5

Ethnicity and Related Forms of Race

If we put aside the polite social practice of using the word "ethnicity" as a euphemism for "race," we can begin with a distinction that ethnicity refers mainly to culture, whereas race refers to hereditary physical traits. Both ethnicity and race are passed on in families, although in different ways. People are believed to physically inherit their racial traits. By contrast, ethnic traits are taught and learned, usually from relatives and others in a community. This cultural aspect of ethnicity is both cause and effect of American **ethnic enclaves** or neighborhoods where one group has a dominant presence. Places called Little Italy, China Town, Spanish Harlem, Little Persia, or Greektown are some examples, but so are Andersonville, Illinois where Swedish immigrants settled and the Germantowns in Pennsylvania.

Ideas of race sometimes overlap with ideas of ethnicity. For instance, many Hispanic/Latinx Americans believe that despite their official classification as an ethnicity, they are treated as members of a nonwhite race. Also, historically in the United States, immigrants who were first identified as members of nonwhite races, such as Italian, Irish, Polish, and Jewish people became re-identified as racially white, over several generations of **assimilation**. There are other complexities: Jews are now considered primarily a religious group, although it is assumed that they also have a distinct ethnicity; African Americans are considered primarily a racial group, although it is assumed they also have a distinct ethnicity. Ethnicity as related to race becomes even more complex if we compare ideas of human difference globally, such as socioeconomic and mixed-race notions of race in Brazil, and

caste in India. Also, indigenous identities are neither racial nor ethnic, although they resemble both.

Ethnicity is close enough to race, conceptually, to merit discussion of ideas of ethnicity in the same context as discussion of ideas of race. Therefore, to complete this Part I discussion of ideas of race, this chapter will be devoted to three interrelated topics: ethnicity and US immigration; global race-like ideas; indigenous identities.

Ethnicity and US Immigration

Diversity of Ethnic Groups

There are thousands of ethnic groups in the world, set apart by custom, appearance, language, culture, religion, history, ancestry, or geographical location. In 2003, political scientist James Fearon prepared a list of 822 ethnic and "ethnoreligious" groups that made up at least one percent of the population in 160 countries in the early 1990s (Fearon 2003). The US Census lists 92 ancestry groups for Americans in 2015, according to income (ranging from about $100,000 to $22,000) (see Table 5.1).

The international lists based on 1% of populations and the US Census lists based on income undoubtedly leave out many groups. For instance, in the New York City public school system alone, the Department of

Table 5.1 US ethnic groups (US Census 2015)

Indian, Taiwanese, Filipino, Australian, European, Russian, Greek, Lebanese, Croatian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Austrian, Iranian, Slovene, Swiss, Bulgarian, Romanian, Scandinavian, Italian, Japanese, British, Chinese, (including Taiwanese), Serbian, Belgian, Scottish, Welsh, Polish, Chinese (excluding Taiwanese), Slovak, Danish, Czechoslovakian, Swedish, Norwegian, Syrian, Czech, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Finnish, German, English, Palestinian, French Canadian, Portuguese, Irish, Albanian, Canadian, Slavic, Pakistani, Nigerian, Scotch-Irish, Indonesian, Dutch, Egyptian, French, Turkish, Armenian, Ghanaian, Vietnamese, Yugoslavian, Korean, Guyanese, British West Indian, Brazilian, Barbadian, Arab, Laotian, Thai, Cambodian, West Indian, Cajun, Trinidadian and Tobagonian, Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac, Pennsylvania German, Jamaican, Cape Verdean, Hmong, Haitian, Jordanian, Moroccan, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Afghan, Sub saharan African, Bahamian, Ethiopian African, Arab/Arabic Burmese, Iraqi, Somali (United States Census Bureau 2015)
There are also subgroups, such as these 12 Native American tribes (again listed in order of average income ranging from about $49,000 to $29,000):
Chickasaw, Choctaw, Alaska Natives, Creek, Iroquois, Cherokee, Blackfeet, Chippewa Lumbee, Navajo, Sioux, Apache (United States Census Bureau 2015)

Education reports that in 2013, 41% of all students or 438,131 were English-Language Learners (ELLs), leading to a count of 160 different languages spoken in the K-12 population (NYC Department of Education 2013). It seems safe to assume that the ELLs in New York City come to school from homes in which languages other than English are spoken. Language is one (if not the main one) of the indicators of ethnicity.

Definitions and Constructions of Ethnicity

There are two approaches to defining "ethnic group." The first and straightforward definition is to take the reality of ethnic groups as what the term is about, which leads to the standard dictionary definition: "A community or population made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent" (Oxford English Dictionary 2017).

However, as Fearon points out about his list of 822 ethnic groups in 160 countries, most researchers continue to identify ethnic groups based on the methods used by Soviet ethnographers in the 1960s, first published as *Atlas Narodov*. In that work, language was the main factor used to define ethnic groups, but some groups had racial traits also and others, for instance, Anglo-Canadians in the United States, were defined by national origin. Subsequent researchers have identified some groups by **ethnic fractionalization**, which occurs when groups are excluded or oppressed. **Primordialist** researchers believe that ethnic groups have fixed biological traits or deeply historical cultural traits; **constructivists** or **instrumentalists** view ethnic groups as "contingent, fuzzy, and situational." Fearon also points out that without a rigid and perhaps arbitrary standard based on numbers or the percentage of a larger population, identifying ethnic groups is arbitrary. Even census categories do not solve this problem:

