

## Chapter 7. Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a source of pride to people, a link to the experiences of ancestors and to cultural traditions. The ethnic group to which one belongs has important measurable differences. Ethnicity also matters in places with a history of discrimination by one ethnic group against another.

The significance of ethnic diversity is controversial in the United States:

- To what extent does discrimination persist against minority ethnicities?
- Should preferences be given to minority ethnicities to correct past patterns of discrimination?
- To what extent should the distinct cultural identity of ethnicities be encouraged or protected?

### Key Issues

1. Where are ethnicities distributed?
2. Why have ethnicities been transformed into nationalities?
3. Why do ethnicities clash?
4. What is ethnic cleansing?

(227)

Ethnicity is identity with a group of people who share the cultural traditions of a particular homeland or hearth. Ethnicity comes from the Greek word *ethnikos*, which means national. Geographers are interested in *where* ethnicities are distributed across *space*, like other elements of culture. Like other cultural elements, ethnic identity derives from the interplay of *connections* with other groups and isolation from them. Ethnicity is an especially important cultural element of *local diversity* because our ethnic identity is immutable. The study of ethnicity lacks the tension in *scale* between preservation of local diversity and *globalization* observed in other cultural elements. No ethnicity is attempting or even aspiring to achieve global dominance. In the face of globalization . . . ethnicity stands as the strongest bulwark for the preservation of local diversity.

### Key Issue 1. Where Are Ethnicities Distributed?

- **Distribution of ethnicities in the United States**
- **Differentiating ethnicity and race**

This section of the chapter examines the clustering of ethnicities within countries, and the next key issue looks at ethnicities at the national scale.

### Distribution of Ethnicities in the United States

The two most numerous ethnicities in the United States are African-Americans, about 13 percent, and Hispanics or Latinos, about 11 percent. In addition, about 4 percent are Asian-American and 1 percent American Indian.

### Clustering of Ethnicities

Clustering of ethnicities can occur at two scales, . . . particular regions of the country, and . . . particular neighborhoods within cities.

**Regional Concentrations of Ethnicities.** African-Americans are clustered in the Southeast, Hispanics in the Southwest, Asian-Americans in the West, and American Indians in the Southwest and Plains states. African-Americans comprise at least one-fourth of the population in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina, and more than one-third in Mississippi. At the other extreme, 9 states have fewer than 1 percent African-Americans.

*Hispanic or Hispanic-American* is a term that the U.S. government chose in 1973 . . . because it was an inoffensive label that could be applied to all people from Spanish-speaking countries. Some Americans of Latin-American descent have adopted the term Latino instead.

(228)

Most Hispanics identify with a more specific ethnic or national origin. Within the United States, Hispanics are heavily clustered in the four southwestern states. About 4 percent of the U.S. population is Asian-American. Chinese account for about 25 percent of Asian-Americans, Filipinos 20 percent, and Japanese, Asian Indians, and Vietnamese 12 percent each. The largest concentration of Asian-Americans is in Hawaii. One-half of all Asian-Americans live in California.

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up about 1 percent of the U.S. population. Within the 48 continental United States, American Indians are most numerous in the Southwest and the Plains states.

**Concentration of Ethnicities in Cities.** About one-fourth of all Americans live in cities, whereas more than half of African-Americans live in cities. The contrast is greater at the state level. For example, African-Americans comprise three-fourths of the population in the city of Detroit and only one-twentieth in the rest of Michigan. The distribution of Hispanics is similar to that of African-Americans in large northern cities.

(229)

In the states with the largest Hispanic populations—California and Texas—the distribution is mixed. The clustering of ethnicities is especially pronounced at the scale of neighborhoods within cities. During the twentieth century the children and grandchildren of European immigrants moved out of most of the original inner-city neighborhoods. For descendants of European immigrants, ethnic identity is more likely to be retained through religion, food, and other cultural traditions rather than through location of residence. Ethnic concentrations in U.S. cities increasingly consist of African-Americans who migrate from the South, or immigrants from Latin America and Asia. In Los Angeles, which contains large percentages of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans, the major ethnic groups are clustered in different areas.

(230)

**African-American Migration Patterns**

Three major migration flows have shaped (African-American) distribution within the United States: immigration from Africa . . . in the eighteenth century; immigration . . . to northern cities during the first half of the twentieth century; (and) immigration from inner-city ghettos to other urban neighborhoods in the second half of the twentieth century.

