

## 13

## DOMINANT-MINORITY RELATIONS IN CROSS- NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- 13.1** State and explain the central themes of this book.
- 13.2** Summarize the overall pattern of ethnic variability around the world and identify which regions are most and least diverse.
- 13.3** Summarize the dominant–minority situations outlined in this chapter, including the history and present situation, and apply the central concepts developed in this book to each case.

*I pause in the central square of Uzhgorod, a city on the western edge of Ukraine. It's early evening, and the streets are crowded as people hurry through the cold, on their way home or to one of the numerous bars for an after-work drink. It's 2006, and I am here for a semester at the university, trying to acclimate to this ancient, recently Soviet, formerly Hungarian, formerly Czechoslovakian, strangely (to me) cosmopolitan city.*

*If I listen closely to the passing crowds, even my untutored ear can hear multiple languages besides Ukrainian: Russian, Czech, Romanian, Hungarian, Slovak, and probably others. I know that almost everyone in the city speaks at least two of these languages, and some, especially the more educated, speak English (thankfully!).*

*From where I stand, I can see the old synagogue, abandoned after World War II when only a few hundred Jews—survivors of the Holocaust and a tiny remnant of a once large, bustling community—returned to the area. In the 1950s, the Soviets, practicing their brand of antisemitism, stripped the building of all religious symbols and turned it into a concert hall.*

*I can hear a Roma boy of about 10 singing nearby. He belts out a melody and accompanies himself on a beat-up guitar. People mostly ignore him, but he manages to score an occasional coin or two from those not too afraid to get close to a Gypsy. He looks cold and unkempt, but I have learned that he is probably better off than the hundreds of Roma children in the orphanages scattered throughout the countryside.*

*The group makeup of the city reflects its complicated past and its geographic centrality. For centuries, it has been a crossroads for cultures and languages, armies and traders. The diversity constantly surprises me, but it's just one of the countless ways ethnicity, language, culture, and race are blended around the world.*

—Joe Healey

Early in this book, we developed a set of concepts and hypotheses to help analyze and understand dominant–minority relations. Our analytical framework has been elaborated and applied to the creation and evolution of diverse minority groups across U.S. history. Although our concepts have proven their usefulness, up to this point, we’ve primarily tested them against the experiences of a single nation. Just as you wouldn’t accept an interview with a single person as an adequate test of a psychological theory, you should not accept the experiences of a single nation as proof for the sociological perspective developed in this book. However, if our ideas can be applied to dominant–minority situations in other societies, we’ll have some assurance that the dynamics of intergroup relations in the United States aren’t unique and that our conclusions have some general applicability.

To that end, in this chapter, we’ll first briefly review the ideas that have guided our analysis. Then, after looking at an overview of diversity around the world, we’ll apply our ideas to several of societies. It’s not possible to investigate every nation in the world, so we’ll focus on societies with widely publicized dominant–minority group conflicts and are, therefore, familiar to many people. For purposes of comparison, we’ve also included several societies in which group relations are thought to be generally peaceful.

We want to be very clear as to the limits of this “test.” The sample of societies is small and isn’t representative of all human societies across time and space; therefore, the test won’t be definitive. Before final conclusions can be reached, we need much more research on a broad array of societies, drawn from different time periods, regions, levels of development, and cultural backgrounds. Just as important, information about many of our most crucial concepts (e.g., the degree and form of prejudice or discrimination) is simply not available for many societies. Without precise, trustworthy information, our tests will necessarily be informal and impressionistic. However, you can rest assured that the conclusions reached in this chapter—and in this book—won’t be the final word on the subject.

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF MAJOR ANALYTICAL THEMES

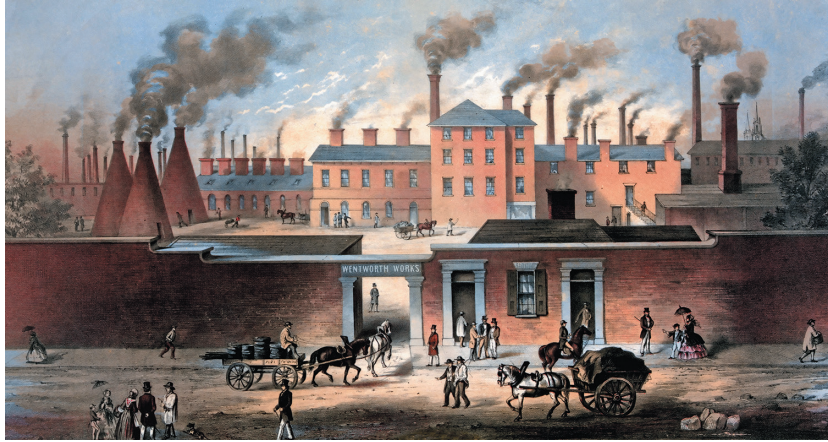
Before our comparative analysis begins, it seems useful to review the major analytical points developed in this book. We summarized these ideas as seven themes in the introduction to Part 3. Because we’ve reiterated those themes extensively throughout the book, a brief review should be sufficient here.

One major theme is the importance of the initial contact situation between groups. The characteristics of the initial meeting can shape relations for centuries. The type and intensity of the competition and the balance of power between the groups is particularly significant. Additionally, research suggests that the experiences and outcomes of minority groups created by colonization and conquest are very different from those of minority groups created by immigration. As we’ve demonstrated, colonized or conquered minority groups, throughout U.S. history, have been subjected to greater rejection, discrimination, and inequality. Positive change is more difficult to accomplish for conquered or colonized groups, especially when the group is racially or physically different from the dominant group.

As this chapter examines the most difficult and explosive group conflicts from around the world, you’ll see that their origins often occur in contact situations in which the colonizers were white Europeans and the eventual minority groups were peoples of color. This pattern of dominance and subordination reflects the conditions under which the present world system of societies was created. By the 1400s, the nations of Europe were the most technologically advanced in the world, and they used that superiority to explore, conquer, and sometimes destroy much of the rest of the world. Contemporary conflicts between whites and nonwhites around the world—and many of the conflicts between peoples of color—are just one legacy of these contact situations.

Of course, the present pattern of white dominance is also an accident of history. Nations have been conquering, enslaving, persecuting, and oppressing their neighbors since there were nations. When neighboring societies differed in some visible way, prejudice, racism, and systems of inequality based on group membership often followed military conquest.

The unique contribution of Europeans to this ancient pattern was that their era of conquest and colonization was made possible by breakthroughs in shipbuilding, navigation, and other technologies that enabled them to spread their influence further and more permanently than previous colonizers. The nations of Europe (and the British in particular) were able to rule much of the world until very



The early days of the Industrial Revolution.

Niday Picture Library / Alamy

recent decades, and many ethnic and racial conflicts today were born during the era of European colonialism (Hyde, 2016; Schmidt, 2016; see Wallace, 1997).

A second important theme developed in this book is that dominant–minority relationships tend to change most rapidly and dramatically when changes occur in the level of development or the basic subsistence technology of the society. For example, industrialization not only revolutionized technology and modes of production; it also transformed group relationships in Europe, in the United States, and, eventually, around the world. In Europe, the growth of industrial technology stimulated massive waves of immigration, beginning in the 1820s, and the new technology helped European nations dominate the world system of societies in the 19th century and much of the 20th century.

In the United States, the industrial revolution led to a transition from paternalistic to rigid competitive group relations, starting in the 19th century. In the latter half of the 20th century, continuing modernization led to the present era of fluid competitive group relations. The blatant racism and overt discrimination of the past have become (for the most part) more moderate, taking on milder, more ambiguous forms that are more difficult to identify and measure. Importantly, this evolution to less repressive forms of group relations has been energized, in large part, by the protest activities of minority-group members and their allies.

Contact situations, subsistence technology, assimilation and pluralism, prejudice, racism, and institutional discrimination are all central to understanding the past and present situations of U.S. minority groups. To what extent are these themes and concepts applicable to group relations around the world?