> If we consult official census categories, we get three "races" - white, African American, and Asian - and an additional group, Hispanic, which the government emphatically declares is "not a race." Is this the right list for the United States? Why disaggregate Hispanic into Puerto Rican Americans, Cuban Americans, Americans, and so on, or likewise for Asian? Why not distinguish between Americans, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, German Americans, and so on? And should we use the current census categories, when earlier censuses formulated categories quite differently? (Fearon 2003, pp. 196–7)

The methodological problems identified by Fearon are related to the second approach to defining ethnicity, which even goes beyond constructivism

or instrumentalism or ideas that the realities of ethnic groups are relative to wider social, political, and economic factors external to the groups themselves. This is a view that the very idea of ethnicity and ethnic groups is an **invention**, a new kind of social technology, prompted by historical events and imposed on people who would not otherwise have been ethnic groups. One striking example of such an invention is the US Census Hispanic/Latino category that includes a diversity of groups from Central and South America, but not Spaniards from Spain, although Spain is the national origin of the language spoken throughout most groups in this ethnic category. The Hispanic/Latino census category includes US residents from: Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, and Brazil and all other countries in South America. While many US residents from Cuba and Argentina might identify as racially white, those with other Hispanic/Latino backgrounds are not perceived as white and in most cases view themselves as people of color. So not only is this census category somewhat arbitrary in lumping distinct groups together, but it is not a purely ethnic category, as census forms stipulate.

Linda Alcoff has suggested that the concept of *ethnorace* is a fruitful way to understand the experience of Hispanic/Latino Americans, because it is less static than race and allows for the interchangeability of ideas of race and ideas of ethnicity (Alcoff 2000). Indeed, researchers at the Census began considering revisions of how to count the Hispanic/Latino group more accurately, thereby implicitly acknowledging that the addition of the category in 1970 was an invention (Haub 2012).

The idea of ethnic groups as invented is closely related to ideas that racial groups have been invented. (The historical account of scientific ideas of race in Chapter 3 supports that view for traditional biological racial categories.) The invention of race is not a relic of the distant past and as a contemporary process, it overlaps with inventions of ethnicity. Falguni Sheth has discussed new forms of racial identity imposed on Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) immigrants by the US government in the post-9/11 United States (Sheth 2017). The newly intense focus on members of these groups as threats to national security has been accompanied by a sense that they can be identified by physical appearance. That is a form of **racialization**, even though racist hate crimes have been triggered by articles of clothing, which are clearly forms of ethnicity, as ethnicity has been traditionally understood (Muslim Advocates 2017). Although members of MENA groups have been officially categorized as racially white, the US Census in 2015 began considering a separate classification for this population. Such reclassification would

be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it would provide a mechanism for resistance against discrimination based on a recognized identity, but on the other hand, it could draw MENA individuals further into government surveillance and record keeping, as well as intensify racism against them (Karoub 2015).

The Invention of Traditional US Ethnic Groups and Immigration

The idea that ethnicity and ethnic groups are invented applies not only to contemporary formations, but to many long-settled US immigration groups. Werner Sollers, in introducing his 1989 anthology, *The Invention of Ethnicity*, writes:

> It is not any a priori [before experience] cultural *difference* that makes ethnicity. 'The Chinese laundryman does not learn his trade in China; there are no laundries in China.' This the Chinese immigrant Lee Chew asserts in Hamilton Holt's *Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans* (1906). (Sollers 1989, p. xvi)

Ethnic groups are not identified by outsiders or themselves as mere varieties of human diversity to be neutrally united under common labels. There are always factors and social forces external to groups, which result in their being named and described as ethnic groups. And this is a more basic way in which ethnic groups are invented, because it is deeper than questions of how to divide or individuate ethnic groups and what the criteria for ethnic groups are—it brings ethnic groups into existence.

In the United States, the strongest factor in the invention of ethnicity has been immigration and social forces have included need for workers, concerns about national identity by dominant groups, concerns about job loss by established residents, outright prejudice and zenophobia, hatred and fear. These forces have influenced immigration policy and laws that have resulted in new arrivals beginning multigenerational lives in the United States, as members of ethnic groups. In their countries of origin, they were not distinguished from other residents as "ethnic groups," although they may have been persecuted on religious or political grounds. In the United States, it would not have been necessary to identify them as ethnic groups if they effortlessly blended in with more settled groups who were already considered full Americans. The invention of ethnic groups was also the invention of the

value of assimilation. The great waves of immigration to the United States occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For each new immigrant group, those groups already in residence had created the dominant and normal culture to which they were expected, and strove, to assimilate (Powell 2005).

Immigration Law and Ethnicity

The bare history of immigration law tells its own story about the invention of American ethnic groups. From the colonial period to the early nineteenth century (1620–1820), most arrivals were from Great Britain (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), France, the Netherlands, and the Palatinate region of Southwest Germany. From 1820 to 1880, about fifteen million of those who came to be called "old immigrants" arrived from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, what is now the Czech Republic, and Northern Ireland. They settled in families in the rural Northeast and Midwest. A small number of single Chinese men also arrived to the West Coast, usually to hostile reception by whites. After about 300,000 Chinese men had arrived, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and further Chinese immigration was banned. From 1880 to 1920, the largest wave yet, about twenty-five million people, arrived from Eastern and Southern Europe on great steamships from Italy, Russia, Greece, Hungary, and Poland. Most in this wave were single adults who became the labor pool for factories in urban American, through World War II.