**Forced Migration from Africa.** The first Africans brought to the American colonies as slaves . . . (arrived in) 1619. During the eighteenth century the British shipped about 400,000 Africans to the 13 colonies. In 1808 the U.S. banned bringing in . . . slaves, but an estimated 250,000 were illegally imported during the next half century. Slavery was replaced in Europe by a feudal system, in which laborers . . . were bound to the land and not free to migrate elsewhere. Although slavery was rare in Europe, Europeans were responsible for diffusing the practice to the Western Hemisphere, . . . a response to a shortage of labor in the sparsely inhabited Americas.

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. Fewer than 5 percent of the slaves ended up in the United States. At the height of the eighteenth-century slave demand, a number of European countries adopted the triangular slave trade. 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.

(231)

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. Attitudes toward slavery dominated U.S. politics during the nineteenth century. The Civil War (1861–1865) was fought to prevent 11 pro-slavery southern states from seceding from the Union. Freed as slaves, most African-Americans remained in the rural South during the late nineteenth century working as sharecroppers. A **sharecropper** works fields rented from a landowner and pays the rent by turning over to the

landowner a share of the 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.

**Immigration to the North.** Sharecropping declined in the early twentieth century as . . . farm machinery and decline in . . . cotton reduced demand for labor. At the same time sharecroppers were being pushed off the farms, they were being pulled to the prospect of jobs in the booming industrial cities of the North. African-Americans migrated out of the South along several clearly defined channels . . . along the major two-lane long-distance U.S. roads that had been paved and signposted in the early decades of the twentieth century. 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.

(232)

**Expansion of the Ghetto.** 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). African-Americans moved from the tight ghettos into immediately adjacent neighborhoods during the 1950s and 1960s.

### **Differentiating Ethnicity and Race**

Ethnicity is distinct from **race**, which is identity with a group of people who share a biological ancestor. Race comes from a middle-French word for *generation*. Race and ethnicity are often confused. In the United States, consider three prominent ethnic groups—Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and Hispanic-Americans. Asian as a race and Asian-American as an ethnicity encompass basically the same group. African-American and black are different groups. Some American blacks . . . trace their cultural heritage to regions other than Africa, including Latin America, Asia, or Pacific islands. Hispanic or Latino is not considered a race.

(231)

The traits that characterize race are those that can be transmitted genetically from parents to children: lactose intolerance, for example. Biological features of all humans . . . were once thought to be scientifically classifiable into a handful of world races. Biological features are so highly variable among members of a race that any prejudged classification is meaningless. The degree of isolation needed to keep biological features distinct genetically vanished when the first human crossed a river or climbed a hill. At worst, biological classification by race is the basis for **racism**, which is the belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

Ethnicity is important to geographers because its characteristics derive from the distinctive features of particular places on Earth. In contrast, contemporary geographers reject the entire biological basis of classifying humans . . . because these features are not rooted in specific places. One feature of race does matter to geographers—the color of skin. The distribution of persons of color matters . . . because it is the most fundamental basis by which people in many societies sort out where they reside, attend school, recreate, and perform many other activities of daily life. The term *African-American* identifies a group with an extensive cultural tradition, whereas the term *black* in principle denotes nothing more than a dark skin.

### **Race in the United States**

Every 10 years the U.S. Bureau of the Census asks people to classify themselves according to races with which they most closely identify. The 2000 census permitted people to check more than 1 of 14 categories listed. A distinctive feature of race relations in the United States has been the strong discouragement of spatial interaction—in the past through legal means, today through cultural preferences or discrimination.

(234)

**"Separate but Equal" Doctrine.** In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana law that required black and white passengers to ride in separate railway cars, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. 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. 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.

**"White Flight."** 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 separate schools for blacks and whites was unconstitutional. A year later the Supreme Court further ruled that schools had to be desegregated "with all deliberate speed." Rather than integrate, whites fled. The expansion of the black ghettos in American cities was made possible by "white flight." Detroit provides a clear example. In the late 1960s the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders . . . concluded that U.S. cities were divided into two separate and unequal societies. Three decades later . . . segregation and inequality persist.

(235)

**Division by Race in South Africa**

Discrimination by race reached its peak in the late twentieth century in South Africa. **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 for it to erase the impact of past policies.

