Chapter 1

Race, Ethnicity, and Place in a Changing America:
A Perspective

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PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Culture, and the human geography it produces, persists over a long time period. However, culture changes slowly, as does the visible landscape it produces and the ethnic meanings imbued by the group that shapes it. That many examples of persistent and new cultural landscapes exist in the United States is not surprising given the major technological, demographic, and economic changes in American society since World War II (WWII). America emerged from WWII as one of two superpowers, developed and embraced technology that took Americans to the moon, created an electronics revolution that greatly modified the ways that Americans work and live, and built a globally unique interstate highway system, new housing stock, millions of additional automobiles, and otherwise increased its production to meet the challenge of nearly doubling its population between 1950 and 2000. The post-WWII baby boom and massive immigration fueled population growth and modified American society in important ways, creating different needs and growing aspirations. A larger African American middle class also emerged during this post-war period. Leadership in a growing global economy enabled unprecedented economic growth that supported these changes.

Some less positive changes occurred during this period as America repositioned itself in global affairs, while experiencing great domestic and global economic, social and political challenges. America fought and lost a war in Vietnam, experienced an energy crisis, and suffered through double-digit inflation and severe economic recession, which contributed to a more conservative mood in Washington, D.C. For many people of color, economic and social disparities with whites were magnified between large inner cities and their surrounding communities. The human geography of the U.S. was modified and reflected some of these major changes. Perhaps the biggest of the geographic changes was the rapid consumption of rural lands, their transformation into thousands of new small communities independent of their nearby large cities, and the relocation of much of the white middle class and economic activities to emerging suburbs. While suburbanization had begun prior to WWII, it intensified in the post-war era and made America a commuting nation dependent on the automobile and foreign oil. While undeniable gains were made by African Americans, suburbanization also increased racial segregation and literally pushed the worlds of blacks and whites farther apart. Americans witnessed the remainder of the Great Migration until 1970, which brought millions of additional African Americans to northern and western cities and, when the economy changed, left millions jobless. Racial strife increased. One of the more obvious results of these culturally-based geographic patterns in American cities has been the unequal distribution of resources that created and concentrated poverty and caused the deterioration of neighborhoods and living conditions. This was true in the early industrial cities, where immigrants were segregated into high-risk ethnic neighborhoods, such as the tenements of New York City or the housing adjacent to the Chicago rail yards and garbage dumps that killed many children. Inner cities since 1950 are no different. Poverty and the risks of infant mortality remain high, despite the national economy being second to none in the world. Poverty begets the crime...
and the drug cultures, which add to the ills of poor living environments, especially those containing American minorities.

In stark contrast to the outer cities of large, old metropolitan areas, inner cities disproportionately contain areas of poor housing, persistent unemployment, low wages, and a declining tax base. American ghettos persist as landscapes of fear and despair that encompass horrendous conditions, despite a half-century of national growth and prosperity. Typically invisible to middle-America, these conditions became more apparent when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005. Hundreds of thousands of residents evacuated, but the very poor, predominantly black, inner-city residents who lacked resources and access to transportation were left behind to experience one of America’s most devastating natural disasters and its aftermath. The conditions and racial distribution of New Orleans is typical of many other American cities, including Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester and others, that experienced ghetto formation generations ago. America’s outer suburbs are the antithesis of such conditions, and represent the relatively new, prosperous and spreading American landscapes.

In short, the early industrial cities with sharp class distinctions and contrasting living conditions also provided the basis for the suburbanization of industry, commerce, and the white middle class, while disproportionately restricting those of lesser means, especially non-whites, to declining sections of large cities. The new environments of suburbia, attracted private investment, but were subsidized by federal spending and federal guaranteed residential loans. The dominant (Anglo-American) culture created new geographic forms, but retained its position of privilege. In general, suburbia meant “white suburbia.” Despite the power of the white majority, some African Americans struggled and pushed into suburbia, creating their own ethnic landscapes (Wiese, 2004). However, these cultural and ethnic landscapes receive little attention in the social science literature to date.

