans, they demanded not only equal rights but recognition of their distinct cultures. These movements fueled the development of a new "identity politics." Advocates of identity politics believed that differences among American racial and ethnic groups were critically important. Group identity, these Americans argued, must be the basis for political action. And government and social leaders must stop imagining the American public as individuals and instead address the needs of different identity-based groups.

### **African American Cultural Nationalism**

By 1970, most African American activists no longer sought political power and racial justice through the universalist claim of the civil rights movement: "We are all the same but for the color of our skins." Instead, they emphasized the distinctiveness of black culture and society. These ideas attracted a large following, even among older, less radical people. Many black Americans had been powerfully disillusioned by the racism that outlasted the end of legal segregation. Many had come to believe that integration would mean subordination in a white-dominated society that had no respect for their history and cultural traditions.

In the early 1970s, though mainstream groups such as the NAACP continued to seek political and social office in Washington, D.C., and then in 1973 a trading post at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, where U.S. Army troops had massacred three hundred Sioux men, women, and children in 1890.

At the same time, more moderate activists, working through pan-tribal organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians and the Native American Rights Fund, lobbied Congress for greater rights and resources to govern themselves and to strengthen their tribal cultures. In response to those demands, Congress and the federal courts returned millions of acres of land to tribal ownership, and in 1975 Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Despite these successes, conditions for most Native Americans remained grim during the 1970s and 1980s: American Indians had a higher rate of tuberculosis, alcoholism, and suicide than any other group. Nine of ten lived in substandard housing, and unemployment rates for Indians were almost 40 percent.

### **Affirmative Action**

As activists from various groups made all Americans increasingly aware of discrimination and inequality, policymakers struggled to frame remedies. As early as 1965, President Johnson had acknowledged the limits of civil rights legislation. "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' " Johnson told an audience at Howard University, "and still justly believe that you have been completely fair." In this speech, Johnson called for "not just legal

equality... but equality as a fact and equality as a result." Here Johnson joined his belief that the federal government must help individuals attain the skills necessary to compete in American society to a new concept: equality could be measured by group outcomes or results.

Practical issues also contributed to the shift in emphasis from individual opportunity to group outcomes. The 1964 Civil Rights Act had outlawed discrimination but seemingly had stipulated that action could be taken only when an employer "intentionally engaged" in discrimination against an individual. This individual, case-by-case approach to equal rights created a nightmare for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The tens of thousands of cases filed suggested a pervasive pattern of racial and sexual discrimination in American education and employment, but each required proof of "intentional" actions against an individual. Some people were beginning to argue that it was possible, instead, to prove discrimination by "results" -- by the relative number of African Americans or women, for example, an employer had hired or promoted.

In 1969, the Nixon administration implemented the first major government affirmative-action program to promote "equality of results." The Philadelphia Plan (so called because it targeted government contracts in that city) required businesses contracting with the federal government to show (in the words of President Nixon) "affirmative action to meet the goals of increasing minority employment" and set specific numerical "goals, ' or quotas, for employers. Affirmative action for women and members of racial and ethnic minorities was soon required by all major government contracts, and many large corporations and educational institutions began their own programs.

Supporters saw affirmative action as a way to address the lasting effects of past discrimination. Critics (some of whom were supporters of racial and sexual equality) argued that attempts to create proportional representation for women and minorities meant discrimination against other individuals who had not created past discrimination, and that group-based remedies violated the principle that individuals should be judged on their own merits. As affirmative-action programs began to have an impact in hiring and university admissions, bringing members of underrepresented groups into college classrooms, law firms, schoolrooms, construction companies, police stations, and firehouses nationwide, a deepening recession made jobs scarce. Thus, increasing the number of minorities and women hired often meant reducing the number of white men. White working class men, who were most adversely affected by the policy, often reacted with anger and resentment.