**Apartheid System.** 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. According to the most recent census, blacks constitute about 76 percent of South Africa's population, whites 13 percent, colored 9 percent, and Asians 3 percent. Under apartheid, each of the four races had a different legal status in South Africa. The apartheid system was created by descendants of whites who arrived in South Africa from Holland in 1652. 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. A series of wars between the British and the Boers culminated in a British victory in 1902, and South Africa became part of the British Empire.

(236)

British descendants continued to control South Africa's government until 1948, when the Afrikaner-dominated Nationalist Party won elections. Colonial rule was being replaced in the rest of Africa by a collection of independent states run by the local black population. The Nationalist Party created the apartheid laws in the next few years to perpetuate white dominance of the country. To assure further geographic isolation of different races, the South African government designated 10 so-called *homelands* for blacks. If the government policy had been fully implemented, the 10 black homelands together would have contained approximately 44 percent of South Africa's population on only 13 percent of the land.

**Dismantling of Apartheid.** In 1991 the white-dominated government of South Africa repealed the apartheid laws, including restrictions on property ownership and classification of people at birth by race. The African National Congress was legalized, and its leader, Nelson Mandela, was released from jail after more than 27 years. When all South Africans were permitted to vote in national elections for the first time, in April 1994, Mandela was overwhelmingly elected the country's first black president. Whites were guaranteed representation in the government during a five-year transition period, until 1999. 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. Average income among white South Africans is about 10 times higher than for blacks.

(237)

## Key Issue 2. Why Have Ethnicities Been Transformed into Nationalities?

- Rise of nationalities
- Nationalities in former colonies
- Revival of ethnic identity

Ethnicity is distinct from race and nationality, two other terms commonly used to describe a group of people with shared traits. **Nationality** is identity with a group of people who share legal attachment and personal allegiance to a particular country. It comes from the Latin word *nasci*, which means *to have been born*. In principle, the cultural values shared with others of the same ethnicity derive from religion, language, and material culture, whereas those shared with others of the same nationality derive from voting, obtaining a passport, and performing civic duties. In the United States, nationality is generally kept reasonably distinct from ethnicity and race in common usage.

In Canada the Québécois are clearly distinct from other Canadians in language, religion, and other cultural traditions. But do the Québécois form a distinct ethnicity within the Canadian nationality or a second nationality separate altogether from Anglo-Canadian? The distinction is critical. Outside North America, distinctions between ethnicity and nationality are even muddier. Confusion between ethnicity and nationality can lead to violent conflicts.

### Rise of Nationalities

Descendants of nineteenth-century immigrants to the United States from central and Eastern Europe identify themselves today by ethnicity rather than by nationality. These ethnicities lived in Europe as subjects of the Austrian emperor, Russian czar, or Prussian kaiser. U.S. immigration officials recorded the nationality of immigrants. But immigrants considered ethnicity more important than nationality, and that is what they have preserved through distinctive social customs. The United States forged a nation in the late eighteenth century out of a collection of ethnic groups. To be an American meant believing in the "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

### Nation-States

The concept that ethnicities have the right to govern themselves is known as **self-determination**. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, political leaders have generally supported the right of self-determination . . . and have attempted to organize Earth's surface into a collection of **nation-states** . . . whose territory corresponds to . . . a particular ethnicity. Yet despite continuing attempts, . . . the territory of a state rarely corresponds precisely to the territory occupied by an ethnicity.

(238)

**Nation-States in Europe.** Ethnicities were transformed into nationalities throughout Europe during the nineteenth century. Most of Western Europe was made up of nation-states by 1900. Following their defeat in World War I, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires were dismantled, and many European boundaries were redrawn according to the principle of nation-states. During the 1930s, German National Socialists (Nazis) claimed that all German-speaking parts of Europe constituted one nationality and should be unified into one state. Other European powers did not attempt to stop the Germans from taking over Austria and the German-speaking portion of Czechoslovakia. Not until the Germans invaded Poland (clearly not a German-speaking country) in 1939 did England and France try to stop them.

**Denmark: There Are No Perfect Nation-States.** Denmark is a fairly good example of a European nation-state. The territory occupied by the Danish ethnicity closely corresponds to the state of Denmark. But even Denmark is not a perfect example of a nation-state. The country's . . . southern boundary with Germany does not divide Danish and German nationalities precisely. Denmark controls two territories in the Atlantic Ocean that do not share Danish cultural characteristics—the Faeroe Islands and Greenland. In 1979 Greenlanders received more authority . . . to control their own domestic affairs. One decision was to change all place names in Greenland from Danish to the local Inuit language.