The black-white settlement geography is only one part of the increasingly complex, post-WWII American landscapes. Immigration and internal migration have greatly complicated most aspects of American life, economy, politics, and geography. More recent patterns from late 20th century immigration overlay pre-existing patterns. The millions of immigrants (“foreign-born”) who entered the U.S. since WWII differed substantially from the predominantly European immigrants that entered in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The most recent immigrants are likely to be from Latin America or Asia. They represent two economic groups: poverty with low/no skills, and those with social and economic capital in hand. These immigrants represent a far more heterogeneous set of Asian and Latin cultures, literally from scores of ancestral homes and speaking numerous languages. Because of this increased cultural and economic diversity, some contemporary immigrants are living in ethnic enclaves. Others are creating places quite different from the general pattern associated with their European predecessors, leading to both practical and theoretical issues concerning their assimilation processes, including non-assimilation or what has been termed “segmented assimilation.”

The history of American racism complicates contemporary immigrant assimilation in a number of ways, as will be discussed later, as has the massive influx of illegal immigrants that contribute to the perception that changes in racial and ethnic composition amount to a “siege” of American culture. Others describe it as enrichment. Because American racism is unique in its character and has such a long and complex history, including its geographical imprints, a brief review of race as a widely applied social construct is useful.

**RACE AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT**

Many Americans would like to dismiss discussions of race and racism because they are uncomfortable topics that lead to responsibility for racist actions. However, American racism and associated prejudice predate the republic and remain an issue, so we must discuss them. Race is a social construction unsupported by science. A number of recent statements about American racism dismiss the “biological truths” of racial distinctions as scientific inaccuracies (e.g., Bamshad and Olson, 2003; Graves, 2004). After illustrating that science cannot justify America’s socially constructed racial schema, Graves, among others, argues that the social construction of
the African-American race was rooted in the ideology of “whiteness” for the purpose of social domination that has continued to the present day. His analysis supports the contention that race is significant in America because Americans have made it significant on all levels. There is a long history of racial classification in America that goes beyond black-white schemas.

When considering race, many Americans think of skin color, which is not surprising given the history of American racial relations. Despite the discrimination and wars against native Indian cultures, it was slavery that led to the Civil War and sharpened American focus on skin color. Prior to the Civil War, however, there is no doubt that white prejudice against blacks was nationally ubiquitous and visible to outsiders. One of the best examples was provided by Alexis de Toqueville, nearly a generation prior to that war:

“The prejudice of race appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists, …” (Reeve, Brown, and Bradley, 1945, quoting A. de Toqueville, 1835).

Post-Civil War activities intensified racial prejudice and Social Darwinist, Herbert Spencer, was “welcomed like royalty” into the U.S. because of his support of capitalism (Kevels, 1985) and his racist ideas flourished. By the early 1900s WEB Dubois spoke of America’s color line and the belief of the superiority of one race (white) over another race (black). Racialism had penetrated the popular and scientific realms, leading to the public endorsement of eugenics. The latter involved the “science” of improvement of human stock through selective breeding and other restrictive, racially-motivated policies, including anti-miscegenation laws that avoided the negative results of association with the “darker races.” Black-white tensions continued as the basis for repetitive racial conflict throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Jim Crow Laws and various institutional mechanisms segregated whites and non-whites nationwide.

Because of slavery, the Civil War, and the Civil Rights Era, black-white racial issues were incorporated into high school curricula in the late 20th century, making Americans aware of racial issues and discrimination. However, little effort has been made to dismiss the notion of the biological basis of racial categories or the racial geography that has resulted from the deliberate efforts of various American institutions to restrict African-American living space. It has been the creation of negative images of minority cultures and their concomitant denial of access to equal education, employment, and housing opportunities by white society that has contributed to the continuing perception of the inferiority vs. superiority of cultures. Rather than address the persistence of these patterns and trace the resulting racial geographies associated with them, some Americans are satisfied with generalization and implied explanation that equity differences are explained by the fact that “all cultures are not equal.” Certainly, different cultures have different strengths and weakness. However, to suggest cultures are “unequal,” unable or unwilling to take advantage of technology or other benefits, and that this explains the “haves” and “have-nots” of the world is a misuse of generalization that dismisses centuries of deliberate social constructions of race and their debilitating consequences for minorities. It is also indicates a return to Social Darwinism. These prejudicial constructions are limited neither to American society, nor to African Americans.