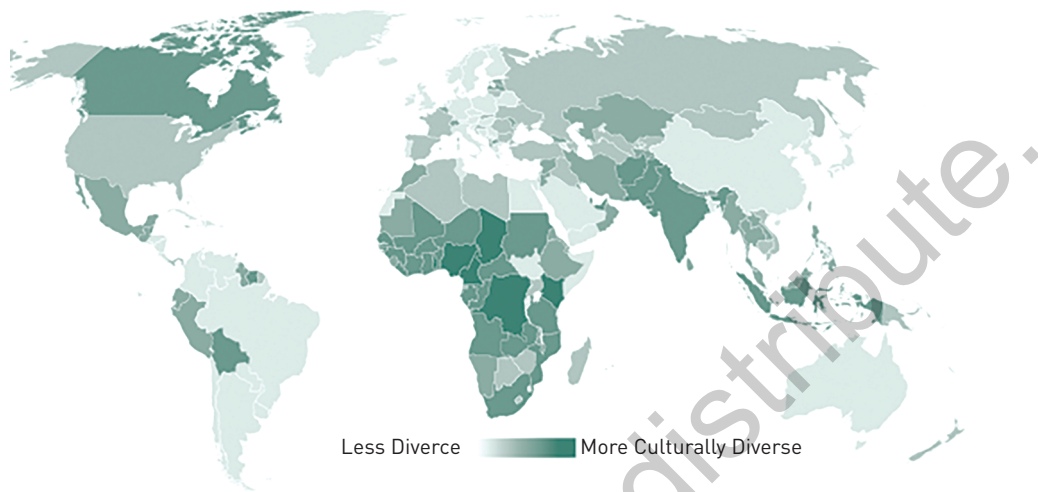
### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is a contact situation, and why is it important?
2. Why do group relationships change when a society undergoes a change in subsistence technology?

### A SNAPSHOT OF GLOBAL DIVERSITY

Before we consider individual nations, let's examine diversity worldwide. Figure 13.1 presents one type of diversity based on an index that combines racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious difference. As you can see, the nations of Africa, with their multitude of tribes, languages, and cultures, tend to rank highest on ethnic diversity.

This pattern partly reflects the colonization of the continent by European powers: Virtually all of Africa has been, at one time or another, a colonial possession of a European nation. The African

**FIGURE 13.1** ■ Cultural Diversity Around the World**Cultural Diversity Around the World***The countries with the most and least cultural diversity**Source: Morin (2013).*

national boundaries of today were drawn for the convenience of—and sometimes at the whim of—the European leaders.

Also, in many cases, part of the governing strategy of European conquerors was to incorporate different ethnic groups in the same colony and pit one against the other, using a “divide-and-conquer” strategy to solidify European rule. This strategy, as you’ll see in the case study of Rwanda, often resulted in prolonged tragedies.

Europe is, generally, the least diverse region of the world, and the most homogeneous nations, according to this measure, are Argentina (virtually all white and Roman Catholic), Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The nations of North and South America are fairly diverse. The United States scores in the middle range and Canada scores higher (largely, as you’ll see, because of the large French-speaking population).

Maps such as Figure 13.1 are interesting and useful for identifying broad patterns, but they should not be taken too literally. For one thing, the data used to compute the scores are old, sometimes stretching back to the early 1990s. (We would prefer updated data, of course, but this is the most recent available.) Also, as we’ve seen, ethnicity—like race—is a social construction. Thus, any attempt to measure it (especially across political, cultural, and social lines) is somewhat arbitrary. Still, the map is a useful starting point and reminds us that the United States isn’t the only nation to confront issues of group relations.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

3. Why might African nations tend to be so diverse? Does this diversity surprise you? Explain.
4. All other things being equal, would you prefer to live in a more diverse or less diverse society? Why?

**A WORLD TOUR**

We begin our “world tour” of group relations with Canada, our neighbor to the north, and then continue east, spanning the world and returning to the Western Hemisphere for a discussion of Brazil.

## Canada

Citizens of the United States sometimes see Canada as simply a colder version of their home society, a perception sustained by the enormous impact the United States has had on everyday social, economic, and political life in Canada. Actually, dominant–minority situations in both countries share some similarities, historically and at present. But the two societies are quite different. For example, although Black Africans were enslaved in colonial Canada, the institution of slavery never reached the economic, political, or social significance it achieved in the United States.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between the two nations is that, for much of its history, the most significant minority-group issue in Canada has been cultural and linguistic, not racial. Virtually since its inception, Canadian society has been divided into two major language groups, French speaking and English speaking. French speakers (or Francophones) are the minority group and are concentrated in the province of Quebec. Nationally, French speakers make up about 21% of the population, but they're about 77% of the population of Quebec (Statistics Canada, 2021).

In our terms, issues of assimilation and pluralism separate the two linguistic and cultural groups. French Canadians have preserved their language and culture in the face of domination by English speakers for more than 200 years, and they still maintain their traditions today.

Although French Canadians tend toward pluralism, they aren't unanimous about the type of relationship they want with the larger society. At one extreme, some Francophones want complete separation between Quebec and English-speaking Canada: Their goal is to make Quebec an independent nation. Others would be satisfied with guarantees of more autonomy for Quebec and some national recognition of the right of the French-speaking residents to maintain their language and culture.

What caused the conflict between French- and English-speaking Canadians? It won't surprise you that the answer begins with the contact situation between the English and French in Canada. Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, France and England (and other nations) fought for control of North America. The French were eliminated as a colonial power in 1759 when the British captured Quebec City and Montreal and ended the French and Indian War (as it is called in the United States).

The French who remained after the war were largely concentrated in what is now Quebec, and they became the ancestral community to today's Quebecois (French speakers of Quebec). The French community was organized around small farms; a rural, traditional, relatively low-income lifestyle; and the Catholic Church. The victorious British Protestants took control of the economic and political institutions of the region and became the ruling elite classes.

A militant pluralistic movement began in the 1960s in Quebec. The French-speaking residents were still clearly a minority group, and there were marked differences in wealth, education, occupational profile, and political power between French and English speakers in the province. Industrialization and urbanization had tended to raise the educational levels and aspiration of the Quebecois, and a nationalistic movement—with some similarities to the Black Power, Brown Power, and Red Power movements that developed in the United States in the same decade—emerged and began to grow in power.

The Parti Quebec became the major vehicle for the expression of Quebecois nationalism and the movement for a politically autonomous Quebec. Referendums in support of separation were held in 1980 and 1995. Both failed but the latter only by a very thin margin.

The status of Quebec's French-speaking residents has continued to rise in recent decades, and they have gained more economic and political power, but issues of control of resources and wealth still animate the struggle. Quebec is still attempting to work out its relationship with the rest of the nation, and the desire for separation is alive and well. Additional referenda on the issue of separation may take place in the future.

Additionally, Canada faces a number of other minority-group issues, most of which will be familiar to citizens of the United States. For example, after years of maintaining a restrictive immigration policy that favored whites, Canada reformed its laws in the 1960s. Since that time, there's been a steady and large influx of newcomers from the same areas that supply immigrants to the United States: Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia.



Also, the native peoples of Canada share many problems and inequities with American Indians in the United States. Many live on remote reservations (called “reserves”) that have high levels of poverty and unemployment and low levels of health care and educational opportunities.

Although they’re different from those of the United States, Canada’s problems of group relations can be analyzed in familiar terms. Some Canadian minority groups (French speakers and Canadian Indians, or First Nations people) originated in conquest and colonization and have been victimized by discrimination and rejection for centuries. Especially since the 1960s, members of these groups have actively protested their situations, and some reforms and improvements have been made.

Canada is seeing an influx of immigrants from outside North America and increasing diversity, while it faces the unresolved issues of Francophones and First Nations. Thus, Canada faces many of the same issues that confront U.S. society: questions of unity and diversity, fairness and equality, assimilation and pluralism.



“The Republic Guarantees . . .” by ADW, a Dublin-based artist, commemorating the 1916 Irish Rebellion, completed on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rebellion. This is one of six pieces created by Irish artists with their vision of the 1916 events.

Artur Widak/NurPhoto via Getty Images.

### Northern Ireland

Other nations face issues like those faced by Canada, but with different levels of intensity, urgency, and lethality. In Northern Ireland, the bitter, violent conflict between Protestants and Catholics has some parallels to Canadian and U.S. group relations and has been closely watched and widely reported. Thousands of people have lost their lives during the struggles, many of them victims of terrorist attacks.

The roots of this conflict lie in armed hostilities between England and Ireland that began almost 1,000 years ago. By the 1600s, England had colonized much of Ireland and had encouraged Protestants from Scotland and England to move to what is now Northern Ireland to help pacify and control the Catholic Irish. The newcomers, assisted by the English invaders, came to own much of the land and control the economy and governing structure of the northern regions of the island.

Over the centuries, the Protestants in the north of Ireland consolidated their position of power and separated themselves from the native Catholic population in the education system, in residential areas, and in most other aspects of society. Law and strong custom reinforced the subordinate position of Catholics, and the system, at its height, resembled Jim Crow segregation. That is, it was a system of rigid competitive relations (see Chapter 5) in which the Protestants sought to limit the ability of Catholics to compete for jobs, political power, housing, wealth, and other resources.