### **Nationalism**

A nationality, once established, must hold the loyalty of its citizens to survive. **Nationalism** typically promotes a sense of national consciousness that exalts one nation above all others. For many states, mass media are the most effective means of fostering nationalism. Consequently, only a few states permit mass media to operate without government interference.

(239)

Nationalism can have a negative impact. The sense of unity within a nation-state is sometimes achieved through the creation of negative images of other nation-states. Nationalism is an important example of a centripetal force, which is an attitude that tends to unify people and enhance support for a state. (The word centripetal means "directed toward the center." It is the opposite of centrifugal, which means to spread out from the center.)

### **Multinational States**

In some **multi-ethnic states**, ethnicities all contribute cultural features to the formation of a single nationality. Belgium is divided among the Dutch-speaking Flemish and the French-speaking Walloons. Both groups consider themselves belonging to the Belgian nationality. Other multi-ethnic states, known as **multinational states**, contain two ethnic groups with traditions of self-determination that agree to coexist peacefully by recognizing each other as distinct nationalities. One example of a multinational state is the United Kingdom, which contains four main nationalities—England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Today the four nationalities hold little independent political power, although Scotland and Wales now have separately elected governments. The main element of distinct national identity comes from sports. Given the history of English conquest, the other nationalities typically root against England when it is playing teams from other countries. Ethnicities do not always find ways to live together peacefully. In some cases, ethnicities compete in civil wars to dominate the national identity. In other cases, problems result from confusion between ethnic identity and national identity.

### **Former Soviet Union: The Largest Multinational State**

The Soviet Union was an especially prominent example of a multinational state until its collapse in the early 1990s.

The 15 republics that once constituted the Soviet Union are now independent countries. When the Soviet Union existed, its 15 republics were based on the 15 largest ethnicities. Less numerous ethnicities were not given the same level of recognition. With the breakup . . . a number of these less numerous ethnicities are now divided among more than one state. The 15 newly independent states consist of five groups, 3 Baltic, 3 European, 5 Central Asian, 3 Caucasus, (and) Russia. Reasonably good examples of nation-states have been carved out of the Baltic, European, and some Central Asian states (but not) . . . in any of the small Caucasus states, and Russia is an especially prominent example of a state with major difficulties in keeping all of its ethnicities contented.

(240)

**New Baltic Nation-States.** Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania . . . had been independent countries between . . . 1918 and 1940. Of the three Baltic states, Lithuania most closely fits the definition of a nation-state, because 81 percent of its population are ethnic Lithuanians. These three small neighboring Baltic countries have clear cultural differences and distinct historical traditions.

**New European Nation-States.** To some extent, the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine now qualify as nation-states. The ethnic distinctions among Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians are somewhat blurred. Belarusians and Ukrainians became distinct ethnicities because they were isolated from the main body of Eastern Slavs—the Russians—during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Russians actually constitute two-thirds of the population in the Crimean Peninsula of Ukraine. After Russia and Ukraine became separate countries, a majority of the Crimeans voted to become independent of Ukraine. Control of the Crimean Peninsula was also

important to both Russia and Ukraine because one of the Soviet Union's largest fleets was stationed there. The two countries agreed to divide the ships and to jointly maintain the naval base at Sevastopol. Compounding the problem in the Crimea, 166,000 Tatars have migrated there from Central Asia in recent years. The Tatars once lived in the Crimea, but the Soviet leadership . . . deported them to Central Asia. The Tatars prefer to be governed by Ukraine.

The situation is different in Moldova. Moldovans are ethnically indistinguishable from Romanians, and Moldova (then called Moldavia) was part of Romania until the Soviet Union seized it in 1940. In 1992, many Moldovans pushed for reunification with Romania. But it was not to be that simple. The Soviet government increased the size of Moldova by about 10 percent, transferring from Ukraine a sliver of land on the east bank of the Dniester (River). Inhabitants of this area are Ukrainian and Russian. They oppose Moldova's reunification with Romania.

(241)

**New Central Asian States.** The five states in Central Asia carved out of the former Soviet Union display varying degrees of conformance to the principles of nation-state. Together the five provide an important reminder that multinational states can be more peaceful than nation-states.

In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the leading ethnic group has an overwhelming majority—77 percent Turkmen and 80 percent Uzbek, respectively. Turkmen and Uzbeks are examples of ethnicities split into more than one country, the Turkmen between Turkmenistan and Russia, and Uzbeks among Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Kyrgyzstan is 52 percent Kyrgyz, 18 percent Russian, and 13 percent Uzbek. The Kyrgyz—also Muslims who speak an Altaic language—resent the Russians for seizing the best farmland.