Until recently, high school textbooks largely ignored indigenous cultures, or treated them poorly. American Indian cultures have been portrayed as savages with little human understanding or sentiment. Only in the last quarter of the 20th century did the interactions between colonial and Indian cultures, such as native culture support for the concepts of liberty and self-government, begin to appear in high school texts. This does not deny the influence of Europeans but recognizes the results of other cultural interactions, and casts them in a more accurate light (Loewen, 1995).

The characterizations of American Asian and Latino cultures as non-white “races” with negative characteristics have been largely ignored until recently. Such omissions lead to the impression that the playing field in America has always been level for all racial/ethnic groups. There are many examples of racial constructions of these groups. The U.S. Census Bureau created the “Mexican race” for use in the 1930 Census, and in the 1940s opinion leaders and the media combined to produce a racial image of the “zoot-suiters” (referring to Mexicans in particular dress) that contributed to a 1942 riot. This social construction portrayed all Mexicans as zoot-suiters and all zoot-suiters as criminals.
Most Asians fared no better than Mexicans. Three Asian immigrant groups, who provided essential, inexpensive labor for some of the most difficult and dirty jobs to help develop the American West Coast, were the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. Together, they were classified as “Orientals” who constituted an “Asiatic Coolie Invasion” (Organized Labor, 1906). Each of these three immigrant groups was initially welcomed as hard workers but, after economic stresses occurred for whites, faced later prejudice, discrimination and exclusion (e.g., the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act). The social construction of the Chinese ethnic group as a “race” is provided in the following paragraphs for clarity.

Kay J. Anderson has argued that racial ideology, rather than prejudice, was the key explanatory variable in the Western construction of “Chinatowns.” She illustrated the role of missionaries, traders and opinion leaders of the West in creating stereotypical images of the Chinese as “conscious agents of Satan,” who were backward, peculiar, immoral and treacherous (Anderson, 1987, p. 591). This became the foundation for characterizing the Chinese immigrants in North America as undesirable outsiders and a threat to local culture. Anderson used Vancouver to illustrate the role of racial ideology linking social construct to place. By 1886, the Chinese, largely a bachelor society, were already under the control of the government and were geographically concentrated in a small neighborhood of Vancouver. While the Chinese contributed to their self-definition and local cultural landscape, the local white European culture created the essence of “Chineseness” and created the regional image of Chinatown “on capricious grounds” (p. 583). According to Anderson, the Chinese were described as “the same everywhere,” dirty, undesirable and a threat. Their “evils” were concentrated in “unsanitary sink{s},” or in their “morally aberrant communit{ies}” (Anderson, p. 586). The local government used this racial classification as a justification for monitoring, restricting and discriminating against Vancouver’s Chinatown. Again, Anderson’s view was that this was not merely prejudice. It was racial ideology that combined race (“Chineseness”) with place (“Chinatown”) for the benefit of Western white society, and to justify its discriminatory, and often harsh, actions against an immigrant population.

In the U.S. the Chinese were victimized by white violence and discrimination in “Chinatowns” in San Francisco, Oakland and other cities. The physical appearance of late 19th and early 20th century “Chinatowns” differed significantly from the late 20th century image of bright and colorful landscapes attractive to tourists and diners. Early enclaves consisted of small, crowded, unattractive structures criticized by local whites as despicable, repulsive, and threatening to local geography. This type of social construction allowed the white majority a basis for ridding local society of its problems. Chinatown, a den of inequity wedged into white society, was the place that magnified the shortcomings of this race. Despite the protests of Chinese merchants and leaders, and their efforts to correct these false race-based images, the strength of social construct created by whites prevailed and resulted in prejudicial discriminatory behavior by the white population and its institutions towards the Chinese people. Many Chinese fled eastward to escape prejudice and discrimination and developed Chinatowns in Chicago, Boston, and New York City, or returned home to China (especially after the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act).