### **The Women's Movement and Gay Liberation**

During the 1950s, even as more and more women joined the paid work force and participated in the political life of the nation, American society and culture emphasized women's private roles as wives and mothers. The women's movement that had won, American women the vote in the 1920s had all but disappeared. But during the 1960s, a "second wave" of the American women's movement emerged, and by the 1970s mainstream and radical activists had joined to wage a multifront battle for "women's liberation."

The key event that marked the reemergence of the, women's movement in the postwar era was the surprise popularity of Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*. Writing as a housewife and mother (though she had a long history of political activism, as well), Friedan described "the problem with no name," the dissatisfaction of educated, middle-class wives and mothers like herself, who -- looking at their nice homes and families -- wondered guiltily if that was all there was to life. This "problem" was not new; the vague sense of dissatisfaction plaguing housewives was a staple topic for women's magazines in the 1950s. But Friedan, instead of blaming individual women for failing to adapt to women's proper role, blamed the role itself and the society that

created it.

### **Liberal and Radical Feminism**

The organized, liberal wing of the women's movement emerged in 1966, with the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW, made up primarily of educated, professional women, was a traditional lobbying group; its goal was to pressure the EEOC to enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act (see page 837). Racial discrimination was the EEOC's focus, and discrimination on the basis of sex was such a low priority that the topic could be treated as a joke. When a reporter asked EEOC chair Franklin Roosevelt Jr., "What about sex?" Roosevelt laughed: "Don't get me started. I'm all for it." Women who faced workplace discrimination were not amused by such comments, and by 1970, NOW had one hundred chapters with more than three thousand members nationwide.

Another strand of the women's movement developed from the nation's increasingly radical movements for social justice. In 1968, a group of women gathered outside the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City to protest the "degrading mindless-boob girlie symbol" represented by the beauty pageant. Though nothing was burned, the pejorative 1970s term for feminists, "bra-burners," came from this event, in which women threw items of "enslavement" (girdles, high heels, curlers, and bras) into a "Freedom Trashcan." Many of these young women, as well as others who helped create a radical feminist movement, had been active in the movements for civil rights or against the war in Vietnam. But even in groups dedicated to social change, they found themselves treated as second-class citizens. Too often, they made coffee, not policy. As they analyzed America's social and political structure, these young women began to discuss their own oppression, and the oppression of all women, in American society.

The feminism embraced by these young activists was never a single, coherent set of beliefs. Some argued that the world should be governed by peaceful, noncompetitive values they believed were intrinsically female; others claimed that society imposed gender roles and that there were no innate differences between men and women. Most radical feminists, however, practiced what they called "personal politics." They believed, as feminist author Charlotte Bunch explained, that "there is no private domain of a person's life that is not political, and there is no political issue that is not ultimately personal." Some of these young women began to meet in "consciousness-raising" groups to discuss how, in their everyday lives, women were subordinated by men and by a patriarchal society. In the early 1970s, women throughout the nation came together in suburban kitchens, college dorm rooms, and churches or synagogues to create their own consciousness-raising groups, exploring topics such as power relationships in romance and marriage, sexuality, abortion, healthcare, work, and family.

### **Accomplishments of the Women's Movement**

During the 1970s, the diverse groups that made up the women's movement claimed significant achievements. On March 22, 1972, after massive lobbying by women's organizations, Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. The amendment stated simply that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." By the end of the year twenty-two states (of the thirty-eight necessary to amend the Constitution) had ratified the ERA. Also in 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Higher Education Act, which prevented federal funds from going to any college or university that discriminated against women. As a result, universities began to channel money to women's athletics, and women's participation in sports boomed.

Feminists worked for reforms that touched all aspects of American life. At the state and local level, women challenged understandings of rape such as the one voiced by a psychiatrist at the University of Kansas student health center in 1970: "A woman sometimes plays a big part in provoking her attacker by... her overall attitude and appearance." By the end of the decade, activists working on the state and local level had

established rape crisis centers, educated local police and hospital officials about procedures to protect survivors of rape, and even succeeded in changing laws.