The British ruled Ireland as a colony for centuries but never succeeded in completely subordinating the Irish, who periodically attempted to gain independence through violent rebellions. These efforts came to partial fruition in the 1920s when an uprising that began with the Easter Rebellion of 1916 led to the creation of an independent Republic of Ireland. The new nation encompassed most of the

island, but the largely Protestant northern counties, most of the province of Ulster, remained part of Great Britain.

The partition of the island into an overwhelmingly Catholic Republic of Ireland and a largely Protestant Northern Ireland set the stage for the troubles that reached a boiling point in the 1960s. The Catholics of Northern Ireland began a civil rights movement, seeking amelioration for their minority status. Protestants, fearing loss of privilege and control, resisted attempts at reform, and the confrontation escalated into violence.

Decades of riots, assassinations, bombings, British Army occupation, mass arrests, prisoner hunger strikes, and terror attacks ensued. Both the Catholic and Protestant communities produced extremist, heavily armed terrorist groups (e.g., the Irish Republican Army for the Catholics and the Ulster Defence Association for the Protestants) that coordinated attacks on the other side. The level of violence rose and fell over the decades, but there seemed little reason to hope for peace. Until, in the 1990s, it began to happen.

In 1994, the paramilitary groups on each side declared a cease-fire, and the parties began to negotiate with each other. Four years later, in 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was signed, but only after an extremely difficult negotiation process. This accord, made possible in large part by the involvement and support of Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States, established a new power-sharing arrangement for the governance of Northern Ireland in which both Protestant and Catholic parties would participate.

The new governing arrangement has survived several difficult crises, including a terrorist attack on a shopping area in Omagh, Northern Ireland, in August 1998 that left nearly 30 people dead. In that same year, a referendum in support of the arrangement passed with overwhelming agreement in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, and a stable and workable solution to the troubles seemed to have been reached. However, in the spring of 2017, conflicts re-emerged and the power-sharing agreement came under heavy stress (Bell, 2017).

Several years later, Great Britain's exit from the European Union ("Brexit") put additional strain on Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland remained in the European Union and its border with Northern Ireland became the only land border between an EU and non-EU nation. There had been considerable support in Northern Ireland for staying in the EU and Brexit resulted in many complications for the government, not the least of which is the condition of the border: Would it remain open or would restrictions be placed on movement, as they had during the "Troubles." These complex issues still animate the government and stability, and continuity aren't assured.

Note that in this case, as in the case of relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the dominant and the minority groups are of the same race. The deep divisions are, on the surface, linguistic and cultural (e.g., English vs. French speaking) and religious (Protestant vs. Catholic). In both nations, however, these divisions are highly correlated with social class position, access to education and jobs, and political power. That is, Catholics in Northern Ireland—like the French-speaking residents of Quebec—are a minority group that has been victimized by intense, systematic, and persistent discrimination and prejudice.

What was at stake in these struggles was not simply the survival of a culture or religion. These clashes were so bitter, so deadly, and so difficult because they also concerned the distribution of real resources and questions about who gets what and how much.

## Germany

In the annals of intergroup relations, Germany is infamous as the site of the greatest atrocities against minority groups in history. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Nazi leadership of the nation attempted to eradicate the Jewish community (and several other groups) and nearly succeeded. Six million Jews died in the concentration camps. The Nazis also killed thousands of other minority group members such as the Roma, people with disabilities, and LGBT people.

Since the end of World War II, modern Germany has broken from its racist past, democratized, industrialized, and modernized. It is a global leader politically and economically, and has one of the world's best-trained and most-educated workforces. Germany has worked hard to atone for the Nazi's

attempted genocide of Jews. It has, for example, paid reparations to the state of Israel in partial compensation for the atrocities of World War II and is one of Israel's leading trading partners in Europe. Germany also funds various cultural exchange programs between the two nations.



A Berlin resident places flowers on *stolpersteine*, or stumbling stones. The stones feature small brass plates inscribed with the names and dates of Jewish people killed during the Holocaust. Typically, they're installed in front of houses where the person(s) last lived.

JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFP/Getty Images

Today, Germany faces new dominant–minority group challenges. Like the United States, Canada, and other Western European nations, Germany has become a highly desirable destination for immigrants, who come to satisfy the demand for cheap, relatively unskilled labor (associated with lower education, physical labor, and less decision-making) and “high-tech” professionals (see Chapter 8).

Besides the demand in various parts of the job market, immigrants are also pulled to Germany (and many other European nations) by the low rate of population growth. Birthrates are low throughout Western Europe, and Germany's birthrate is lower than its death rate (Population Reference Bureau, 2021). If this condition continues, Germany will begin to lose population.

Based on the patterns we've documented in the United States, we'd predict that high rates of immigration would be accompanied by episodes of racist violence, and it's easy to find neo-Nazi hate groups, hate crimes, and violent attacks against immigrants and other minority-group members in Germany (and other European nations) in recent years. These attacks include bombings, killings, beatings, and myriad other forms of violence and brutality.

One of the most sensational of these attacks involved a gang of three neo-Nazis who allegedly murdered at least nine people from immigrant backgrounds and robbed at least a dozen banks to finance their activities. Two of the members of the so-called Zwickau Cell of the National Socialist Underground committed suicide as they were about to be captured, but the third, Beate Zschaepe, went on trial for these crimes in December 2013 (Schofield, 2013).

Also, antisemitism is still a fact of life in Germany and may be increasing there and across Europe. A 2018 survey of Jews in 12 European nations found that 85% thought that antisemitism was a “very big” or “fairly big” problem in their country. Percentages ranged from a high of 95% in France (up from 85% in 2013) to a low of 56% in the Denmark. Germany's rate was 85% and most felt things had gotten worse in recent years (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018, p. 16). Another survey found that anti-Semitic sentiments had decreased in Germany from 27% with Anti-Semitic



attitudes in 2014 to 15% in 2016 (Anti-Defamation League [ADL], 2019). Given these results, you may not be surprised to learn that anti-Semitic crimes in Germany increased by nearly 20% in 2018 (Angelos, 2019).

Hate crimes, neo-Nazis, and anti-Semitic sentiments are part of everyday life in Germany, other European nations, and the United States, and across the world. They seem to have some common causes: high rates of immigration combined with economic uncertainty for working-class, less educated men and strong traditions of racism and intolerance. Still, the memory of the Holocaust gives special resonance to attacks on minority groups in Germany.

### Switzerland

Although our focus is on the ethnic and racial trouble spots. It's also important to consider societies where group relations are generally peaceful, and conflict is comparatively minimal. One such society is Switzerland. Swiss society incorporates three major and distinct language and cultural groups: French speakers, German speakers, and Italian speakers. (A fourth official language, Romansh, is spoken by a small number of Swiss.) Each language group resides in a particular region of the country and enjoys considerable control of its local affairs. In our terms, Switzerland is a pluralistic society where the groups are separate culturally and structurally. At the local level, the groups have neither acculturated nor integrated. Each group maintains its unique cultural and linguistic heritage, and its separate institutional and organizational structures.

At the national level, political power and economic resources are shared in proportion to the size of each group. The leaders of the different groups are careful to cooperate in national affairs and maintain the sense of proportional sharing and fundamental fairness. With the combination of cooperation at the national level and autonomy at the local level, Switzerland functions effectively as a multicultural, multilingual society.

In addition to the Swiss-born population, about one fourth (25.1%) of the population are foreign-born (The European Commission, 2021). Compared with many countries, they enjoy a strong economy which lessens potential threats from those who might view them as economic competition (e.g., by “taking” jobs). European Union citizens living in Switzerland also possess additional protections such as social security benefits and residence rights.

Nevertheless, Switzerland has recently experienced a rise in populism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and Islamophobia, mirroring the same trend throughout Europe. Research by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office found that about one fourth of immigrants surveyed, particularly Asians and Africans, experienced discrimination. Nevertheless, most respondents felt favorably about their overall experience in Switzerland, rating it as a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale (Bitschnau et al., 2021; D'Amato & Ruedin, 2018; Ernst et al., 2016; Turuban, 2021).

Perhaps the key to Swiss success in combining diversity and unity is that none of the three major groups was forced to join the nation by military conquest or coercion. The groups joined together voluntarily and created this pluralistic nation for mutual advantage. Thus, for the three major groups that make up Swiss society, there's no history of conquest or subordination and no patterns of structured inequality, prejudice, or resentment.

### Former Yugoslavia

The case of Switzerland indicates that peaceful and prosperous pluralistic societies can be created, but this isn't typical of multigroup societies. Conquest and coercion are more common than voluntary cooperation, and the potential for rancor, conflict, and violence tends to be high, as demonstrated by the former nation of Yugoslavia.

As you saw in the chapter introduction, Eastern Europe is a region of immense ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. Travel, trade, and warfare have mixed and scattered groups, and over the centuries, nations and empires have come and gone. The former nation of Yugoslavia exemplifies the diversity of the region and the complexities of intergroup conflict and cooperation.