Before we attribute social constructions of race to “old” American history, consider a different construction of the Post-WWII characterization of American Asian ethnics for a different purpose. In response to the demands of African Americans during the Civil Rights Era for fairer treatment in housing, employment, and education, Asian Americans were elevated to the status of a “model minority” for African Americans to emulate. Like African Americans, Asian Americans had faced prejudice and discrimination. However, unlike African Americans, they were perceived as having family values, a drive for advanced education, perseverance, and other features that allowed them to overcome roadblocks and become highly successful in the American economy. The message to other minorities was “quit whining and emulate the behavior of Asians.” Later, many Asian American scholars responded by debunking this image and indicated that it would be more appropriately termed the “model minority myth.”

These examples illustrate how race in America is a majority culture social construct that stereotypes a minority group. In a contemporary context, social constructions of others, including other minority ethnic groups, also occur. In this case, one group stereotypes another and demonizes it as an alien group that creates
negative impacts on society. Such conditions contribute to poor ethnic relations, rioting and other forms of conflict. Important concepts in social conflict theory and racism are culture and ethnicity.

**CULTURE AND ETHNICITY**

Culture refers to an entire way of life of a group of people. A culture maintains values, beliefs, practices, and behaviors that help define and differentiate one group from others. These traits are learned, or exchanged within and between groups and are passed from one generation to the next. Many traits are common among cultural groups but cultural identification entails a unique set of individual elements and processes that together create a unique cultural identity. Biological and ideological characteristics, social institutions, and technology are typically used to identify a specific cultural group. Wilbur Zelinsky, in discussing the American culture and its landscapes, observed that certain characteristics, while not uniquely American, were uniquely American in their combination. He also suggested that American culture was linked to northern Europe, especially Great Britain. This implied the importance of the English language, representative government, a focus on the individual, and the preponderance of the Judeo-Christian outlook among its members. However, it involves much more.

Cultural groups may also have an affinity for a particular environment, which can influence cultural identity. Because the host environment provides a range of opportunities for indigenous resources and accessibility to others, it may contribute to cultural identity. An example of the attachment of environmental features to culture identification is the term “mountain people,” which implies more than living at high elevation. Such descriptions are meant to help identify cultural groups by location and the influence of environment on the group. Mountain people, for example, live in rough and isolated terrain that keeps them at relatively low levels of economic development and separated from other societal groups, which leads to distinctive qualities. The Hmong people are an example of a culture defined in part as a “mountain people” of South Asia. They supported the U.S. during the Vietnam War, suffered genocide afterwards, and were admitted later into the U.S. as refugees. Perhaps one of the best known perspectives on environmental influence on cultural development is the “Turner hypothesis,” which credited the environmental conditions of the North American frontier as a significant force that shaped the “rugged individualism” trait of the American culture (Hofstadter and Lipset, 1968).

Beyond environmental influences, a culture may have a sense of synergy with environment, feeling inextricably linked with nature. This also can be a defining element of that particular cultural group. In such cases, the culture self-identifies using aspects of nature and place. For example, indigenous populations often have a very different association with their environments than those cultures in advanced industrial societies. Examples within the U.S. include American Indian, Eskimo, and native Hawaiian cultures. Their relationships with their environments contribute to their cultural identification and, therefore, helps distinguish their cultural traits. Later in this text, this association of native cultures with place is explored for the case of native Hawaiians.

Culture, then, can be understood to be a set of values, beliefs, technology, and institutions that brings meaning to and preserves a group’s existence. Cultural continuity is provided by a common language and cultural history. Both function as powerful sources for strengthening individual ties to the group. Particular social institutions, such as schools and social organizations, reinforce and maintain culture. The cultural system contains individual elements that combine to form a unique set of interrelationships, dynamic in nature, always open and adaptive to new information, ideas, and technology. It also seeks stability through continuity.

Ideology refers to the comprehensive vision of a culture. Cultures encompass strong beliefs, often involving deities or a particular political ideology, or both. This is why a shared sense of the divine is often a component of ethnic identity. Cultural ideology and associated emotions sometimes result in malicious actions toward other groups, including open conflict directed at the destruction of the enemy culture and/or its cultural symbols. Ideology also results in expressions within the culture, such as memorializing a special place or sacred space associated with some event or person important to the host culture. When two cultures value the same
land or place, cultural conflict typically ensues due to competition over the depth of beliefs and sentiment toward the place.