After 1924, Congress began to limit the numbers of immigrants from Europe and new arrivals were screened for skills in manual labor and the professions or family relations to US citizens. The Immigration Act of 1924 imposed quotas of 2% of the same group already residing in the United States, for each immigrant group. The civil rights movement of the 1960s ushered in the 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act. Quotas were rescinded but there was a cap of 170,000 visas a year. Occupational and familial preferences from the 1924 act were retained, but restrictions due to "race, sex, place of birth or place of residence" were outlawed. New immigrants from Korea, China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, South and Central America, and Africa, began to arrive. From 1990 to 2000, foreign-born American residents increased almost 60%, to over 31 million. Most of the new immigrants in the late twentieth century were from Asia, South America, and the Caribbean, while the number of European immigrants markedly decreased (Cornell University 2017).

To get a sense of what has been considered successful immigration, brief accounts of the collective experiences of the dominant Anglo-population and Germans, Irish, Italians, and Jews in the United States will help flesh out the legal account.

US Immigrant Groups: White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, German, Irish-Catholic, Italian, and Jewish

White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans

Anglo-American Protestant groups, including those from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Isle of Man have dominated US culture and major institutions since colonial times. After English Puritans arrived at Plymouth Rock on the *Mayflower* in 1620, 80,000 English settled in Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, by 1742 (Klein 2000). They displaced those preceding them, the Dutch, Native Americans, and Spaniards. There were 20 indentured servants on the *Mayflower* and in 1619 the governor of Jamestown had imported twenty African slaves who had been pirated from a slave-trading Portuguese ship (Hawshaw 2007, pp. xv–xvi).

Over the next 150 years, English customs, speech, dress, and aspects of folk culture came to dominate US society in New England, the South, mid-Atlantic states, and the Southwest (Fischer 1989). English law and representative government were expressed in the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (Haft 1995, pp. 472–8). Restraint in display and recreation and the nuclear family structure were also part of the ensuing **WASP** (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) ideal to which other immigrants or ethnic groups assimilated.

Before the Revolutionary War, Americans bought about 25% of British exports of finished goods, many of which were luxuries purchased on credit, such as fabrics, tea, fancy clothes, and fine furniture (Breen 2004, p. 185). Both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 with England interrupted commerce. But soon after, English foreign investment developed US land, industry, railroads, mining, and cattle ranching. Eight of the first ten American presidents were English and English Americans became a plurality (greater in number than any other group) in executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government (Haft 1995, pp. 475–6). From 1997 to

2006, 13,000 British persons immigrated to the United States each year, of which over 8000 became citizens (Klein 2000). Assimilation was never a problem for individual English immigrants. The US and the UK governments were allies during World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the first Gulf War, as well as in post-9/11 military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Haft 1995, p. 476).

The Scots-Irish, or Ulster Irish descended from 200,000 Scottish lowland Presbyterians, who the English government settled in Northern Ireland, during the 1600s. Upon their first arrival in New England in 1717, they were considered "illiterate, slovenly, and filthy" and themselves "nurtured a profound hatred for the English." But they were fully assimilated by the late 1700s (McLemore and Romo 2005, pp. 63–4). Distinct from this group were the Scots, many of whom were prisoners taken during the English Civil War or criminals sent to work on tobacco plantations in South Carolina, where they were a third of the state population by the 1790 census (Dobson 1994, pp. 4–5). Scots continued to arrive throughout the nineteenth century, often in clans who settled in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. (The Hatfield—McCoy feud in the Tug River Valley between West Virginia and Kentucky achieved national notoriety during the 1880s.) Almost 5 million Americans claimed Scots ancestry in 2000 (Rice 1982; Hess 1995, pp. 1204–5).

Welsh explorers were reported to have predated Columbus in the United States. Welsh history and myths about twelfth-century Welsh contact with American Indians motivated eighteenth-century immigration to the United States (Heimlich 1995, pp. 1408–11; Curran 2010, pp. 21–36). Since colonial times, Welsh immigrants were welcomed because they were skilled workers. By 2008, 6% of Americans claimed Welsh ancestry and almost twice as many have Welsh surnames, including African Americans (Welsh-American 2008).

Manx have immigrated from the Isle of Man, a land mass of 227 square miles, equidistant from Ireland, Scotland, and Whales. In 2006, the US resident population of Manx was about 80,000, of which 38,000 were born on the Isle of Man (Isle of Man Digest 2011). There were two major waves of Australian and New Zealand immigration, the 1849–50 California gold rush drew up to 8000 and after World War II, 11,650 immigrated, many of whom were new wives of US servicemen who had been stationed in the South Pacific (Parkin 1980, p. 163).

Canadians have immigrated and assimilated easily compared to other groups. There are at present about 500–800,000 Canadians living in the United States (Klein 2000; Fedunkiw 1995, p. 244).

German Americans

Americans with German ancestry number over 40 million, the most numerous US ethnic group, who by the twenty-first century were mostly third generation or later (US Census "Quick Facts" 2010). Until the twentieth century, German-Americans were not fully assimilated, but retained their distinct social institutions, including newspapers (almost 1000 by 1900), political groups, and singing societies (30 in San Francisco in 1890) (Bergquist 2005). But international politics intervened. Germany was a US enemy during World War I and the political fallout included anti-German propaganda in the United States, which accelerated German-American assimilation. The German-American National Alliance, representing German interests in the United States, dissolved under congressional pressure and the number of German organizations, including newspapers, quickly shrank. During the 1930s before World War II and over the war, 11,000 German Americans were **interned**, or removed from the West and East coasts and relocated to over 50 closed "camps" throughout the United States and Hawaii. But the patriotism of German Americans was generally unquestioned and many fought in the US military. Two twentieth-century US Presidents had German ancestry: Herbert Hoover, who served after World War I and Dwight D. Eisenhauer, who served after World War II (Carlson 2003; Kazal 2004; Schaefer 2011, pp. 165–6). After World War II, English-speaking German immigrants have been able to assimilate immediately, including over 100,000 who arrived to the United States from 1990 to 2010 (Homeland Security 2010; Harzig 2008).