In principle, Kazakhstan, twice as large as the other four Central Asian countries combined, is a recipe for ethnic conflict. The country is divided almost evenly between Kazakhs and Russians. Kazakhstan has been peaceful, in part because it has a somewhat less depressed economy than its neighbors.

In contrast, Tajikistan—65 percent Tajik, 25 percent Uzbek, and only 3 percent Russian—would appear to be a stable country, but it suffers from a civil war among the Tajik people. The civil war has been between Tajiks who are former Communists and an unusual alliance of Muslim fundamentalists and Western-oriented intellectuals.

#### **Russia: Now the Largest Multinational State**

Russia officially recognizes the existence of 39 nationalities, many of which are eager for independence. Russia's ethnicities are clustered in two principal locations. Some are located along borders with neighboring states.

(242)

Other ethnicities are clustered in the center of Russia. Most of these groups were conquered by the Russians in the sixteenth century. Independence movements are flourishing, because Russia is less willing to suppress these movements forcibly than the Soviet Union had once been. Particularly troublesome . . . are the Chechens, a group of Sunni Muslims who speak a Caucasian language and practice distinctive social customs. Chechnya was brought under Russian control in the nineteenth century only after a 50-year fight. When the Soviet Union broke up . . . the Chechens declared their independence. Russia fought hard to prevent Chechnya from gaining independence because it feared that other ethnicities would follow suit. Chechnya was also important to Russia because the region contained deposits of petroleum.

**Russians in Other States.** Decades of Russian domination has left a deep reservoir of bitterness among other ethnicities once part of the Soviet Union. Russian soldiers have remained stationed in other countries, in part because Russia cannot afford to rehouse them. Other ethnicities fear . . . the Russians are trying to reassert . . . dominance. For their part, Russians claim that they are now subject

to discrimination as minorities in countries that were once part of the Soviet Union. Russians living in other countries of the former Soviet Union feel that they cannot migrate to Russia, because they have no jobs, homes, or land awaiting them there.

### **Turmoil in the Caucasus**

The Caucasus region . . . gets its name from the mountains that separate Russia from Azerbaijan and Georgia. The region is home to several ethnicities. Each ethnicity has a long-standing and complex set of grievances against others in the region. Every ethnicity in the Caucasus has the same aspiration: to carve out a sovereign nation-state.

**Azeris.** Azeris (or Azerbaijanis) trace their roots to Turkish invaders . . . in the eighth and ninth centuries. An 1828 treaty allocated northern Azeri territory to Russia and southern Azeri territory to Persia (now Iran). More than 7 million Azeris now live in Azerbaijan, 90 percent of the country's total population. Another 6 million Azeris are clustered in northwestern Iran. Azeris hold positions of responsibility in Iran's government and economy, but Iran restricts teaching of the Azeri language.

**Armenians.** More than 3,000 years ago Armenians controlled an independent kingdom in the Caucasus. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were killed in a series of massacres organized by the Turks. Others were forced to migrate to Russia. After World War I the allies created an independent state of Armenia, but it was soon swallowed by its neighbors. Turkey and the Soviet Union . . . divided Armenia. The Soviet portion became . . . an independent country in 1991. More than 90 percent of the population in Armenia are Armenians, making it the most ethnically homogeneous country in the region. Armenians and Azeris . . . have been at war with each other since 1988 over the boundaries between the two nationalities.

(243)

**Georgians.** The population of Georgia is more diverse than that in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgia's cultural diversity has been a source of unrest, especially among the Ossetians and Abkhazians. Abkhazians want an independent state in the northwest, while the Ossetians want to rejoin the south of Georgia to Russia.

### **Revival of Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identities never really disappeared in Africa, where loyalty to tribe often remained more important than loyalty to the nationality of a new country, perhaps controlled by another ethnicity. Europeans thought that ethnicity had been left behind as an insignificant relic, such as wearing quaint costumes to amuse tourists. But Europeans were wrong.

### **Ethnicity and Communism**

From the end of World War II in 1945 until the early 1990s, attitudes toward communism and economic cooperation were more important political factors in Europe than the nation-state principle. For example, the Communist government of Bulgaria repressed cultural differences by banning the Turkish language and the practice of some Islamic religious rites . . . to remove . . . obstacles to unifying national support for the ideology of communism.