Technology refers to the tools available to a society to make its living, to communicate and exchange with others, and to transform its surroundings. As with other traits, technological devices and expertise vary by culture, as does the vision of technology’s role in the future of the society and the globe. In America, a constant increase in technology has created a historical framework for discussing progress and development of the nation. By the middle 1850s, canals and railroad systems were both established in the U.S. Their creation attracted numerous ethnic immigrants to work in their development. These technologies allowed for the rapid development of the American Midwest, the stunning transformation of Chicago from trading outpost to the rail center of the nation and one of the leading industrial cities in America. By the 1860s the Transcontinental Railroad connected eastern and western coast and stimulated even greater growth by century’s end. The creation of the automobile industry with its assembly line revolutionized American industry and transportation systems. Air travel followed on the heels of the auto and by WWII America was an air power. Post-WWII saw a rapid development of commercial aviation and the space race that placed a human on the moon by 1969. A person born in the late 1890s literally observed the transformation of American travel. In the early 1900s some workers operated with horse-drawn wagons, such as in the delivery of ice to homes and businesses. In that same lifespan, a human traveled to the moon and safely returned. The electronics revolution during the same lifetime changed the ways that Americans traveled, worked, and played. It also provided global military advantage. It is little wonder, then, that American culture is perceived as different from others on the basis of technology in combination with other distinctive traits.

It should be clear by the discussion thus far that culture also has transforming powers. The group imposes boundaries between its areas and that of others, gives meaning and sentiment to place and objects, and transforms the land by imprinting its cultural presence. While the dominant culture may control the geographic space of a nation, any cultural group can and typically does leave its cultural imprint on the land it occupies. Cultural groups create spaces and places of their own to celebrate and perpetuate their culture. The transformed visible cultural pattern on the earth’s surface is called a cultural landscape. It therefore is the material expression of the occupying culture, an affirmation of what is valued by that culture. It represents a set of ideas about life — family, the social group and social relations, relations with nature, and the value given to objects that embody its beliefs — present in every culture. The landscape contains cultural markers symbolizing what is important, those deeply embedded values, and what is unique about the group. This is true of American culture. However, changes in the human enterprise are constant and evolving cultural landscapes represent not only the inseparable elements of history and historical geography, as visibly apparent expressions of human occupation of various places, but contemporary expressions that result from recent immigrant settlements. As we will see later in this text, cultural landscapes, one of geography’s central concepts, take on many forms but one of the most dominant examples among American immigrant ethnic groups is the clustering of ethnic businesses that serve commercial and cultural functions.

Ethnicity involves a group-constructed identity using one or more of its cultural attributes. Ethnic identity connects group members through a shared sense of what is unique and therefore distinguishes “us” from “them.” Common attributes contribute to characteristics that may also make groups distinct from other groups, influencing how others within the larger society see them (“they-ness”) (Ringer and Lawless, 1989). The shared traits can involve, for example, language, cultural history, cultural traditions, and religion. There also is a shared sense of aspirations and sometimes vulnerability among those in an ethnic group. National origin may be important but is not synonymous with ethnicity. Ethnicity is a social construct that defines the “we-ness” of group membership and often involves connection to place. Immigrants, by definition residents of a new land, often find it necessary to reaffirm their ethnic identity, which involves preserving cultural value and distinctiveness and preserving ties to a homeland.

Ethnicity, however, is not the equivalent of race. However, racism certainly can cause a shared sense of vulnerability and, therefore, contribute to ethnic identity. This is particularly true when struggle is a part of the group’s cultural history, as in the cases of African Americans and Jews. Religious customs and cultural celebra-
tions are two ways that ethnic affinity is strengthened. For example, American Jews celebrate cultural and religious holidays, which strengthen their ethnicity. It is also important to note that “racial” differences within a community, within the context of different skin color, need not preclude a common ethnic identity. Puerto Ricans are a good example. Black and white Puerto Ricans are included in this ethnic group.