Irish-Catholic Americans

Researchers believe that the 39 million Irish-Americans are descended from the 3.2 million Roman Catholic "potato famine Irish," who arrived in the United States from 1841 to 1890, to settle on the East Coast (US Census "Quick Facts" 2010). Many were peasants, escaping starvation and English economic and political oppression. About 40% of those who traveled below deck, in *steerage*, died enroute. There were large numbers of young single women who worked in domestic service and became school teachers throughout the country (Ireland Story 1998; Schaefer 2008).

Nineteenth-century Irish-Catholics immigrants were not accepted as white, but viewed as an inferior racial group. Samuel F.B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, in 1834 published *A Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties*

of the United States, vilifying the Irish as illiterate and claiming that the Pope was planning to move the Vatican to the Mississippi River Valley. In *Awful Disclosures*, Maria Monk's 1836 best seller, paranoia was combined with pornography in a fantastical account of intercourse between nuns and priests and infanticide in a Montreal convent. By the Civil War, Irish gangs or "fire companies," were attacking African Americans as their competitors for jobs; they also resisted their draft to the Union side, particularly during the "Draft Riots of 1863" (Members of some fire companies later participated in the Fenian movement for Irish independence.) (Kenny 2000, pp. 124–7).

Following Ireland's independence from Britain in 1921, Irish-Americans asserted themselves as superior to Italian, Polish, and Slovak Roman Catholic immigrants, as well as blacks (Ignatiev 1995; Schaefer 2008). Through the **patronage system** (election winners distribute the spoils of office to those who organized their victories), Irish Americans became well represented in police and fire departments in New York City, Boston, Chicago, and other places. The Irish became regarded as racially white and became more inclusive. Saint Patrick's Day is now celebrated throughout the United States, without much regard for the real "Irishness" of participants (Blessing 1980, pp. 529–39, 545).

Italian Americans

About 16 million Americans claim Italian descent, or almost 6% of the population (US Census "Quick Facts" 2010). Italians had explored the New World before Italy became a united country in 1860: In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Cristoforo Colombo, Giovanni Cabotto, Amerigo Vespucci, and Giovanni de Verranzano all explored and charted parts of what would be the United States; Father Marcos da Nizza explored Arizona. There were Italian glass bead makers in Jamestown, silk producers in Georgia, and landowners in Maryland. Philippo Mazzei, a Tuscan physician, shared his interest in agricultural science with his neighbor, Thomas Jefferson. Fifty Italians fought in the Revolutionary War. The 14,000 Italians in the United States before the Civil War were artisans, artists, teachers, musicians, and political refugees. Constantino Brumidi painted frescoes in the Capitol rotunda from 1852 to 1877 and Antonio Meucci, from Florence, invented a version of the telephone 26 years ahead of Alexander Graham Bell; the first Italian church in the United States was founded in 1866, in New York City. Despite such cultural contributions, skin color discrimination against Italians was virulent in the South throughout the nineteenth century, including segregation, attempts to substitute Italian laborers for slaves, and lynchings (Parillo 2008; Candeloro 1992, pp. 1173–4).

About 5 million Italians arrived between 1880 and 1920, from Sicily and parts of the impoverished *Mezzogiorno*, east and south of Rome. They came for *pane e lavoro* (bread and work) and many were single males, who returned to Italy. After the Depression of the 1930s and the reign of Benito Mussolini in Italy, Italian immigration to the United States slowed, but it picked up again after World War II. Italians immigrants often came in clans and settled near neighbors from Italy, in Philadelphia, New Orleans, New York, and Boston. Culture was based on *famiglia* and the Church, including many festivals throughout the year. There had not been a strong tradition of education in the *Mezzogiorno* and upward mobility did not occur until the third and fourth generations. Early generations worked at unskilled jobs and in family-owned and run restaurants, shoe repair shops, barbershops, and dry and green groceries. Job security came after successful union organizing, including: the International Laborers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, the Garment Workers Union, and the Teamsters Union. Italian organizations included The Order of the Sons of Italy of America, which had thousands of lodges, and many newspapers of which *It Progresso Italo-Americano* endured the longest (Parillo 2008; Klein 2008; Candeloro 1992).

The impression of America that Italian immigrants formed during such times were not optimistic about their assimilation to the mainstream. This partly accounts for the Italian American presence in organized crime and the sensationalization of those activities, in the media and popular entertainment depended on their identity as a distinctive group. However, most researchers now agree that criminal stereotyping and suspicion of Italian-Americans is unjust and impedes their progress in politics, as well as business. Third- and fourth-generation Italian-Americans are well represented in the professions and by 2000, their median family income was higher than the national median. As assimilated generations moved to the suburbs and generally assumed a white racial identity, "Little Italy" disappeared from many American cities. Italian-American marriage outside the group is 40%, the average for white European immigrant groups in the United States (Guglielmo and Salerno 2003; US Census "Qucik Facts" 2010; Klein 2008; Candeloro 1992).