Feminists also questioned the ways women were treated by the medical establishment. Our Bodies, Ourselves was created by the Boston Women's Health Collective in 1971 to help women understand -- and take control over -- their own sexual and reproductive health. Women who sought the right to safe and legal abortions won a major victory in 1973 when the Supreme Court, in a 7-2 decision on Roe v. Wade, ruled that privacy rights protected a woman's choice to end a pregnancy.

Women greatly increased their roles in religious organizations, including the Church of Christ, the Unitarian and Episcopalian churches, and Reform and Conservative Judaism, and more religious denominations accepted the ordination of women. Finally, women made enormous gains in the workplace and in education during the decade. In 1970, only 8.4 percent of medical school graduates and 5.4 percent of law school graduates were women. In 1979, those percentages had climbed to 23 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively; they would continue to grow. Colleges and universities also established women's studies departments, and by 1980 more than thirty thousand college courses focused on the study of women or gender relations.

### **Opposition to the Women's Movement**

The women's movement encompassed a broad range of women, but it also was met by powerful opposition, much of it from women. Many women believed that middle-class feminists did not understand the realities of their world. They had no desire to be "equal" if that meant giving up traditional gender roles in marriage or going out to work at low-wage, physically exhausting jobs. African American women and Chicanas, many of whom had been active in movements for the liberation of their peoples and some of whom had helped create second-wave feminism, often came to regard feminism as a "white" movement that ignored their cultural traditions and needs; some believed that the women's movement diverted time and energy away from the fight for racial equality.

Organized opposition to feminism came primarily from conservative, often religiously motivated men and women. As one conservative Christian writer claimed, "The Bible clearly states that the wife is to submit to her husband's leadership... just as she would to Christ her Lord." Such religious beliefs, along with fears about changing gender roles and expectations, fueled a movement to stop ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The STOP-ERA movement was led by Phyllis Schlafly, a lawyer and prominent conservative political activist. Schlafly argued that ERA supporters were 'a bunch of bitter women seeking a constitutional cure for their personal problems.' She attacked the women's movement as "a total assault on the role of the American woman as wife and mother, and on the family as the basic unit of society." Schlafly and her supporters argued that the ERA would decriminalize rape, force Americans to use unisex toilets, and make women subject to the military draft.

Many women saw feminism as an attack on the choices they had made and felt that by opposing the ERA they were defending their traditional roles. In the fight against the ERA, tens of thousands of women became politically experienced; they fed a growing grassroots conservative movement that would come into its own in the 1980s. And by the mid-1970s, the STOP-ERA movement had stalled the Equal Rights Amendment. Despite a congressional extension of the ratification deadline, the amendment would fall three states short of ratification and expire in 1982.

### **Gay Liberation**

At the beginning of the 1970s, gay men and lesbians faced widespread discrimination. Consensual sexual intercourse between people of the same sex was illegal in almost every state, and until 1973 homosexuality was labeled a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. Homosexual couples did not receive partnership benefits such as health insurance; they could not marry or adopt children. The issue of gay and lesbian rights divided even progressive organizations: in 1970 the

New York City chapter of NOW expelled its lesbian officers. As open racism declined, gay men and women remained targets of discrimination in hiring and endured public ridicule, harassment, and physical attacks.

Gay men and lesbians, unlike most members of racial minorities, could conceal the identity that made them vulnerable to discrimination and harassment. Remaining "in the closet" offered individuals some protection, but that option also made it very difficult to organize a political movement. There were small "homophile" organizations, such as the Mattachine Society (named for the Societe Mattachine, a medieval musical organization whose members performed in masks, to evoke the "masked" lives of gay Americans) and the Daughters of Bilitis (after a work of love poems between women), that had worked for gay rights since the 1950s. But the symbolic beginning of the gay liberation movement came on June 28, 1969, when New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. (New York City law made it illegal for more than three homosexual patrons to occupy a bar at the same time.) That night, for the first time, patrons stood up to the police. As word spread through New York's gay community, hundreds more joined the confrontation. The next morning, New Yorkers found a new slogan spray-painted on neighborhood walls: Gay Power.