Ethnicity also has been defined within the context of ethnic polarization as a “strategic construction” of cultural boundaries, a process driven by economic and political differences and concerns (Ballard, 2002). As such, ethnicity can be a deliberate process of amplifying cultural distinctiveness and “moral solidarity” to protect community interests. This, of course, is not limited to minority ethnic groups. The majority, or host culture, closes ranks to sustain its power base, whereas the minority ethnic group seeks refuge because it feels threatened. Both tend to organize geographic space in ways meaningful to their group. Sometimes, when both groups seek the same spaces, this results in contested space. A simple example involves suburbanization in the 20th century. African Americans sought a place in the suburbs but were rebuffed by the white majority. Despite this, African Americans created their own cultural landscapes and carved out living space in suburbia as “places of their own” (Wiese, 2004).

This notion of physically and economically defending one’s ethnic group from discriminatory actions of the host culture is but one dimension of ethnicity. Even among European groups, who have been permitted to assimilate into the broader American culture and economic system without experiencing long-term exclusion, there is a need for belonging, or for ethnic affinity. This is why “Irish-only” enclaves still exist in the Catskills, various ethnic celebrations (German, Italian, etc.) remain popular, and some ethnic groups, such as Greek Americans, retain a sense of ethnicity decades after assimilating into the American culture. Affinity takes on many forms and can even lead to claims for aid by contemporary white, first generation immigrants, as demonstrated by Susan Hardwick in chapter 25 of this text. Important dimensions of culture include prejudice and privilege, which can lead to cultural and ethnic conflict.

**PREJUDICE, PRIVILEGE AND CONFLICT**

An important understanding related to culture is that the creation of a feeling of “we-ness,” while establishing a sense of coherence and wellness within the group, results in that group perceiving its cultural system as superior to all others. Accordingly, although adaptive, each culture seeks preservation of their perspective and goes to some length, including conflict with others, to perpetuate their superior system. The result is power struggles between cultures. In making this argument, Roger Ballard argued that European-based cultural systems, because they emerged from the Enlightenment perspective that elevated personal freedom to the position of a universal value, are particularly given to feelings of superiority. They tend towards “hegemony,” the “use of ethnocentric judgments to justify their own position of socioeconomic privilege” relative to other cultures and subcultures (Ballard, 2002, p. 140). A dominant culture also constructs an image of other cultures that is the antithesis of their own positive cultural image. Typically, the dominant culture believes that it should convert others to their superior cultural values. Further, cultural superiority justifies prejudice and discrimination towards others who have not sought or achieved the same universal values.

*Prejudice* is an attitude that expresses intellectual beliefs about another societal group. It is an inflexible pre-judgment, or bias, against a person or group without cause. While direct contact with that “other” may have some influence in prejudice, it is among the lesser causes of prejudice, which typically occurs prior to contact. Prejudice results from a number of sources; among the most important are historical and socio-cultural. Prejudice passes from generation to generation through social institutions and, therefore, maintains animosity. This is why we speak of long-term ethnic conflict across the globe, including, for example, the ethnic conflict between the Irish and English that has periodically resulted in conflict over two centuries. Other factors, such as persistent negative social conditions, including urban poverty, are credited as sources of prejudice as well.

As noted earlier, prejudice can be due to unfounded suspicion. However, it also is caused by ethnic and racial intolerance and often leads to dislike and even hatred. Obviously, prejudice interferes with the fair treat-
ment of “others” (Allport, 1954). Although an indirect relationship, prejudice is related to discrimination, the behaviors that include the harsh treatment and exclusion of “inferior” groups from access to resources and equality. Privileges are extended to those of the dominant cultural group because of their superior qualities and withheld from others. These privileges may be on ethnic or racial grounds. In the case of European-based cultures, like the U.S., the racial construction of “whiteness” as descriptive of all things good about Anglo culture (and of those who assimilate with it) amounts to the antithesis of being non-white. That status results in white privilege, or a system that provides access to resources and other preferences based on race and culture. Social psychologist Beverley Tatum has discussed the difficulty for some white students in accepting this concept in her college classroom. She spoke of a white woman who, after being presented the unsought benefits of white advantage, concluded that the list of unasked-for advantages was substantial:

“… she hadn’t always noticed she was receiving them. They include both major and minor advantages. Of course, she enjoyed greater access to jobs and housing. But she also was able to shop in department stores without being followed by suspicious sales people…. She could send her child to school confident that the teacher would not discriminate against him…. She could also be late for meetings, and talk with her mouth full, confident that these behaviors would not be attributed to the fact that she was white. She could express an opinion in a meeting or in print and not have it labeled as the ‘White’ viewpoint” (Tatum, 1999, p. 8).