The history of the modern nation of Yugoslavia is short yet complex. When it was created in 1918, at the end of World War I, the nation encompassed diverse ethnic groups, each with its own language,



religion, history, and memories of grievances against other groups. The larger groups include Croats (who are mainly Roman Catholic), Serbs (primarily Eastern Orthodox), and Bosnians (roughly half Muslim, half Christian). Each of these groups had a home territory (see Figure 13.2) in which it was the numerical majority. For example, in 1992, Croatia was 78% Croatian, and Serbia was 85% Serbian. Bosnia was the most diverse of the former Yugoslav states. In 1992, about 44% of the population of Bosnia was Muslim, 39% was Serb, and 17% was Croat (Remington, 1997, p. 275). Religious homogeneity and diversity seem to have held steady. According to the most recent censuses in 2011, 84.59% of Serbians were Eastern Orthodox and 86.3% of Croats were Catholic. Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted its most recent census in 2013. Just over half (51%) of the population were Muslim, about one third (31%) were Serbian Orthodox Christian; 15% were Roman Catholics, and the remainder identified with other faith traditions (e.g., Judaism) (U.S. State Department, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c.)

During World War II, Yugoslavia was one of the bloody battlegrounds, and each of these groups took sides. German forces invaded the region and created a puppet government in Croatia. The Croatian allies of the Nazis participated in the persecution of Jews and also in a campaign against the Serbs residing within their reach. They constructed concentration camps and executed people. By the end of the war, the fascist Croatian government had murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs. However, the Croats weren't alone in their atrocities. Their campaign against Serbs provoked anti-Croatian violence in Serbia; hostility and resentment between the two groups had grown to new heights by the end of the war.

World War II also saw the emergence of Josip Broz Tito as a leader of anti-Nazi guerrilla forces. After the war, Tito became the chief architect of the modern nation of Yugoslavia. Tito's design incorporated many of the same elements that make Switzerland a successful pluralistic society. Postwar Yugoslavia comprised several different subnations, or republics, each of which was associated with a particular ethnic group. Power at the national level was allocated proportionately, and each region had considerable autonomy in the conduct of its affairs.

A major difference between Yugoslavia and Switzerland, however, lies in the contact situation. Whereas Switzerland was formed on a voluntary basis, Yugoslavia was first created by post-World War I diplomatic negotiations and then re-created at the end of World War II by the authoritarian regime of Tito. The nation was held together largely by the forcefulness of Tito's leadership. After his death in 1980, little remained to preserve the integrity of the Yugoslavian experiment in nation building. The memories of past hostilities and World War II atrocities were strong, and the separate republics began to secede from the Yugoslav federation in the 1990s.

Self-serving political and military leaders in Serbia and in the other former Yugoslavian states inflamed prejudices and antipathies. Vicious conflicts broke out throughout the region, with the worst

violence occurring in Bosnia. Bosnia's attempt to establish its independence was opposed by Serbia and by the Serbian and Croatian residents of Bosnia, both of whom formed armed militias. Bosnia became a killing field as these different contingents confronted each other. The Serbs began a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia in 1992 and committed the worst excesses. In the areas of Bosnia where they could establish control, Serbs mounted a campaign to eliminate non-Serbs by forced relocation or, if necessary, by wholesale massacre. Concentration camps appeared, houses were torched, former neighbors became blood enemies, people (especially women) were raped, and children were killed along with their parents.

The Serbs weren't alone in resorting to tactics of mass terror and murder. Croats used the same methods against Bosnian Muslims, and Bosnians retaliated in kind against Serbs. By the time relative peace was established in Bosnia in 1995, more than 100,000 people had died in the murderous ethnic conflict. Many of these patterns of vicious brutality reappeared in the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo that began in 1999 and was ended by the armed intervention of the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies.

The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia into savage ethnic violence is one of the nightmarish episodes of recent history. Unfortunately, it's not unique.

### Rwanda

In the spring of 1994, the tiny African nation of Rwanda sprang into international headlines. Rwanda's two ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis, had a long history of mutual enmity and hatred, but the attacks that began in 1994 reached new heights of brutality. Perhaps 800,000 people—perhaps many more—were murdered, and millions fled to neighboring nations (Gourevitch, 1999, p. 83; see McDoom, 2020). Accounts by witnesses and survivors told of massacres with rifles, machetes, rocks, and fists. No one was spared in the killing frenzy. Elderly people, pregnant women, and small children were executed along with the men in what became one of the most horrific, unimaginable episodes of intergroup violence in world history.

What caused this horrific situation? As seems to be the case whenever intense ethnic violence occurs, colonization and conquest are part of the explanation for the brutal confrontation between the Hutus and Tutsis. European nations began colonizing Africa in the 1400s, and the area that became Rwanda didn't escape domination. Germany established control over the region in the late 1800s. Following its defeat in World War I, Germany lost its overseas possessions, and Belgium became the dominant power in the region. Both European powers valued Rwanda for its mild climate and fertile soil. The native population was harnessed to the task of producing agricultural products, especially tea and coffee, for export.

The European colonizers attempted to ease the difficulty of administering and controlling Rwanda by capitalizing on the long-standing enmity between the Tutsis and Hutus. In a classic case of divide and conquer, Germany placed the Tutsis in a position to govern the Hutus, a move that perpetuated and intensified hostilities between the tribes. The Belgians continued the tradition and maintained the political and economic differentials between the tribes.

Throughout the colonial era, mutual tribal hostilities were punctuated by periodic armed clashes, some of which rose to the level of massacres. In the early 1960s, the era of direct European political colonialism ended, and two nations were created in the region: Rwanda was dominated by the Hutus, and neighboring Burundi by the Tutsis. Hostilities didn't stop at this point, however, and the short histories of these two new nations are filled with shared conflicts. What portion of these conflicts is international and what portion domestic is difficult to determine, because a substantial number of Tutsis continued to reside in Rwanda and many residents of Burundi were Hutus. That is, the borders between the two nations were drawn arbitrarily and don't reflect local traditions or tribal realities.

In the early 1990s, a rebel force led by exiled Tutsis invaded Rwanda with the intention of overthrowing the Hutu-dominated government. The conflict continued until the spring of 1994, when the plane carrying the Hutu president of Rwanda was shot down, killing all aboard. This was the incident that set off the massacres, with Hutus seeking revenge for the death of their president and attempting to eliminate their Tutsi rivals. In another of the great nightmarish episodes of the 20th century, perhaps

as many as half the Tutsis in Rwanda died in the confrontation, and millions more fled for their lives. Although surely not a complete explanation for these horrors, the history of intertribal enmity and competition for power and control enhanced and magnified by European colonialism is part of the background for understanding them—if such an understanding is possible.

Since 1994, Rwanda has enjoyed relative calm. Violent ethnic clashes, however, have continued across the African continent, and the nightmare of genocide has struck Darfur, the Central African Republic, and Somalia, among other nations. The year 2019 marked 25 years post-genocide and Rwanda memorialized its victims. In that time, and since, its government and people have taken impressive measures to prosecute those responsible through the court of law. Additionally, more 250,000 people served in more than 12,000 Gacaca courts. (“Gacaca” loosely translate to “justice amongst the grass.”) By the time these courts closed in 2012, almost two million people had been tried for their participation in the genocide—in addition to cases tried in the country’s formal legal system and in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Because Rwanda’s genocide was largely an instance of neighbors killing neighbors, this local approach seems useful, though it’s certainly not without critique. Also, local communities must deal with situations where people convicted of brutal crimes come back to their neighborhoods. To deal with these issues, many people are joining “peace clubs” to acknowledge their responsibility for playing a part in the atrocities and to ask for forgiveness. However, research shows that inter-ethnic trust remains low, especially for those targeted in the genocide (Hopkins, 2017; Ingelaere & Verpoorten, 2020; *New York Times* Editorial Board, 2014; Nyseth Brehm et al., 2020; Thorne & Viebach, 2019).