Inspired by the Stonewall riot, some men and women decided the time had come to work openly and militantly for gay rights. They focused on a dual agenda: legal equality and the promotion of Gay Pride. In a version of the identity politics adopted by racial and ethnic communities, some rejected the notion of fitting into straight (heterosexual) culture and helped create distinctive gay communities and lifestyles. "Look out, straights," wrote gay liberation activist Martha Shelley in 1970. "We're gonna make our own revolution." By 1973, there were about eight hundred gay organizations in the United States. Centered in big cities and on college campuses, most organizations tried to create supportive environments for gay men and lesbians to come "out of the closet." Once "out," they could use their numbers ("We are everywhere" was a popular slogan) to push for political reform, such as nondiscrimination statutes similar to those that protected women and racial minority groups. By the end of the decade, gay men and lesbians had become a public political force in several cities, especially New York, Miami, and San Francisco, and played an increasingly visible role in the social and political life of the nation.

(photo) In 1970, young women marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of women's suffrage in the United States and demanding "women's liberation." Throughout the decade, Americans would struggle over the meaning of equality and the proper roles for men and for women in American society. (John Olsen)

[882-883]

### **Sexuality and the Family**

One such self-help book was *The Joy of Sex* (1972), which sold 3.8 million copies in two years. Sex became much more visible in America's public culture during the 1970s as network television loosened its regulation of sexual content. At the beginning of the 1960s, married couples in television shows were required to occupy twin beds; in the 1970s, hit television shows included *Three's Company*, a situation comedy based on the then-scandalous premise that a single man shared an apartment with two beautiful female roommates -- and got away with it only by pretending to their suspicious landlord that he was gay. *Charlie's Angels*, another major television hit, capitalized on what people called the "jiggle factor," and displayed (for the time) lots of bare female flesh. The major youth fad of the era was "streaking," running naked through public places. Donna Summers's 1975 disco hit, "Love to Love You Baby," contained sixteen minutes of sexual moaning. And though very few Americans participated in heterosexual orgies at New York City's Plato's Retreat, many knew about them through a *Time* magazine feature story.

Sexual behaviors had also changed. The seventies were the era of singles bars and gay bathhouses, and some Americans led sexual lives virtually unrestrained by the old rules. For most Americans, however, the major changes brought about by the "sexual revolution" were a broader public acceptance of premarital sex and a limited acceptance of homosexuality, especially among more educated Americans. More and more heterosexual young people "lived together" without marriage during the 1970s; the census bureau even coined the term "POSSLQ" (persons of opposite sex sharing living quarters) to describe the relationship. When First Lady Betty Ford said on 60 Minutes that she wouldn't be surprised if her then-seventeen-year-old daughter Susan began a sexual relationship, it was clear that much had changed in the course of a decade.

Changes in sexual mores and in the roles possible for women helped to alter the shape of the American family as well. Both men and women married later than in recent decades, and American women had fewer children. The birth rate had dropped almost 40 percent from its 1957 peak by the end of the 1970s. Almost a quarter of young single women in 1980 said they did not plan to have children. And a steadily rising percentage of babies were born to unmarried women, as the number of families headed by never-married women rose 400 percent during the 1970s. The divorce rate also rose, in part because states implemented "no fault" divorce, which did not require evidence of adultery, physical cruelty, abandonment, or other wrongdoing. While families seemed less stable in the 1970s than in the previous postwar decades, Americans also developed a greater acceptance of various family forms (the blended family of television's Brady Bunch, for example), and many young couples sought greater equality between the sexes in romantic relationships or marriages.