Together, prejudice and privilege help define what resources are open to societal groups and where they are welcome to live geographically speaking. They place the “us and them” dichotomy into economic, political, and geographic contexts. In particular cases, these occur within a racial context. However, they also become the basis of conflict between minority ethnic groups, too. Such conflicts can arise from economic differences but occur within the context of racial and ethnic stereotyping and end in violence.

In a contemporary context, a good example is the conflict between Latinos and blacks in the U.S. Despite facing some of the same challenges and vast economic disparities, these two groups have exhibited a great deal of mistrust and animosity toward one another in recent decades, especially since the rapid increase in Latino legal and illegal immigration. Notwithstanding occasional collaboration on a common issue, tensions have increased between blacks and Latinos across the U.S., from Miami to Chicago, and from Chicago to Los Angeles and Washington state, and points in between. One dimension of this mistrust and conflict lies in black resentment of the increasing number of immigrant Latinos relocating in formerly predominantly black neighborhoods and the competition they bring to the housing and job markets in those areas. The black perspective is that progress made during the Civil Rights era has been lost, in part by the willingness of Mexican immigrants and other Latinos to work for below market wages. Further, when Latino businesses open in black neighborhoods, selling to largely an African-American market, they refuse to employ blacks. Hispanics are cast by African Americans as criminals and as economic threats. On the other side, some Latinos have characterized blacks as unwilling to perform hard work, favoring government welfare, and as having a tendency toward criminal behavior. Racial stereotyping by both sides quickly antagonizes the other. The actual conflict pertains to scant resources and jobs available for minorities in the urban economy. One of the most frequently quoted perceived racist comments against blacks occurred in 2004 and was attributed to Mexican President Vincente Fox , who indicated that Mexicans in the U.S. were performing labor “that not even blacks want to do in the United States.”

Unfortunately, name calling and stereotyping sometimes turn to violence, including in the nation’s schools. High Schools in the West, including several in California, have experienced serious conflicts between Mexicans and blacks. Reports from Midwestern, Eastern and Southern states illustrate that tensions are there as well.

Tensions and racial/ethnic problems have taken on various forms and involve contested space and unfair competition. One of the better examples of a controversial urban program occurred in Detroit, a predominantly black city. There an outspoken critic (some say racist), African American Claude Anderson openly criticized Latinos as having motives for non-assimilation into the economy, specifically to undermine the economic posi-
tion of African Americans. Susy Buchanan reported on the impact of Anderson’s economic development plan endorsed by the Detroit City Council:

“His recommendation was that the city spend $30 million to develop something called ‘African Town’ — an inner city business enclave for blacks that would keep them from spending money in immigrant businesses.

Anderson and others argued that the city had provided incentives to Mexicantown and Greek-town, two neighborhoods marked by ethnic businesses and restaurants. Why shouldn’t they do the same for black businesses? … Anderson went further, Hispanics, he said in the kind of comment that lit up many citizens of Detroit, ‘have surpassed Blacks now and make-them third-class citizens’…

The blacks-only funding plan outraged many…. Detroit Mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, who is African American, vetoed…. But the Council overrode his veto, although it did ultimately strike the requirement (for all-black funding)” (Buchanan, 2005, p. 14).

Unfortunately, ethnic and racial conflict over resources and space continue to be a problem in the U.S. When this occurs, ethnic and racial groups turn to social institutions to protect their interests.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURE

Social institutions are vehicles that support common cultural goals and objectives. Because ethnicity is a part of culture, they also support the existence of ethnicity, including minority ethnic groups within the dominant American culture. They can influence all aspects of an individual’s life from birth to death. They permeate marriage and family, govern financial transactions, guide worship where it exists, and often structure burial ceremonies. They are in the market place and they take on many forms, social, political, and economic, but share the same purpose of supporting and perpetuating the health and strength of the culture they are designed to serve.