Jewish Americans

Forty percent of Jews in the world live in the United States (Israel has only 20%, making up 80% of its population). Jewish Americans are now a small, religiously identified ethnic minority, who have been very successful in American secular society in politics, the arts, academia, law, medicine, and the media. Until the end of World War II, Jews were considered a racial

group, although there are no uniform physical traits shared by all Jews. Most Jews in the United States have Northern and Eastern European ancestry, but there are also Jews from the Mediterranean region and North Africa. One-third of all Jewish-Americans have no religious affiliation and do not observe Jewish religious practices (The term *Judaization* refers to shared culture and history, as a basis of Jewish identity.) (Porter 2008; Shapiro 1992). After World War II, and the Nazi attempt to exterminate all Jews, suggestions that Jews are racially nonwhite have been viewed as anti-Semitic. Almost all American Jews now identify as white Americans (Brodkin 1998).

In 1654, twenty-three Jews first arrived in New Amsterdam from Brazil. Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Jewish immigrants, known as "Sephardim," were part of a **diaspora** following the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal. With help from "kindred congregations" in Central and South America and Europe, they built synagogues in New York and Newport. Colonial Sephardim were joined by "Ashkenazim," German-speaking Jews from central Europe and Poland, who also spread **Yiddish**, a spoken language, based on Middle High German and other European languages, Hebrew, and Aramaic. During the colonial period, Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews intermarried and also inter-acted with the Anglo establishment, to tolerable degrees. For example, Mordecai Noah (1785–1851) was born in Philadelphia of a mixed Jewish family and served as US consul in Tunis. He later entered politics in support of the Anti-Catholic Native American party and published a Whig newspaper, *The Evening* Star (Goran 1980, pp. 571–4).

Ashkenazi Jews who arrived from 1830 to 1880 considered the Orthodox Ashkenazi-Sephardic alliance too lax, religiously, and they established sep-arate congregations. German Jews who arrived before the Civil War settled throughout the United States, often working as artisans and merchants; many followed the westward demand for manufactured goods, as dis-tributors, retailers, and peddlers. By 1859, there were 141 wholesale firms with Jewish names in New York City, alone. The mid-nineteenth century group of 100,000–200,000 German mercantile Jews quickly became mid-dle class. By the time of the Civil War, 160 places in the United States had forms of Jewish community life, including Cincinnati, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Ordained rabbis began to arrive in the 1840s, but efforts to establish a **synod**, or general organization of clergy, with a standard prayer book, and uniform guiding principles of a religion for American Jews, failed (Goran 1980, pp. 576–8, quote cited p. 578).

From 1884 to 1924, one-third of the Jews in Eastern Europe emigrated as a result of religious persecution, political oppression, expulsion, and economic displacement; About 2 million came to the United States, from

Russia, Lithuania, the Ukraine, Galicia, Hungary, and Romania. Most were young skilled workers, often in the clothing trades. They settled in major east coast cities in crowded enclaves and thrived culturally, establishing a Yiddish theater and literary tradition, as well as the modern motion picture industry. The established German Jewish community supported them in philanthropic projects. The first generation of the Eastern European wave did not assimilate as readily as had mid-nineteenth-century German Jews. But through education, the second and further generations entered the professions and became successful entrepreneurs, labor leaders, and socialist political activists.

In the early twentieth century, some mainstream Americans reacted to Jewish financial success and political radicalism with virulent anti-Semitism that did not distinguish between Eastern European Jews and the already established German Jews. All Jews were accused of being clannish, vulgar, greedy, physically inferior, and so forth. American Jews supported the Jews remaining in Eastern Europe during World War I, who were subject to famine, expulsion, and **pogroms** (violent attacks on Jewish communities). The American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) raised $60 million between 1914 and 1922. As anti-Semitism increased in Germany, mirrored by the German-American Bund in the United States, 150,000 German Jews sought refuge in the United States during the 1930s, including Albert Einstein. Between 1939 and 1945, the JDC sent $80 million to Europe, but it could not stem the tide of the Nazi holocaust in which 6 million Jews were killed; 550,000 American Jews served in the US armed forces during World War II. After the war, Jewish Americans continued to prosper and by the 1970s were no longer subject to explicit, organized anti-Semitism (Goran 1980, pp. 586–97).

The Present and Future of American Ethnic Groups

This brief account of the historical experiences of American groups suggests that assimilation to dominant Anglo-American culture has involved opposition and struggle for successful groups. But dominance at one time may not be permanent. The 2016 US presidential campaign revealed economic and social dissatisfaction within the parts of the WASP group who did not have college degrees (Tyson and Maniam 2016). That same year, in *Hill Billy Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, J.D. Vance described contemporary descendants of the Scots-Irish population from Kentucky and Ohio, as economically marginal and pessimistic about their place in twenty-first-century society (Vance 2016).

Scholars differ about whether the new immigrant/ethnic groups who have arrived since the late twentieth century will go through the same processes of assimilation as those who immigrated earlier. Sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee are optimistic that past patterns will in time repeat (Alba and Nee 2005). However, new MENA immigrants face problems of post-9/11 suspicion and fears of terrorism that were not as widespread and intense, earlier. And undocumented immigrants from Central America, especially Mexico, have been targeted by changes in enforcement policy and political promises of "building a wall" under President Donald Trump's administration. In addition, Moslem religious affiliation and practice among MENA immigrants and a general racialization of Hispanic/Latino immigrants have come up against new expressions of American White Christian Nationalism, during and after the 2016 political campaign (Gidda 2016).

The other side of mainstream establishment barriers to assimilation of immigrants after 1990 is that electronic communications and air travel make it easier for them to maintain ties with relations in places of origin. Many members of these groups find it simple to send money and consumer items back to their countries of origin and ongoing contact supports retention of their original cultural identities (Rebala 2015). Their incentive to assimilate may be further weakened by hate crimes against members of their groups, US government suspicion, and general feelings of alienation outside of cosmopolitan urban centers.