### **Diversity**

The racial-justice and identity movements of the late 1960s and 1970s made all Americans more aware of differences among the nation's peoples -- an awareness made stronger by the great influx of new immigrants, not from Europe but from Latin America and Asia following changes in immigration law during the mid-1960s. It was a challenge, however, to figure out how to acknowledge the new importance of "difference" in public policy. The solution developed in the 1970s was the idea of "diversity." Difference was not a problem but a strength; the nation should not seek policies to diminish differences among its peoples but should instead seek to foster the "diversity" of its schools, workplaces, and public culture.

One major move in this direction came in the 1978 Supreme Court decision *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*. Allan Bakke, a thirty-three-year-old white man with a strong academic record, had been denied admission to the medical school of the University of California at Davis. Bakke sued, charging that he had been denied "equal protection" of the law because the medical school's affirmative-action program reserved 16 percent of its slots for racial-minority candidates, who were held to lower standards than other applicants. The case set off furious debates nationwide over the legitimacy of affirmative action. In 1978 the Supreme Court, in a split decision, decided in favor of Bakke. Four justices argued that any race-based decision violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964; four saw affirmative-action programs as constitutionally acceptable remedies for past discrimination. The deciding vote, though for Bakke, contained an important qualification. A "diverse student body," Justice Lewis Powell wrote, is "a constitutionally permissible goal for an institution of higher education." To achieve the positive quality of "diversity," educational institutions could take race into account when making decisions about admissions.

[906-907]

### **"Culture Wars"**

Though the New Right often found an ally in the Reagan White House, many other Americans vigorously opposed a movement they saw as preaching a doctrine of intolerance and threatening basic freedoms -- including the freedom of religion for those

whose beliefs did not accord with the conservative Christianity of the New Right. In 1982, the politically progressive television producer Norman Lear, influential former congresswoman Barbara Jordan, and other prominent figures from the fields of business, religion, politics, and entertainment founded People for the American Way to support American civil liberties and freedoms, the separation of church and state, and the values of tolerance and diversity. The struggle between the religious right and their opponents for the future of the nation came to be known as the "culture wars."

It was not only organized groups, however, that opposed the agenda of the religious right. Many beliefs of Christian fundamentalists ran counter to the ways most Americans lived -- especially when it came to women's roles. The women's movement, like the civil rights movement, had brought about significant changes in American society. By the 1980s, a generation of girls had grown up expecting freedoms and opportunities their mothers never had. Legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX (see pages 837 and 865) had opened both academic and athletic programs to girls and women. In 1960, there were thirty-eight male lawyers for every female lawyer in the United States; by 1983, the ratio was 5.5 to 1. By 1985, more than half of married women with children under three worked outside the home. The religious right's insistence that women's place was in the home, subordinated to her husband, contradicted not only the gains made toward sexual equality in American society but also the reality of many women's lives.

### **The New Inequality**

As Americans fought the "culture wars" of the 1980s, another major social divide threatened the nation. A 1988 national report on race relations looked back to the 1968 Kerner Commission report to claim: "America is again becoming two separate societies," white and black. It argued that African Americans endured poverty, segregation, and crime in inner-city ghettos while most whites lived comfortably in suburban enclaves. In fact, America's separate societies of comfort and hardship were not wholly determined by race. The majority of America's poor were white, and the black middle class was strong and expanding. But people of color made up a disproportionate share of America's poor. In 1980, 33 percent of blacks and 26 percent of Latinos lived in poverty, compared with 10 percent of whites (see Figure 32.3).

Reasons for poverty varied. For people of color, the legacies of racism played a role. The changing job structure was partly responsible, as the overall number of well-paid jobs for unskilled workers decreased, replaced by lower-paid service jobs. New York alone had 234,000 fewer blue-collar workers in 1980 than at the beginning of the 1970s. In addition, families headed by a single mother were more likely to be poor -- five times more likely than families of the same race maintained by a married couple. By 1990, a high rate of unwed pregnancy and a rising divorce rate meant that about a quarter of all children lived in households without fathers. Racial differences were significant: by 1992, 59 percent of African American children and 17 percent of white children lived in female-headed households, and almost half of black children lived in poverty.