### South Africa

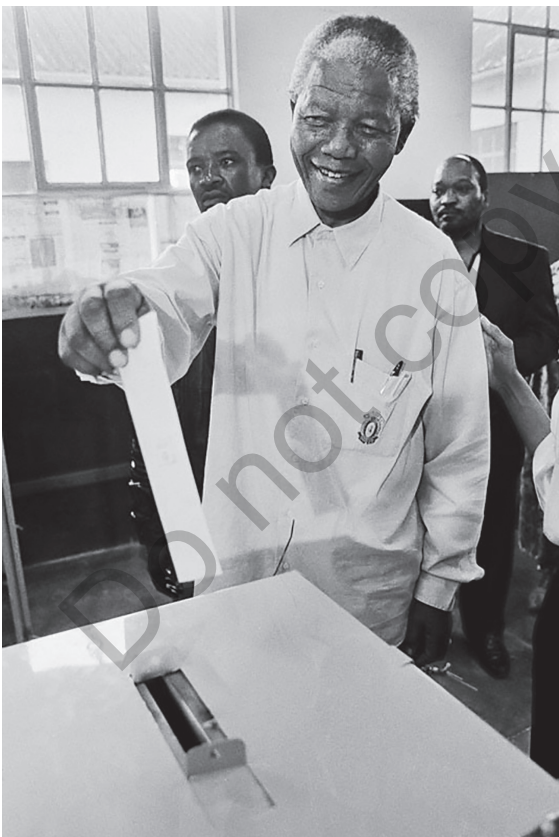
Not all stories are nightmares, and the dreary litany of hatred, conflict, and violence occasionally takes a surprising twist. As recently as the late 1980s, the Republic of South Africa was one of the most racist

and discriminatory societies in the world. A small minority of whites (no more than 10%) dominated the Black African population and enjoyed a level of race-based privilege rarely equaled in the world’s history.

Today, although enormous problems of inequality and racism remain, South Africa has officially dismantled the machinery of racial oppression, enfranchised nonwhites, and elected five Black presidents. Even in a world where change is rapid and unpredictable, the end of state-supported racism and race-based privilege in South Africa is one of the more stunning surprises of recent times.

Some background will illuminate the magnitude of the change. Europeans first came into contact with the area that became the nation of South Africa in the 1600s, at about the time when the British were establishing colonies in North America. First to arrive were the Dutch, who established ports on the coast to resupply merchant ships for the journey between Asia and Europe. Some of the Dutch began moving into the interior to establish farms and sheep and cattle ranches. The “trekkers,” as they were called, regularly fought with indigenous Black Africans and tribes moving into the area from the north. These interracial conflicts were extremely bloody and resulted in enslavement for some Black Africans, genocide for others, and a gradual push of the remaining Black Africans into the interior. In some ways, this contact period resembled that between European Americans and Native Americans, and in other ways, it resembled the early days of the establishment of Black slavery in North America.

In the 1800s, South Africa became a British colony, and the new governing group attempted to grant more privileges to Black people. These efforts stopped far short of equality, however, and South Africa continued to evolve as a racially divided, white-dominated society into



Nelson Mandela casts his ballot in South Africa’s first democratic election. He was elected President and served from 1994 to 1999.

Paul Weinberg/Wikimedia Commons



the 20th century. The white community continued to be split along ethnic lines, and hostilities erupted into violence on a number of occasions. In 1899, British and Dutch factions fought each other in the Boer War, a bitter and intense struggle that widened and solidified the divisions between the two white communities. Generally, the descendants of the Dutch have been more opposed to racial change than have the descendants of the British.

In 1948, the National Party, the primary political vehicle of the Afrikaans, or Dutch, segment of the white community, came into control of the state. As the society modernized and industrialized, there was growing concern about controlling the majority Black population. Under the leadership of the National Party, the system of apartheid was constructed to firmly establish white superiority. In Afrikaans, *apartheid* means “separate” or “apart,” and the basic logic of the system was to separate whites and Blacks in every area of life: schools, neighborhoods, jobs, buses, churches, and so forth. As discussed in Chapter 5, apartheid resembled the Jim Crow system of segregation in the United States, except it was even more repressive, elaborate, and unequal.

Although the official government propaganda claimed that apartheid would permit Blacks and whites to develop separately and equally, the system was clearly intended to solidify white privilege and Black powerlessness. By keeping Black residents poor and powerless, white South Africans created a pool of workers who were both cheap and relatively defenseless. Whites of even modest means could afford the luxuries of personal servants, and employers could minimize their payrolls and their overhead. Of the dominant–minority situations considered in this book, perhaps only American slavery rivals apartheid for its naked, unabashed subjugation of one group for the benefit of another.

Note that the coming of apartheid reversed the relationship between modernization and control of minority groups that we observed in the United States. As the United States industrialized and modernized, group relations evolved from paternalistic to rigid competitive to fluid competitive forms (see Table 5.2), each stage representing a looser form of control over the minority group. In South Africa after 1948, group relations became more rigid, and the structures of control became stronger and more oppressive. Why the difference?

Just as whites in the U.S. South attempted to defend their privileged status and resist the end of de jure segregation in the 1950s and 1960s, white South Africans were committed to retaining their status and the benefits it created. Although South Africans of British descent tended to be more liberal in matters of race than those of Dutch descent, both groups were firmly committed to white supremacy. Thus, unlike the situation in the United States at the end of Jim Crow segregation, in which white liberals and non-Southerners put considerable pressure on the racist South, there was little internal opposition to the creation of apartheid among South African whites.

Furthermore, Black South Africans in the late 1940s were comparatively more powerless than Blacks Americans in the 1950s and 1960s. Although South African Black protest organizations existed, they were illegal and operated underground or from exile and under conditions of extreme repression. However, Blacks Americans living outside the South were able to organize and pool their resources to assist in the campaign against Jim Crow, and these activities were protected (more or less) by the national commitment to civil liberties and political freedom.

A final difference between the two situations has to do with numbers, as you learned in Chapter 5. In the United States, Black peoples are a numerical minority. However, they were the great majority of the population in South Africa. Part of the impetus for establishing the rigid system of apartheid was the fear among whites that they would be “swamped” by the numerical majority unless Black powerlessness was perpetuated. The difference in group size helped contribute to the “fortress” mentality among some white South Africans: the feeling that they were defending a small (but luxurious) outpost surrounded and besieged by savage hordes who threatened their immediate and total destruction. This strong sense of threat among whites, and the need to be vigilant and constantly resist the least hint of racial change, is part of what made the events of the 1990s so remarkable and unexpected.

The system of racial privilege called apartheid lasted about 40 years. Through the 1970s and 1980s, changes within South Africa and the world in general built up pressure against the system. Internally, protests by Blacks against apartheid began in the 1960s and continued to build in intensity. The South African government responded to these protests with violent repression, and thousands died in the

confrontations with police and the army. Nonetheless, anti-apartheid activism continued to attack the system from below.

Apartheid also suffered from internal weaknesses and contradictions. For example, jobs were strictly segregated, along with all other aspects of South African society. In a modern, industrial economy, however, new types of jobs are constantly being created and old jobs are continually lost to mechanization and automation, making it difficult to maintain simple, caste-like rules about who can do what kinds of work. Also, many of the newer jobs required higher levels of education and special skills, and the number of white South Africans was too small to meet the demand. Thus, some Black South Africans were slowly rising to positions of greater affluence and personal freedom even as the system attempted to coerce and repress the group collectively.

Internationally, pressure on South Africa to end apartheid was significant. Other nations established trade embargoes and organized boycotts of South African goods. South Africa was banned from the Olympics and other international competitions. Although many of these efforts were more symbolic than real and had only minor impacts on everyday social life, they sustained an outcast status for South Africa and helped create an atmosphere of uncertainty among its economic and political elite.

In the late 1980s, these various pressures made it impossible to ignore the need for reform any longer. In 1990, F. W. de Klerk, the leader of the National Party and prime minister of the nation, began a series of changes that eventually ended apartheid. He lifted the ban on many outlawed Black African protest organizations, and, perhaps most significant, he released Nelson Mandela from prison. Mandela was the leader of the African National Congress, one of the oldest and most important Black organizations, and he had served a 27-year prison term for actively protesting apartheid.

Together, de Klerk and Mandela helped ease South Africa through a period of rapid racial change that saw the franchise being extended to Black people, the first open election in South African history, and Mandela's election in 1994 to a five-year term as president. After his presidency, Mandela continued to grow in stature on the world stage, hailed as the key individual who prevented a race war in South Africa and as a symbol of racial democracy and justice. His passing in December 2013 was met with virtually universal grief.

In 1999, Mandela was replaced by Thabo M. Mbeke, another Black South African. Mbeke was reelected in 2004 but ousted in September 2008 after a bitter struggle with African National Congress rival Jacob Zuma, who became president in 2009. Zuma is a charismatic figure with strong support among the rank-and-file of the party, but his standing has been compromised by allegations of corruption, charges of rape, and other scandals. In 2021, Zuma was sent to prison on charges of corruption and contempt of court.

The future of South Africa remains unclear. Although the majority Black population now has political power, deep racial divisions remain. In many urban and white residential areas, South Africa maintains a First-World infrastructure, but the Black population continues to live in poverty.