Indigenous Identities

Indigenous identities throughout the world are based on perspectives and values at odds with Western ideas of race and ethnicity. This is evident in self-descriptions by contemporary Native Americans and Australian and New Zealand aboriginals.

Native Americans

The United States is commonly referred to as "a nation of immigrants," meaning that it is a nation of foreigners and their descendants, who voluntarily came here. However, Native Americans who were here well before European and Asian immigrants and blacks who were brought as slaves were not immigrants in this sense. African American ideas about human identity, race, and ethnicity have not differed radically from white ideas.

Their main ambition has not involved resisting taxonomies of race and ethnicity but demanding justice and equality within systems regulated by those taxonomies. Some of those aims and aspirations were discussed in Chapter 2 and more will be considered in Part II. However, Native Americans and other indigenous peoples have concepts of human identity and origins that are radically different from Euro-American views of both race and ethnicity. These differences are evident in the story of "Kennewick Man."

Kennewick Man

Human remains were found when the Columbia River in Kennewick, Washington, flooded in 1996. Anthropologist James Chatters identified a middle-aged man with "caucasoid" features who lived about 9300 years ago. Chatters thought that these remains, dubbed "Kennewick Man" confirmed hypotheses that a European group had arrived in the Americas before North Asians who were the ancestors of modern Native Americans. The age of Kennewick Man brought the skeleton under the jurisdiction of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and the Army Corp of Engineers removed it to a secure vault in the Burke Museum. Representatives of the Umatilla Indians, tribes in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho claimed Kennewick Man for reburial and Chatters and colleagues sued for possession or access to the skeleton for further research (Zimmerman and Clinton 1999).

Armand Minthorn, representing the Umatillas claimed that the age of the skeleton alone established it as Native American. He said:

> If this individual is truly over 9,000 years old, that only substantiates our belief that he is Native American. From our oral histories, we know that our people have been part of this land since the beginning of time. We do not believe that our people migrated here from another continent, as the scientists do.
>
> We also do not agree with the notion that this individual is Caucasian. Scientists say that because the individual's head measurements does not match ours, he is not Native American. We believe that humans and animals change over time to adapt to their environment. And, our elders have told us that Indian people did not always look the way we look today. (Minthorn 2014)

How does this dispute show a radical difference in ideas about human biological diversity? Although in calling Kennewick Man "caucasoid," anthropologists later clarified that they were not making a racial designation,

but were applying a typology, which the Umatilla Indians regarded as irrelevant to their heritage. The scientists based lineage on **phenotypical** (visible bodily) resemblance, whereas the Umatilla Indians based lineage on place of residence. If Kennewick man had resided where they believed their ancestors had always resided, then he was their ancestor, a member of their tribal nation. The question of whether modern Native Americans had in time changed in appearance is not at odds with scientific theories of evolutionary adaptation. But the importance of place of origin for determining what scientists would consider membership in a race or population is of primary importance in the indigenous meaning of identity. Place of ancestry alone, rather than visible traits, is thus the basis for Native American group identities. Place of ancestry played an important role in the history of modern scientific ideas about race, but this was based on observable human traits of inhabitants in distinct places and not on those places alone.

There are more modern ways of determining ancestry than skeleton appearance, for instance, whether Kennewick Man's DNA more closely matches the DNA of Umatilla Indians or Europeans. Also, both groups seem to have assumed that Kennewick man was a reproducing member of the ancestral population of contemporary Umatilla Indians. But even if he were European, Kennewick man may have been an interloper and not part of the Umatilla ancestral lineage. Umatillas might have been there before he arrived.

In September 2014, Douglas Owsley, Smithsonian physical anthropologist reported his findings, based on **morphology**, that the skeleton was related to Pacific groups such as the Ainu and Polynesians. But in June 2015, Eske Willersley and colleagues from the University of Copenhagen published findings from sequencing the genome of Kennewick Man and comparing DNA from a hand bone to worldwide genomic data that included the Ainu and Polynesians. Willersley et al. concluded that Kennewick Man is most closely related to modern Native Americans. In February 2017, Kennewick Man, who the Umatillas called "The Ancient One," was returned to the Umatilla Indians by the Burke Museum, which had curated the remains, as a neutral party. Kennewick man was buried by Umatilla Indians in a private ceremony at an undisclosed place (Burke Museum 2017).

Australian and New Zealand Aboriginals

Indigenous inhabitants of Australia were called "Aboriginals," after 1830 when white settlers took their name of "Australians" for themselves. Similar to the Umatilla Indians, they do not have an internal idea of race or racial

typologies, but have identified themselves based on family relations, rather than place. Contemporary aboriginals have more parents and grandparents who are not aboriginal than those who are aboriginal. However, this widespread family genealogy of mixture does not interfere with aboriginal identity, because that identity is based on kinship culture. In the early 1970s, aboriginal leaders collaborated with the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs to define Aboriginals based on three main factors: family descent from Aboriginal ancestors, self-identification as Aboriginal, and acceptance by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal person. In this sense, aboriginals in both Australia and New Zealand emphasize connectedness—in contrast to Euro-American racial identities, which apply to individuals, aboriginal identities derive from being part of aboriginal collectives.

Maori people in New Zealand call the ongoing process of communication about descent and culture, "whakapapa." Reference to ancestral and contemporary places over time is an important part of what is shared, as is language and the recognition of language groups the same and different from one's own. Bill Gammage has recently shown how aboriginal Australians had complex ecological practices that contributed to the nature of the land in modern Australia (Gammage 2011). Aboriginals are aware of their culture as encompassing myth, history, dreaming, religious rituals, and stories of group relations and they refer to their cultural knowledge as "tjukurrpa" (Australian Institute of Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander Studies 1994; Grieves 2014).