The Communists did not completely suppress ethnicities in Eastern Europe: The administrative structures of the former Soviet Union and two other multi-ethnic Eastern European countries—Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia—recognized the existence of ethnic groups. Units of local government . . . were created . . . designed to coincide as closely as possible with the territory occupied by the most numerous ethnicities.

(244)

### **Rebirth of Nationalism in Eastern Europe**

The breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has given more numerous ethnicities the opportunity to organize nation-states. But the less numerous ethnicities still find themselves existing as minorities in multinational states, or divided among more than one of the new states. Especially severe problems



have occurred in the Balkans. Bulgaria's Turkish minority pressed for more rights, including permission to teach the Turkish language as an optional subject in school. But many Bulgarians opposed these efforts. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia were dismantled . . . largely because minority ethnicities opposed the long-standing dominance of the most numerous ones in each country. Local government units . . . made peaceful transitions into independent countries—as long as their boundaries corresponded reasonably well with the territory occupied by a clearly defined ethnicity. The relatively close coincidence between the boundaries of the Slovene ethnic group and the country of Slovenia has promoted the country's relative peace and stability, compared to other former Yugoslavian republics. Sovereignty has brought difficulties in converting from Communist economic systems and fitting into the global economy (see Chapters 9 and 11). But . . . problems of economic reform are minor compared to the conflicts . . . where nation-states could not be created.

### **Key Issue 3. Why Do Ethnicities Clash?**

- **Ethnic competition to dominate nationality**
- **Dividing ethnicities among more than one state**

#### **Ethnic Competition to Dominate Nationality**

Sub-Saharan Africa has been a region especially plagued by conflicts among ethnic groups competing to become dominant within the various countries. The Horn of Africa and central Africa are the two areas . . . where conflicts . . . have been particularly complex and brutal.

#### **Ethnic Competition in the Horn of Africa**

The Horn of Africa encompasses the countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. Especially severe problems have been found in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, as well as the neighboring country of Sudan.

**Ethiopia and Eritrea.** Eritrea, located along the Red Sea, became an Italian colony in 1890. Ethiopia, an independent country for more than 2,000 years, was captured by Italy during the 1930s. After World War II, Ethiopia regained its independence, and the United Nations awarded Eritrea to Ethiopia. Ethiopia dissolved the Eritrean legislature and banned the use of Tigrinya, Eritrea's major local language. The Eritreans rebelled, beginning a 30-year fight for independence (1961–1991). In 1991 Eritrean rebels defeated the Ethiopian army, and in 1993 Eritrea became an independent state. But war between Ethiopia and Eritrea flared up again in 1998 because of disputes over the location of the border. Ethiopia defeated Eritrea in 2000 and took possession of the disputed areas.

(245)

Even with the loss of Eritrea, Ethiopia remained a complex multi-ethnic state. From the late nineteenth century until the 1990s, Ethiopia was controlled by the Amharas, who are Christians. After the government defeat in the early 1990s, power passed to a combination of ethnic groups. Eritrea has nine major ethnic groups.

**Sudan.** In Sudan a civil war has raged since the 1980s between two ethnicities, the black Christian and animist rebels in the southern provinces and the Arab Muslim-dominated government forces in the north. The black southerners have been resisting government attempts to convert the country from a multi-ethnic society to one nationality tied to Muslim traditions.

**Somalia.** On the surface, Somalia should face fewer ethnic divisions than its neighbors in the Horn of Africa. Somalis are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims and speak Somali. Somalia contains six major ethnic groups known as clans. Traditionally, the six major clans occupied different portions of Somalia.

(246)

With the collapse of a national government in Somalia, various clans and sub-clans claimed control over portions of the country. In 1992, after an estimated 300,000 people . . . died from famine and from warfare between clans, the United States sent several thousand troops to Somalia . . . to protect

delivery of food . . . and to reduce the number of weapons in the hands of the clan and sub-clan armies. After peace talks among the clans collapsed in 1994, U.S. troops withdrew.

### **Ethnic Competition in Lebanon**

Lebanon has been severely damaged by fighting among religious factions since the 1970s. The precise distribution of religions in Lebanon is unknown, because no census has been taken since 1932. Current estimate is about 60 percent Muslim, 30 percent Christian, and 10 percent other. About 7 percent of the population is Druze. The Druze religion combines elements of Islam and Christianity.