In 2010, South Africa hosted the soccer World Cup and expanded airports, improved roads, and built hotels and stadiums to provide first-class facilities for the hordes of fans who attended the matches. The event went off smoothly and was generally considered a triumph as South Africa presented its best multiracial, unified face to the world.

What the world didn't see was that much of the Black population continues to live in apartheid-era townships—pockets of deep, grinding poverty with no running water, electricity, or sewage, poor or nonexistent medical care, and grossly overcrowded and understaffed schools. Things may be getting better for Black South Africans: One report concludes that the Black middle class has doubled in size since 1993 and the percentage of Black members of the middle class has increased from 8% to almost 14% in the same time period. Furthermore, the income gap between whites and Blacks has declined. Still, the average annual income (in U.S. dollars) for Black households was \$5,203 in 2015, about one fifth of the annual income for white households (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Residential segregation remains high.

The problems of racial and class inequality facing South Africa are enormous, and this experiment in racial reform might still fail. However, should it succeed in meeting these challenges, the dramatic transition from massive racism and institutionalized discrimination could still provide a model of change for other racially divided societies.

## The Middle East

The tense, often violent relations between Israelis, Palestinians, and other Arabs are yet another example of the complex, long-lasting conflicts that seem to defy the most concerted, best intentioned efforts at conciliation. Hatred, terrorism, and pledges to fight to the death are common in these conflicts and deeply complicated because they involve nation–states and global alliances as well as dominant and minority groups. Relations between groups in the Middle East are perhaps the most complex and ancient of any around the world.

As with many of the situations considered in this chapter, present-day conflicts in the Middle East have their origins in military conquest. Following World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, European Jews pushed for the establishment of a Jewish state in their traditional homeland. The United Nations and United States strongly supported this cause, and Israel was founded in 1948.

Unfortunately, the Jewish homeland was established on land occupied by Arabs (Palestinians), who also regarded it as their rightful homeland. Thus began the dominant–minority (Israeli–Palestinian) situation that continues today and is further complicated by relations between Israel and the other nations of the Middle East.

One difference between this and other intergroup struggles is the span of time involved. Although the modern state of Israel encompasses the traditional Jewish homeland, few Jews have lived in this area for the past 2,000 years. Jews were exiled from the region during the time of the Roman Empire and resettled in parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Middle East has been Arab land for most of the past thousand years. Jews began to immigrate back to the area early in the 20th century, and especially after World War II and the founding of Israel, but they found a well-entrenched Palestinian Arab society on what they considered to be “their” land.

Warfare between the newly founded Israel and the surrounding Arab nations began almost immediately, and violent confrontations of one sort or another have been nearly continuous. Full-scale wars were fought in 1948, 1967 (the famous Six-Day War), and again in 1973. Israel was victorious in all three instances, and it claimed additional territory from its Arab neighbors (including the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip) to reduce the threat and provide a buffer zone. The wars also created a large group of refugees in the Arab countries neighboring Israel.

The Arabs who remained in Israel after the wars and in Israeli-occupied territories became a minority group. Israel has always pursued an official policy of assimilation, and some Arabs eventually became Israeli citizens, although most prefer to be classified as “permanent residents” rather than citizens, as a way of refusing to recognize Israel’s sovereignty. Arabs make up about 21% of Israel’s population of eight million (CIA Factbook, 2021). The Palestinian population of Israel is supplemented with millions more living in the surrounding Arab nations.

Part of the complexity and intensity of this situation stems from the fact that the groups involved are separated along so many different lines: nationality, religion, language, ethnicity, history, and social class. Additionally, because of the huge oil reserves in the region, the Israeli–Arab conflict has political and international dimensions that directly involve the rest of the world. The U.S. involvement in two separate invasions of Iraq; the war on terror following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States; the war in Afghanistan; and the difficult relationship between Iran and the West have added a level of complexity to the already tense relationships between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

There are some indications that a solution to the enmities in the Middle East is possible. In 1979, Egypt, formerly committed to the destruction of the Jewish state, signed a peace accord with Israel. More recently, Israel and representatives of the Palestinians have engaged in occasional peace talks and, most famously, signed an accord intended to lead to Palestinian self-rule in Oslo in 1993. The peace talks have been punctuated with violent uprisings by Palestinians and military responses by the Israeli Army. To say the least, negotiations have been extremely difficult and constantly threatened by violence, suicide bombings, attacks, and counterattacks.

The year 2017 marks the 50th year anniversary of the 1967 war, and 2021 is the 73rd year that Israel has been a homeland for Jews—or 73 years that Palestinians have lived under occupation—depending on one’s perspective. Few can see an end to the ongoing conflicts. Of course, much the same point was made about South Africa until the dramatic events that led to the release of Mandela and

the relatively peaceful transition to a racial democracy. The history of dominant–minority relations is filled with surprises, and, at least theoretically, a peaceful, permanent resolution remains a possibility.

## Hawaii

Like Switzerland, Hawaii is often identified as a place that maintains peaceful group relations in the face of great diversity. This reputation justifies the inclusion of the islands in this global survey even though Hawaii isn't a separate, autonomous nation.

The diversity of Hawaiian society is demonstrated, in part, by its racial makeup. The Hawaiian population has a much higher rate of multiracial people than the general population of the United States. Table 13.1 shows the racial breakdown of the island: Note that 22% chose “more than one race” compared with just 3.4% in the U.S. population.

Whites are a numerical minority on the island and Asians are the single largest racial group, with Japanese Americans and Filipino Americans the largest Asian subcategories. Native Hawaiians are about 10% of the population. Other groups—Hispanic Americans, Black Americans, and Samoans and other Pacific Islanders, among others—are also a part of the island social order.

Racial Category	Percent of State Population
White Alone	24.1
Black American	1.9
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4
Asian Alone	38.7
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	10.8
Some other race alone	1.7
Two or more races	22.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2021), Hawaii.



Palestinian activists confront Israeli soldiers during a demonstration.

©iStockphoto.com/ rrodrickeiler



The cultures and traditions of these groups are evident in the mix of Hawaiian society and the rhythm of everyday life. The relatively low levels of prejudice, discrimination, and group conflict in the midst of this diversity are the bases for the sometimes glowing (and, many would argue, overstated) depictions of Hawaii as a racial paradise.

The comparatively high levels of tolerance seem unusual in a world that often features just the opposite. A brief review of the history of the islands provides some insight into the development of these peaceful relations, as well as the suggestion that the seemingly untroubled facade hides a grimmer reality.

Hawaii first encountered Europeans in 1788, but conquest and colonization didn't follow the initial contact. Early relations between the islanders and Europeans were organized around trade and commerce—not agriculture, as was the case in the United States, South Africa, Northern Ireland, and so many other places. Thus, the contact situation didn't lead immediately to competition over the control of land or labor.

Also, the indigenous Hawaiian society was highly developed and had sufficient military strength to protect itself from the relatively few Europeans who came to the islands in these early days. Thus, two of the three conditions—competition and a power differential—stated in the Noel hypothesis (see Chapter 4) for the emergence of a dominant–minority situation weren't present in the early days of European–Hawaiian contact. Anglo dominance didn't emerge until decades after first contact.

Contact with Europeans did bring other consequences, including smallpox and other diseases to which Native Hawaiians had no immunity. Death rates began to rise, and the population of Native Hawaiians fell from about 300,000 in 1788 to less than 60,000 a century later (Kitano & Daniels, 1995, p. 137).

As relations between the islands and Europeans developed, the land gradually began to be turned to commercial agriculture. By the mid-1800s, white planters had established sugar plantations, an enterprise that's extremely labor intensive and has often been associated with systems of enforced labor and slavery (Curtin, 1990). By that time, however, there weren't enough Native Hawaiians to fill the demand for labor, and the planters began to recruit abroad, mostly in China, Portugal, Japan, Korea, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Thus, the original immigrants of the Asian American groups we discussed in Chapter 9 often came first to the Hawaiian Islands, not to the mainland.

The white plantation owners came to dominate the island economy and political structure. Other groups, however, weren't completely excluded from secondary structural assimilation. The various nationality and ethnic groups remained largely separate from each other but Jim Crow-type laws banning entire groups from public institutions or practices such as school segregation are nonexistent in Hawaiian history. Americans of Japanese ancestry, for example, are very powerful in politics and have produced many of the leading Hawaiian politicians. (In contrast to events on the mainland, very few Japanese Americans in Hawaii were interned during World War II.) Most other groups have taken advantage of the relative openness of Hawaiian society and have carved out niches for themselves in the institutional structure.