Ainu in Japan

Native Americans, Australian Aboriginals, and New Zealand Maori all share degrees of distance from the nations that emerged after their territories were occupied. The Ainu of Japan, by contrast, have been absorbed into the Japanese notion of nation race. Tarō Asō, former Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Japan since 2012, said in 2005 that Japan was "one nation, one civilization, one language, one culture and one race. There is no other nation (that has such characteristics)" (Siddle 2003). His words echoed those of Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone who referred to Japan as a "homogeneous nation" in 1986. Mitsunori Keira, head of the citizens' group Yaiyukara-no-Mori that preserves indigenous Ainu culture, protested (*Japan Times* 2005). While Japan has officially embraced indigenous culture as part of national identity, critics claim that the rights and needs of existing Ainu people have been neglected (Bukh 2010).

Race, Caste, and Class

Ideas of Race in Brazil

Eleven times as many African slaves were imported to Brazil as to the United States and both countries have large European immigrant populations. The racial history of Brazil is thus very similar to that of the United States, but ideas of race within the two countries are strikingly different. In the United States, most people with black ancestry identify as black, so that there are very few whites who also claim black ancestry. But in Brazil, many who are considered white are also known to have black ancestry. According to Edward Telles, the reason for the difference is that racial identity in Brazil is based wholly on appearance, with little regard for ancestry. Telles also argues that whereas segregation (keeping blacks and whites apart) has been the core of US racial ideology, in Brazil, the core of racial ideology is racial mixing. Brazilians have officially valued racial ambiguity, as opposed to the value of racial purity in the United States, and Brazilians believe that they are the result of a long history of such racial mixing (Telles 2014, pp. 1–23). Nevertheless, whites have remained dominant and the importance of social class for those who are mixed has been described as "money lightens." Upward socioeconomic mobility and greater education have been correlated with a tendency of mixed-race parents to classify their children as white. However, Luisa Schwartzman explains this in terms of the mixed-parents having white co-parents and notes that there is a recent countertrend among black men married to white women, since political aspects of race changed in Brazil toward the end of the twentieth century (Schwartzman 2007).

Abandoning earlier ideas of Brazil as a racial democracy, after researchers reported racial exclusion of blacks and ongoing white supremacy, the government of Brazil instituted affirmative action policies in 2001. Brazilians who appeared black or mixed race made up three-quarters of the bottom tenth of those employed and they earned about 40% less than whites. Only 13% had access to college education. The Law of Social Quotas was passed in 2012, setting aside half of all admissions in top higher education to public high school students, who were disproportionately black. After many white students began to apply for these spots, the government resorted to bio-measurement of racial features, a measure that many viewed as a return to ideas of race in effect during slavery (de Oliveira 2017).

Measurement of racial traits can theoretically be used to affirm nonwhites as Brazil has been attempting, but the practice has an oppressive history, so it is not surprising that it has caused controversy. In Nazi Germany, racial-trait measurements were performed to determine non-Aryan ancestry,

for persecution and extermination (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2017). Contemporary exclusions and discrimination are therefore denounced by comparing them to past racial-trait measurements: In US Historically Black Colleges and Universities, admission is said to have been determined by whether an applicant's skin was lighter than a brown paper bag (Carter 2013). In South Africa under apartheid, black racial identity was determined by assessing hair with a "pencil test" (Ndlovu 2008).

Caste in India

Caste differences on the Indian subcontinent, but mainly in India, are similar to racial categories insofar as they are hereditary. They resemble the influence of class on racial identities in Brazil, but caste identities are based on only one aspect of class, namely occupation. Their cultural role aspect makes caste differences closer to ethnic than racial differences, although caste is different from ethnicity in not allowing for change. Like race and ethnicity, caste is a system throughout society. What is caste? In India, **caste** is a system that divides society into a hierarchy of hereditary groups, based on occupation. The system provides for neither individual upward social mobility nor interactions between members of different castes. India's caste system was legally abolished in 1950, but it is persistent enough to justify affirmative action for disadvantaged castes and those outside of the system.

The four main Indian castes were described in the *Vedas*, ancient Hindu religious texts: Brahmins (priests, teachers, and scholars); Kshatriyas (rulers, police, soldiers, and administrators); Vaishyas (farmers, cattle herders, traders, and bankers); and Shudras (craftsmen and professional service providers). Karma and past life actions determined an individual's caste; positions could be changed only if a group in the same caste did so (Cox 1947, pp. 3–120). Historian Oliver Cox related the following in 1947, about the Gachua Talis and Kolus, two different ancestral groups of "oil pressers" who extracted Neem oil from the fruits and seeds of the every green neem tree:

> The Gachua Talis and Kolus are both oil pressers. They became separate castes when the Kolus left the traditional practice of soaking up the pressed oil from their mortars with a rag and adopted the device of making a hole in the bottom of the container, through which the oil was drawn off. The status of the Kolus is now very much lower than that of the Gachuas. (Cox 1947, quote p. 10)

There are differences of wealth and status within each caste, although members of other castes may not recognize them.