When Lebanon became independent in 1943, the constitution required that each religion be represented in the Chamber of Deputies according to its percentage in the 1932 census. By unwritten convention, the president of Lebanon was a Maronite Christian, the premier a Sunni Muslim, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies a Shiite Muslim, and the foreign minister a Greek Orthodox Christian. Other cabinet members and civil servants were similarly apportioned among the various faiths. Lebanon's religious groups have tended to live in different regions of the country. Maronites are concentrated in the west central part, Sunnis in the northwest, and Shiites in the south and east.

When the governmental system was created, Christians constituted a majority and controlled the country's main businesses, but as the Muslims became the majority, they demanded political and economic equality. A civil war broke out in 1975, and each religious group formed a private army or militia to guard its territory. Syria, Israel, and the United States sent troops into Lebanon at various points to try to restore peace. Most of Lebanon is now controlled by Syria, which has a historical claim over the territory.

(247)

### **Dividing Ethnicities among More Than One State**

Newly independent countries were often created to separate two ethnicities. However, two ethnicities can rarely be segregated completely.

### **Dividing Ethnicities in South Asia**

When the British ended their colonial rule of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, they divided the colony into two irregularly shaped countries: India and Pakistan. The basis for separating West and East Pakistan from India was ethnicity. Antagonism between the two religious groups was so great that the British decided to place the Hindus and Muslims in separate states.

(248)

**Forced Migration.** The partition of South Asia into two states resulted in massive migration, because the two boundaries did not correspond precisely to the territory inhabited by the two ethnicities. Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India were killed attempting to reach the other side of the new border by people from the rival religion.

**Ethnic Disputes.** Pakistan and India never agreed on the location of the boundary separating the two countries in the northern region of Kashmir. Since 1972 the two countries have maintained a "line of control" through the region. Muslims, who comprise a majority in both portions, have fought a guerrilla war to secure reunification of Kashmir, either as part of Pakistan or as an independent country. India's religious unrest is further complicated by the presence of 19 million Sikhs, who have long resented that they were not given their own independent country when India was partitioned (see Chapter 6). Sikhs comprise a majority in the Indian state of Punjab. Sikh extremists have fought for more control over the Punjab or even complete independence from India.

(249)

### **Dividing Sri Lanka Among Ethnicities**

Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), an island country of 20 million inhabitants off the Indian coast, has been torn by fighting between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Sinhalese, who comprise 74 percent of Sri Lanka's population, migrated from northern India in the fifth century B.C., occupying the southern

portion of the island. Tamils—18 percent of Sri Lanka's population—migrated across the narrow 80-kilometer-wide (50-mile) Palk Strait from India beginning in the third century B.C. and occupied the northern part of the island. The dispute between Sri Lanka's two ethnicities extends back more than 2,000 years but was suppressed during 300 years of European control. Since independence in 1948, Sinhalese have dominated. Tamils have received support, from Tamils living in other countries, for a rebellion that began in 1983.

(250)

#### **Key Issue 4. What Is Ethnic Cleansing?**

- **Ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia**
- **Ethnic cleansing in Central Africa**

Throughout history, ethnic groups have been forced to flee from other ethnic groups' more powerful armies. The largest level of forced migration came during (and after) World War II. The scale of forced migration during (and after) World War II has not been repeated, but in the 1990s a new term—"ethnic cleansing"—was invented to describe new practices by ethnic groups against other ethnic groups. **Ethnic cleansing** is a process in which a more powerful ethnic group forcibly removes a less powerful one in order to create an ethnically homogeneous region.

#### **Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia**

Ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia is part of a complex pattern of ethnic diversity in the region of southeastern Europe known as the Balkan Peninsula. The Balkans includes Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania, as well as several countries that once comprised Yugoslavia.

(251)

#### **Creation of Multi-ethnic Yugoslavia**

The Balkan Peninsula has long been a hotbed of unrest, a complex assemblage of ethnicities. Northern portions were incorporated into the Austria-Hungary Empire, whereas southern portions were ruled by the Ottomans. In June 1914 the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb who sought independence for Bosnia. The incident sparked World War I. After World War I the allies created a new country, Yugoslavia, to unite several Balkan ethnicities that spoke similar South Slavic languages. The prefix "Yugo" in the country's name derives from the Slavic word for "south."