In the area of primary structural assimilation, rates of intermarriage among the various groups are much higher than on the mainland, reflecting the relative openness to intimacy across group lines that has characterized Hawaii since first contact. About 42% of all marriages in Hawaii from 2008 to 2010 crossed group lines, a much higher rate than for any other state (Wang, 2012, p. 10). In particular, Native Hawaiians have intermarried freely with other groups (Kitano & Daniels, 1995) and a recent study found that Honolulu had the highest rate of intermarriage (42%) of any large U.S. metropolitan area (Livingston, 2017).

Although Hawaii has less of the most blatant and oppressive forms of group discrimination, all isn't perfect in the reputed racial paradise. There's evidence of ethnic and racial stratification, as well as prejudice and discrimination. Native Hawaiians, like Native Americans and other colonized groups, have developed organizations to pursue compensation for lands illegally taken and to resolve other grievances. There have been hate crimes in Hawaii (Department of Justice, 2020), including attacks on Asians during the COVID-19 pandemic (Tanigawa, 2021). Hopefully, the traditions of tolerance and acceptance will remain strong in the island state, although it's not the paradise of mutual respect sometimes alleged.

## Brazil

As you learned from the Chapter 6 Comparative Focus, Brazilian and U.S. history run parallel in many ways. Both nations emerged from a contact situation that involved three racially distinct groups and a struggle for land and labor. In both cases, the group that became dominant was white, harsh treatment and disease devastated one of the defeated groups (the indigenous population), and the other group (Black people from Africa) were enslaved for labor on plantations. Despite these early parallels, the nations developed along different tracks, and race relations in modern Brazil are different from those in the United States.

Brazil is the largest nation in South America and about the same size as the United States. Its territory stretches from the Atlantic Ocean deep into the interior and almost across the width of the continent. Its population of 211 million people in 2020 is racially and ethnically diverse, as reflected in Table 13.2.

About 80,000 indigenous people survive, down from about five million at first contact. Portugal colonized Brazil in 1500 and it remained a colony until 1822. Portuguese remains its primary language.

The colonial history of Brazil began almost a century before Jamestown was established. Actually, the African slave trade on which the British colonies became so dependent in the 1600s and 1700s was originally created to provide slave labor for colonial Brazil in the 1500s (Curtin, 1990). Until 1866, Brazil “imported” 4.9 million enslaved people—more than any other country and about 10 times as many the United States (Bourcier, 2012; Gates, 2011). Although its system of slavery started much earlier than in the United States, it evolved for the same reason—to supply labor—in this case for sugar, gold and diamonds, cotton, coffee, cattle, and tobacco production (Wimberly, 2015). That is, it also had a plantation economy (Bourcier, 2012; Bucciferro, 2015).

In both countries, the experiences of enslaved people were gendered. For example, most enslaved women in both nations worked as domestic servants, were often sexually abused by their masters, and were regarded as useful for their reproductive capabilities (Santos, 2016). However, the overall system of slavery in Brazil tended to be more open than the North American system. Enslaved Brazilian were freed at a much higher rate than enslaved people in the United States and free Blacks and “mulattos” could work in most jobs in that society.

The slave trade in both countries declined, in part, due to changing subsistence economies that required fewer slaves. As abolitionist movements gained strength, people in both countries fought to preserve their respective systems of slavery. The abolition of slavery came in gradual stages in Brazil. In the United States, slavery ended more suddenly due to the Civil War. In Brazil, preparations for the end of slavery extended over decades, allowing for a smoother transition of enslaved people to free citizens. For example, Brazil outlawed the importation of enslaved people in 1831 though slave traders often ignored that law. In 1851, it outlawed the maritime slave trade (again), this time criminalizing it as an act of piracy (Bucciferro, 2015; Conrad, 1972). Enslaved people in the two countries were liberated in different ways. The United States free enslaved people all at once with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. However, Brazil freed enslaved people in stages. First, in 1871, through the “Law of Free Birth” which granted freedom to children born to enslaved women. Then, in 1885, enslaved people

**TABLE 13.2** ■ Racial Makeup of Brazil, 2018

Racial Category	Percent of Population
White	43.1
Black	9.3
Multiracial (Pardo)	46.5
Asian	0.7
Indigenous	0.4

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2021).

over the age of 60 were freed (Conrad, 1972, pp. 214–216). Finally, in 1888, Brazil outlawed the ownership of people, making it the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery (Bourcier, 2012; Bucciferro, 2015; Conrad, 1972).

Various scholars (e.g., see Cottrol, 2013; Degler, 1971; Tannenbaum, 1947) have explored the contrasting racial systems of the two nations and, although we can't examine every issue in these few pages, we can say that the foundation for today's race relations may have been laid in the distant past, both before and during the contact situation. At the time Brazil was established, Portugal, unlike England, had long been familiar with African cultures and peoples. In fact, Moors from North Africa ruled Portugal for a time. Thus, darker skin and other African "racial" features were familiar to the Portuguese, which was not the case for early American colonists.

In Brazil, slavery was not so thoroughly equated with race as it was in the United States. Although slave status was oppressive, it didn't always carry the presumption of racial inferiority. In contrast, anti-Black prejudice and racism developed to rationalize and support the system of slavery in the United States. Thus, slavery, Blackness, and inferiority were tightly linked in the dominant ideology, an equation with powerful echoes today.

The type of colonization during the contact situation has some importance for contemporary race relations. "Colonies of exploitation" are mainly created by single men (Barnhill, 2014, p. 192) who intermarry with other racial groups and help produce a group of multiracial people. The Portuguese who colonized Brazil created, primarily, a colony of exploitation (Novais, 1991) though there was some regional variation (Metcalf, 2005). Thus, the Portuguese, Africans, and indigenous people had high rates of intermarriage.

"Colonies of settlement" are formed by families who arrive together or plan, at some point, to reunite in the colonies. In colonies of settlement, migrants force indigenous people out. The United States was primarily a colony of settlement (Szirmai, 2005). Interracial marriage between free whites and free Blacks first became illegal in Maryland in 1664, and eventually, in all the colonies. Variations of that law remained in place until 1967 when the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia*. Thus, colonists didn't recognize a multiracial group (although this group indisputably existed).

Table 13.2 shows one legacy of high intermarriage rates in Brazil: people of multiracial heritage (pardos) are the largest segment of the population. These historical and demographic characteristics have several consequences. First, they helped sustain a way of thinking about race that's sharply different from North American practices. In Brazil and other parts of South and Central America, people see race as more fluid and as having somewhat ambiguous, indeterminate boundaries between groups. People in the United States, in contrast, have traditionally seen race as a smaller set of sharply delineated categories with relatively clear boundaries between groups (Petrucci, 2015; Telles & Esteve, 2019). (See Chapter 6; for an interesting analysis on the distinction between race and self-identification, see Monk, 2016.)

Secondly, societal life, post-slavery, was different for both countries. Brazil didn't go through a period of legalized racial segregation like the American Jim Crow system. Such a system would be difficult to construct or enforce when race is seen as a set of open-ended categories that gradually fade into one another. Racial segregation requires a simple racial classification system in which people are easily classified into a single category. The more nuanced and subtle perception of race in Brazil isn't conducive to such a system of racial inequality. This isn't to say that segregation didn't occur in Brazil. After the abolishment of slavery, formerly enslaved people moved to the tops of mountains where they built separate communities. The key factor for living in these areas today, known as *favelas*, is poverty not race (Nunes & Veloso, 2012). This de facto segregation continues today.

Brazil isn't the "racial paradise" as some people claim. While race in Brazil is socially constructed in less rigid ways, research suggests that whites felt concern about "darker races" (Oboler & González, 2005). These fears influenced the country's "racial whitening" (*branqueamento*) policies of the late 19th century. When President Theodore Roosevelt visited Brazil, a government leader advised him to consider it, saying, "Now comes the necessity to devise some method of dealing with it [the Negro problem]. You of the United States are keeping the Black people as an entirely separate element, and you are not treating them in a way that fosters their self-respect . . . they will remain a menacing element . . ."

With us the question tends to disappear, because the Blacks themselves tend to disappear and become absorbed. You speak of Brazil as having a large Negro population. Well, in a century there will not be any Negroes, whereas you will have 20 or 30 million of them” (Roosevelt, 1914, pp. 410–411).

To facilitate *branqueamento* the government allowed more than four million (white) Europeans to immigrate to help supply labor from 1884 to 1939 (Gates, 2011). However, they banned African immigrants (Hernández, 2012). The hope was that, over time, Brazil would become “whiter” as whites and Blacks had children. Although many Brazilians (and others) promoted the idea that their country was a “racial democracy,” this policy illustrates an ideology that “white blood” is superior (Telles, 2004). (The Chapter 7 Comparative Focus illustrates similar thinking and practice regarding Aboriginal people in Australia.)