The outsiders of the caste system included tribal groups, foreigners, and those who were "untouchables," because Hindu purity laws were violated by their occupations (butchering, cleaning public places, leatherworking, garbage disposal, and undertaking). Untouchables have encompassed a number of groups with different languages and religions. After 1950, they came to self-identify as *Dalit*, meaning "broken." K.R. Narayanan, a Dalit, was elected President of India in 1997, but Dalit have continued to experience segregation, contempt, social humiliation, and discrimination, solely because of their caste. Dalit are segregated and often prohibited from using common public amenities such as highways. Anthropologist William Haviland wrote in 2005:

> Even a Dalit's shadow is believed to pollute the upper classes. They may not cross the line dividing their part of the village from that occupied by higher castes, drink water from public wells, or visit the same temples as the higher castes. Dalit children are still often made to sit in the back of the classroom. (Haviland 2005, p. 575)

British colonial rule is believed to have made the caste system more rigid, to facilitate their administrative functions. Some contemporary scholars therefore view the caste system as a social construction (Prakash 1990, pp. 392–3). Cast has been compared to race, but many, including its strongest critics, have insisted that all Indian castes are of the same race (Ambedkar 1979, p. 49). Others have observed that higher castes are genetically closer to European populations than to other castes and hypothesized that groups from Eastern Europe and Central Asia invaded and dominated the indigenous population sometime between 3000 and 8000 BCE (Trivedi 2001).

Conclusion

Ethnicity is supposed to belong to culture, race to biology. But ethnic groups have been viewed and treated as races and racial groups have ethnicities. In the United States, Anglo-Americans have dominated since colonial times. European immigrants formed distinctive ethnic groups after arrival. But their identifications by customs, appearance, language, and religion, after several generations of assimilation, turned out to be less enduring and stigmatizing than nonwhite racial identities. And these groups became white Americans. It is perhaps too soon to determine whether that same process is at work for Hispanic/Latinx and Asian immigrants and their descendants, because these groups retain stronger racial descriptions as not white. MENA ethnic groups are further stigmatized by suspicion of terrorist association.

Indigenous identities are altogether different from both racial and ethnic identities, if they are taken on their own terms. Indigenous people are the descendants of first inhabitants in a place or they are those populations who have remained in the same places as their ancestors for much longer in time than other groups. Insofar as ideas of race claim to provide universal means for dividing all humankind, indigenous peoples do not internally have ideas of race. And neither do they see themselves as ethnicities, because the very concept of ethnicity pertains to human migration, in the modern period. If anything, the Euro-American conquerors of indigenous lands would be ethnic groups from an indigenous perspective.

Notions of race in Brazil, as influenced by social class and in India as castes determined by inherited occupations, are closer to Euro-American ideas of race, but less dependent on ideas of human biology. What they share with Euro-American ideas of race is descriptions of groups in terms of their status in systems containing other groups.

Although this chapter has provided a glimpse of ideas of human difference that resemble race, the resemblance breaks down on the presumed universal and eternal characteristic of racial divisions—those who have posited biological race in the modern period have sought to create systems that apply to all humankind, for all time. When group identities apply mainly to members of a particular group and are constructed by members of that group, although the results may be comparable to race, they are in reality closer to notions of **identity** than **identification**—how people describe themselves, rather than how others see them. Historically, there is a difference in the identities of those groups who seek assimilation into a wider racial or ethnic whole—European ethnic groups in the United States, for example—versus identities expressed for affirmation or declaration, such as indigenous identities. When contemporary scholars of race discuss identity, what they usually have in mind is the identities of groups and their members who accept external identification in a wider system of race. This sense of identity will be the main subject of Chapter 6.

Glossary

assimilation—learning and adoption of the language and customs of the country to which a group immigrates.

caste—a system that divides society into a hierarchy of hereditary groups based on occupation.

constructivist or **instrumentalist**—view of ethnic groups as having characteristics resulting from social factors external to those groups.

diaspora—scattered ethnic or racial group with a shared homeland or geographical origin.

ethnic enclaves —neighborhoods where a distinct ethnic group predominates, in residence and small service businesses.

ethnic fractionalization—formation of an ethnic group occurring when people are excluded or oppressed.

identification—how a group and its members are described by nonmembers.

identity—how a group and its members describe themselves.

invention of ethnicity—view of ethnic groups as the result of a new kind of social technology that was prompted by historical events and imposed on people who would not otherwise have been ethnic groups or viewed as ethnic groups.

morphology—form or shape of living things and relationships among structures and study of them.

patronage system—political system in which election winners distribute appointments to those who organized their victories.

phenotype—observable physical traits of living things, caused by interactions of genes with environments.

pogroms—violent attacks on Jewish communities in Eastern Europe during the early twentieth century.

primordialist—view of ethnic groups as having fixed biological traits or deeply historical cultural traits.

racialization—psychological and social process of viewing members of a group as members of a racial group.

Yiddish—a language spoken by Jews, based on Middle High German and other European languages, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

Discussion Questions

1. Why has ethnicity has been called an invention?
2. How has ethnic experience in the United States been like and unlike nonwhite racial experience?
3. In your own experience, how important is the dominance of WASP culture in twenty-first-century America?
4. What historical trends suggest that new immigrants will assimilate?
5. What trends will work against the assimilation of new immigrants?
6. In terms of the universal aspect of ideas of race, explain how indigenous self-descriptions by Umatillas and Australian Aboriginals are matters of

identity (how they see themselves) rather than identification (how others see them).

7. Explain how DNA studies settled the race of Kennewick man. Would the Umatilla claim have been valid with different DNA results?
8. Are the Brazilian government's methods to determine who qualifies for affirmative action racist? (Give reasons with reference to history or explain how this case is different.)
9. How does the history of US ethnic groups who came to be regarded as racially white compare with ideas of race in Brazil?
10. How is the Indian caste system like and unlike the US system of race?

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