### **Social Crisis in American Cities**

As inequality increased, so too did social pathology. In impoverished and often hopeless inner-city neighborhoods, violent crime -- particularly homicides and gang warfare -- grew alarmingly, as did school dropout rates, crime rates, and child abuse. Some poverty-stricken men and women tried to find escape in hard drugs, especially crack, a derivative of cocaine, which first struck New York City's poorest neighborhoods in 1985. Crack's legacy included destroyed families, abused children, and heavily armed teenage drug dealers. Gang shootouts over drugs were deadly: the toll in Los Angeles in 1987 was 387 deaths; more than half of the victims were innocent bystanders. Shocked by the violence, many states instituted mandatory prison sentences for possessing small amounts of crack, making penalties for a gram of crack equivalent to those for 100 grams of cocaine, the drug of choice for more-affluent, white Americans during the

1980s. Owing in large part to drug-sentencing policies, America's prison population grew almost four fold from 1980 to the mid-1990s, with black and Latino youth arrested in disproportionate numbers. By 2000, young black men were more likely to have been arrested than to have graduated from a four-year college.

Rates of homelessness also grew during the 1980s. Some of the homeless were impoverished families; many of the people living on the streets had problems with drugs or alcohol. About a third of the homeless were former psychiatric patients discharged from psychiatric wards in a burst of enthusiasm for "deinstitutionalization." By 1985, 80 percent of the total number of beds in state mental hospitals had been eliminated on the premise that small neighborhood programs would be more responsive to people's needs than large state hospitals. Such local programs failed to materialize. Without adequate medical supervision and medication, many of America's mentally ill citizens wandered the streets.

(photo) The Reverend Jerry Falwell, an evangelical preacher whose "Old Time Gospel Hour" program reached 15 million Americans, founded the Moral Majority in 1979. This conservative political action group drew support from fundamentalist Christians and played a major role in the political elections of the 1980s. (Dennis Brack/BlackStar) [941-943]

### **A More Diverse Culture**

American popular culture embraced the influences of this new multiethnic population. Economics were important: the buying power of the growing Latino population exceeded \$561 billion in 2000, and average income for Asian American households topped all other groups. But American audiences also crossed racial and ethnic lines. Superstar Jennifer Lopez (of Puerto Rican descent) was the most "bankable" musician/actress in the nation; black basketball great Michael Jordan had more commercial endorsements than any other celebrity in America's history. Latin dancing styles swept the club scene; white teens in the nation's suburbs took up urban rap and hip-hop culture. Golfer Tiger Woods became a symbol of this new, hybrid, multiethnic nation: of African, European, Native American, Thai, and Chinese descent, he calls himself "Cablinasian" (CAucasian-BLack-INDian-ASIAN).

### **The Changing American Family**

Americans were divided over the meaning of other changes, as well -- especially the changing shape of American families (see Figure 33.4). The number of people living together without marriage jumped 72 percent during the 1990s, to 5.5 million. Of those, at least 600,000 were same-sex couples -- perhaps 1 percent of households nationwide. A third of female-partner households and one-fifth of male-partner households had children, and in 2002 the American Academy of Pediatrics endorsed adoption by gay couples. A vocal antigay movement coexisted with rising support for the legal equality of gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual Americans. While many states and private corporations extended domestic-partner benefits to gay couples, the federal Defense of Marriage Act, passed by Congress in 1996, defined marriage as "only" a union between one man and one woman.

More children were born outside marriage than ever before -- almost a third of all children, and more than two-thirds of those born to African American women. Mothers of small children commonly worked outside the home, and in the majority of married-couple families with children under eighteen, both parents held jobs. The divorce rate stayed high; statistically, a couple that married in the late 1990s had about a 50-50 chance of divorce. While almost a third of families with children had only one parent present -- usually the mother -- children also lived in blended families created by second marriages, or moved back and forth between households of parents who had joint custody.