The legacy of slavery is still strong, and there’s a very high correlation between skin color and social status. Studies consistently show that Black Brazilians have higher poverty rates and lower educational attainment, levels of health, and incomes. Whites dominate the more prestigious and lucrative occupations and the leadership positions in the economy and politics, whereas Blacks are concentrated at the bottom of the class system (Haan & Thorat, 2012; IBGE News Agency, 2016; Marteleto, 2012; Monk, 2016; Saraiva, 2019).

Racial discrimination, inequality, and racism are massive problems in Brazil, as they are in the United States. Still, the comparison between the two nations is instructive. Differences in the contact period and the development of race relations over time have resulted in a notably different form of group relations today. Some scholars argue that the “racial order” in both countries are beginning to overlap (see Monk, 2016, p. 427).

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

5. Which, if any, of these dominant–minority situations is new to you? Which was the most surprising to you? Why?
6. Do you think your peers are aware of the situations described in this section? How about most Americans? How would you explain the level of information (or interest) that people have in these matters?

### ANALYZING GROUP RELATIONS

Our analysis of group relations around the world has been brief and highly selective. Nonetheless, we can make some conclusions.

Problems of dominant–minority relations are extremely common. It seems that the only nations that lack such problems are the relatively few (e.g., Sweden) that are homogeneous in their racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic makeup. Still, many of these countries (including Sweden) face challenges related to immigration.

Dominant–minority problems are highly variable in their form and intensity. They encompass genocide in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; hate crimes motivated by race, religion, or ethnicity in Germany (and many other nations); and complaints of racism, unfairness, and injustice virtually everywhere. Some long-standing minority grievances remain unresolved, and new problem areas appear on a regular basis. It seems unlikely that all these issues of group relations—and the many others not covered in this chapter—will be settled or otherwise fade away at any point soon.

As we’ve noted on a number of occasions, the most intense, violent, and seemingly intractable problems of group relations almost always have their origins in contact situations in which one group is conquered or colonized by another. Blauner’s hypothesis seems well supported by this examination of dominant–minority relations around the world.

The impact of modernization and industrialization on racial and ethnic relations varies. Whereas these forces led to less rigid group relations in the United States, they had the opposite effect in South Africa until the 1990s. Furthermore, globally, ethnic and racial groups that were thought to have been submerged in the hustle and bustle of modern society have reappeared with some regularity. The



former Yugoslavia supplies some of the most dramatic examples of the seeming imperviousness of ethnicity to industrialization and modernization, but others can be found in Scotland, Belgium, Spain, the former Soviet Union, Mexico, China, Nigeria, Iraq, and scores of other nations. In each of these cases, pluralistic or separatist movements based on ethnic, racial, or religious groups are present and, in some cases, thriving.

It seems unlikely that even the most sophisticated and modern of nations will outgrow the power of ethnic loyalties at any point in the near future. In virtually all the cases discussed, whatever tendencies modernization fosters to reduce prejudice seems to be offset by memories of past injustices, unresolved grievances, a simple yearning for revenge, and continuing struggles over control of land, labor, and other resources. Ethnic and racial lines still reflect inequalities of wealth and power, and as long as minority-group status is correlated with inequality, ethnic and racial loyalties will remain powerful motivations for conflict.

As we've noted, ethnic and racial group conflicts are especially intense when they coincide with class divisions and patterns of inequality. For example, minority-group members in Canada, South Africa, and Northern Ireland command lower shares of wealth and political power, and have worse jobs, poorer housing, and lower levels of education. When a conflict arises in these societies, whether the problem is one of economics, politics, or a dominant–minority issue, the same groups face each other across the lines of division. The greater the extent to which issues and lines of fracture coincide and reinforce each other, the greater the threat to society as a whole and the more difficult it will be to manage the conflict and avoid escalation to its extremes.

With respect to the intensity and characteristics of dominant–minority problems, the United States is hardly in a unique or unusual position. Many nations are dealing with problems of assimilation and pluralism, diversity and unity, and some of these issues seem far more difficult and complex than those facing the United States. Societies like Switzerland and Hawaii help sustain the idea that relatively peaceful, comparatively just, and roughly equal group relations are possible even for very diverse nations. Our tour of the world also shows that no racial paradises exist; even the multigroup societies with the most glowing reputations for tolerance aren't immune to conflict, inequality, discrimination, and racism.

## SUMMARY

*We've organized this summary around the Learning Objectives at the beginning of the chapter.*

### 13.1 State and explain the central themes of this book.

Throughout the book, we've stressed the importance of the initial contact situation (especially competition, differential in power, and colonization vs. immigration); subsistence technology; assimilation; pluralism; and prejudice, discrimination, and racism.

### 13.2 Summarize the overall pattern of ethnic variability around the world, and identify which regions are most and least diverse.

The United States is one of many nations dealing with issues of diversity. African nations tend to be the most diverse, and Western European nations tend to be the least.

### 13.3 Summarize the dominant–minority situations outlined in this chapter, including the history and present situation, and apply the central concepts developed in this book to each case.

Virtually all these dominant–minority situations began with a contact situation in which one group colonized another. In Canada, the groups were based on language and culture; in Northern Ireland, religion was the obvious dividing line; and in South Africa and Brazil, it was race. In all cases, however, the divisions go deeper and include differences in access to power, property, and prestige.

In all cases, perhaps especially in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia, the group divisions are ancient and carry a heavy burden of history, memory, and old grievances. Unlike the United States, separatism, self-determination, and group autonomy are major themes, especially in Canada, Northern Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia (and

in the situations listed in the Applying Concepts exercise in this chapter). Immigration and assimilation are important factors in Germany, Canada, and many other nations.

The cases of Switzerland and Hawaii suggest the possibility that multigroup societies can have relatively peaceful group relations. The other cases seem to suggest the difficulty of achieving that goal.

### APPLYING CONCEPTS

Listed below are some ethnic or racial “trouble spots” that weren’t covered in this chapter. For each, can you identify the region of the world, the groups involved in the conflict, and at least one key issue? For any given location, there may well be more than one issue, but we’ve tried to select the most prominent (at least in the headlines). How well do you think most Americans would do on this quiz?

Area	Region	Groups and Issues
Chechnya		
Scotland		
Nigeria		
China		
Spain		
Mexico		

### ANSWERS TO APPLYING CONCEPTS

Area	Region	Groups and Issues
Chechnya	Eastern Europe	Separatism. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Chechnya has fought two wars for independence. Besides cultural differences with Russia, Chechens are predominantly Muslim. Since 2017, Chechnya has come under international scrutiny for its treatment of LGBT people, particularly gay men who have been taken, tortured, and sometimes killed.
Scotland	Northern United Kingdom	Separatism. Scotland has been part of the United Kingdom for centuries, but there’s always been strong sentiment to secede and become an independent sovereign nation. A variety of Scottish groups are pursuing this goal. A referendum on the question was held in 2014. The supporters of separation lost decisively with 55% voting “no” and 45% voting “yes.”. Since Scotland supported remaining in the European Union while England voted to exit (“Brexit”), there’s renewed interest in independence. However, multiple polls conducted in 2021 show levels of support similar to the 2014 vote (Castle, 2021; What Scotland Thinks, 2021).
Nigeria	Western Africa	Discrimination against gays and lesbians (see Chapter 12). In January 2014, Nigeria passed a law that criminalized homosexuality and provided up to 14 years in prison for same-sex relationships.
China	East Asia	Separatism. Groups claiming to represent Uyghur, a predominantly Muslim area of western China, wish to gain their independence and make the province a separate, autonomous nation. The central government has tried to repress this movement, sometimes brutally and some argue the Chinese government is actively committing genocide against the Uyghurs (Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, 2021). There’s also considerable support for separation and autonomy in Tibet, which has been a part of China since the 1950s.

Area	Region	Groups and Issues
Spain	Western Europe	Separatism. Many Basques, who live in the mountainous northern regions of Spain, desire their own independent nation. Basques are a distinct cultural and linguistic minority whose “home territory” stretches across the border to France. In 1958, the Basque separatist militant group, ETA, was founded. It disarmed in 2017 and disbanded in 2018 (Associated Press, 2020).
Mexico	North America	Indigenous rights. In 2017, nearly one fourth of all Mexicans (25.7 million) identify as indigenous. Almost half (42.6%) live in the southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Yucatán. They have numerous grievances, including forcible displacement and land claims and other forms of racism and discrimination (Minority Rights Group International, n.d.). Research in 2018 showed that indigenous people were almost twice as likely to experience poverty (69.5%) compared with the general population (39%) (Nun, 2020).

Note the frequency of separatism as a goal in these trouble spots. Is this a testimony to the ability of groups to maintain their culture and distinct identity even when they have been part of a larger nation, sometimes for centuries? Will ethnicity ever fade away?

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