**Ethnic Diversity in the Former Yugoslavia.** Under the long leadership of Josip Broz Tito, who governed Yugoslavia from 1953 until his death in 1980, Yugoslavs liked to repeat a refrain that roughly translates as follows: "Yugoslavia has seven neighbors, six republics, five nationalities, four languages, three religions, two alphabets, and one dinar." The refrain concluded that Yugoslavia had one dinar, the national unit of currency. Despite cultural diversity, according to the refrain, common economic interests kept Yugoslavia's nationalities unified.

#### **Destruction of Multi-Ethnic Yugoslavia**

Rivalries among ethnicities resurfaced in Yugoslavia during the 1980s after Tito's death, leading to the breakup of the country in the early 1990s. When Yugoslavia's republics were transformed from local government units into five separate countries, ethnicities fought to redefine the boundaries.

(252)

**Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia.** The creation of a viable country proved especially difficult in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rather than live in an independent multi-ethnic country with a Muslim plurality, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serbs and Croats fought to unite the portions of the republic that they inhabited with Serbia and Croatia, respectively. Ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serbs against Bosnian Muslims was especially severe, because much of the territory inhabited by Bosnian Serbs was separated from Serbia by areas with Bosnian Muslim majorities. Accords reached in Dayton, Ohio, in 1996 . . . divided Bosnia and Herzegovina into three regions, one each dominated by the Bosnian

Croats, Muslims, and Serbs. Bosnian Muslims, 44 percent of the population before the ethnic cleansing, got 27 percent of the land.

(253)

**Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo.** Despite the loss of Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia in the early 1990s, Yugoslavia remained a multi-ethnic country, although dominated by Serbs. Particularly troubling was the province of Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians comprised 90 percent of the population. Serbia had an historical claim to Kosovo, having controlled it between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Serbia was given control of Kosovo when Yugoslavia was created in the early twentieth century. Under Tito, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo received administrative autonomy and national identity. As most Serbs emigrated from Kosovo north into Serbia, the percentage of Albanians in Kosovo increased from one half in 1946 to three fourths at the time of Yugoslavia's last formal census in 1981.

(254)

With the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbia took direct control of Kosovo and launched a campaign of ethnic cleansing of the Albanian majority. Outraged by the ethnic cleansing, the United States and Western European democracies, operating through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), launched an air attack against Serbia.

(255)

**Balkanization.** A century ago, the term **Balkanized** was widely used to describe a small geographic area that could not successfully be organized into one or more stable states because it was inhabited by many ethnicities with complex, long-standing antagonisms toward each other. Balkanization directly led to World War I. At the end of the twentieth century—after two world wars and the rise and fall of communism—the Balkans have once again become Balkanized. If peace comes to the Balkans, it will be because in a tragic way ethnic cleansing “worked.” Millions of people were rounded up and killed or forced to migrate . . . Ethnic homogeneity may be the price of peace in areas that once were multi-ethnic.

### Central Africa

Long-standing conflicts between two ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis, lie at the heart of a series of wars in central Africa. The Hutus were settled farmers. The Tutsi were cattle herders who migrated . . . from the Rift Valley of western Kenya beginning 400 years ago. The Tutsi took control of the kingdom of Rwanda and turned the Hutu into their serfs. Under German and Belgian control, differences between the two ethnicities were reinforced. Shortly before Rwanda gained its independence in 1962, Hutus killed or ethnically cleansed most of the Tutsis out of fear that the Tutsis would seize control of the newly independent country. In 1994 children of the ethnically cleansed Tutsis, most of whom lived in neighboring Uganda, poured back into Rwanda, defeated the Hutu army, and killed a half-million Hutus, while suffering a half-million casualties of their own. Three million of the country's 7 million Hutus fled to Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi. The conflict between Hutus and Tutsis spilled into neighboring countries of central Africa, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tutsis were instrumental in the successful overthrow of the Congo's longtime president, Joseph Mobutu, in 1997, replacing him with Laurent Kabila. But Tutsis soon split with Kabila and led a rebellion that gained control of the eastern half of the Congo. Armies from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and other neighboring countries came to Kabila's aid.

### Key Terms

Apartheid (p.235)  
Balkanization (p.255)  
Balkanized (p.255)  
Blockbusting (p.235)  
Centripetal force (p.239)  
Ethnic cleansing (p.250)  
Ethnicity (p.227)  
Multi-ethnic state (p.239)

Multinational state (p.239)

Nationalism (p.238)

Nationality (p.237)

Nation-state (p.237)

Race (p.227)

Racism (p.233)

Racist (p.233)

Self-determination (p.237)

Sharecropper (p.231)

Triangular slave trade (p.230)