### **New Technologies and New Challenges**

Increasingly, new reproductive technologies allowed infertile women or couples to



conceive and bear children. In 2000, more than 100,000 attempted in vitro fertilizations -- in which sperm and egg combine in a sterile dish or test tube and the fertilized egg or eggs are then transferred to the uterus -- resulted in the birth of more than 35,000 babies. From the beginning, such techniques have raised legal and ethical questions. What are the comparable rights and responsibilities of sperm and egg donors, the woman who carries the fetus, and male and female prospective parents? At the same time, the children these new technologies made possible have brought joy to many families.

This rapidly developing field of biogenetics offers even more possibilities for good, and also even knottier philosophical and ethical conundrums. The five- or six-cell blastocytes formed by the initial division of fertilized eggs during in vitro procedures contain stem cells, unspecialized cells that can be induced to become cells with specialized functions. For example, stem cells might become insulin-producing cells of the pancreas -- and thus a cure for diabetes; or they might become dopamine-producing neurons, offering therapy for Parkinson's disease, a progressive disorder of the nervous system affecting over 1 million Americans. President Bush, in 2001, acknowledged the "tremendous hope" promised by this research but called embryonic stem cell research "the leading edge of a series of moral hazards," including the possibility of cloning humans for spare body parts. In a highly controversial decision, Bush limited federally funded research to the existing seventy-eight stem cell lines, not all of which are viable for research.

### **Century of Chance**

For middle-aged and older Americans, the stem cell debate was another indicator of the rapid pace of scientific advancement during their lifetime. The twentieth century had seen more momentous change than any previous century: change for better; change for worse; change that brought enormous benefits to human beings; change that threatened the very existence of the human species. Research in the physical and biological sciences had greatly broadened horizons and had provided deep insight into the structure of matter and of the universe. Technology -- the application of science -- had made startling advances that benefited tens of millions of Americans in nearly every aspect of life: better health, more wealth, more mobility, less drudgery, greater access to information.

As a result, Americans at the start of the new century were more connected to the rest of humankind. This interconnectivity of people was perhaps the most powerful product of globalization. A commodities trader in Chicago in March 2003 could send an e-mail to his fiancée in Tokyo while he spoke on the phone to a trader in Frankfurt and kept one eye on CNN's real-time coverage of the air war over Baghdad; within a minute or two he could receive a reply from his fiancée saying she missed him too. If he felt sufficiently lovesick, he could board an airplane and be in Japan the following day.

The world had shrunk to the size of an airplane ticket. In 1955, 51 million people a year traveled by plane. By the turn of the century 1.6 billion were airborne every year, and 530 million crossed international borders -- or about 1.5 million each day. For our Chicago trader and for millions of other Americans, this permeability of national boundaries brought many benefits, as did the integration of markets and the global spread of information that occurred alongside it.

(map) Map 33.3. Mapping America's Diversity. Aggregate figures (more than 12 percent of the U.S. population is African American and about 4 percent is Asian American, for example) convey America's ethnic and racial diversity. However, as this map shows, members of racial and ethnic groups are not distributed evenly throughout the nation. [Source: Adapted from the New York Times National Edition, April 1, 2001, "Portrait of a Nation," p. 18. Copyright © 2001 by The New York Times Co. Reprinted with permission.]

(photo) This 21st-century American family shows the increasing complexity of racial

and ethnic identities. The father is Chinese, Irish, French, German, and Swedish; the mother Italian, Irish, and Japanese. (Terrence Mielse/Newsweek)  
(graph) Figure 33.4. The Changing American Family. American households became smaller in the latter part of the twentieth century, as more people lived alone and women had, on average, fewer children. [Source: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf> and <http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/2000/chap04.pdf> )