Educational institutions, for example, are dedicated to teaching particular knowledge and skills that support cultural interests. Governments and legal institutions create and administer the affairs of culture, including the governing body of law and its interpretation, and the military. Social institutions have great power. Subsequent chapters of this book will have much to say about American institutions because they have shaped American immigration policy, including the numbers and sources of migrants from time to time, the rights of American subcultures in many different ways, and have contributed directly to the settlement patterns of suburbia mentioned earlier. Institutions also serve economic functions (market institutions), such as in lending money for home mortgages and real estate agencies that present available properties to interested buyers. Both of these institutions played major roles in shaping the racial distribution of urban Americans (discussed in detail in later chapters). Finally, social institutions also can be ethnic organizations that seek to support their group in many ways. The Chinese Benevolent Association is an example. It has provided guidance and support to sustain many Chinese immigrants in America and has served as an umbrella organization for their other ethnic institutions as well.

In summary, social institutions appear in many contexts, support members of a group, and perpetuate culture and ethnicity. They are the mechanisms of social structure that, although they change from time to time, are the permanent means of governing and supporting the culture. This leads to a consideration of what constitutes the uniqueness of the Anglo-American culture.
ANGLO-AMERICAN CULTURE

The United States continues to change as a nation yet maintains its central beliefs that guide its behaviors as a culture. This supports the notion that, although the U.S. is a relatively young nation, it definitely has cultural qualities that some social scientists believe constitute an “American culture.” Recall the tendency of European-based cultures to see western democracy’s individual freedom as a “universal value.” This Enlightenment-based concept projected social evolution in a rational manner wherein democracy and personal freedom would be globally achievable (Gray, 2000 and Ballard, 2002). In this vision, individual freedom is a personal right that supersedes group value and association. Personal freedom is the path to a more perfect society. This, of course, ignores the “non-universal” visions of cultures that stress group welfare over individual freedom. The concept also assumes that western democracies have evolved a set of superior cultures. This justifies their political hegemony and messianic desire to “share” (“convert”) their superior values with others (Ballard, 2002). As such, the Euro-American approach uses the importance of individual freedom to act superior and to argue that their cultural virtues should be emulated as universals, applicable for all others to follow.

During the post-1950 period chronicled earlier, the U.S. maintained a set of unique cultural motifs that created many of the societal and landscape changes discussed earlier. When discussing American culture, Zelinsky was clear that American cultural history was tied with that of northern Europe, especially with the British. An overall set of American cultural traits evolved under these ties with Great Britain and resulted in an Anglo-dominated U.S. cultural system that had a distinctly American flavor. Zelinsky explained American cultural characteristics as “the basic values and axioms that define aspiration and direction” and as an “ethos — that powerful mood of this and all other distinctive cultures …” (Zelinsky, 1973, pp. 39–40). His American cultural traits included “a reverence for individualism,” a high valuation placed on “mobility and change,” “a mechanistic world vision” that values “growth and bigness,” which also explains America’s reverence for technology and its cures, and a “messianic perfectionism” with a drive to share their culture with others. Related to the last trait, Zelinsky stated:

“… the notion that the United States is not just another nation, but one with a special mission — to realize the dream of human self-perfection and, in messianic fashion, to share its gospel and achievement with the remainder of the world. This moral expansiveness (some would call it ‘moral imperialism’) exists over and beyond the usual flexing of economic or military muscle …” (Zelinsky, 1973, p. 61).

He elaborated the expressions of each of the motifs as American cultural landscapes. Several examples are provided here.

The strongest trait attributed to Americans is the “intense, almost anarchistic individualism” that permeates American society and is expressed in American landscapes. This is American’s most dominant value and drives institutional decisions as well as individual behaviors. Having many dimensions, it has transformed American landscapes in diverse and important ways:

“… the fanatical worship of extreme individualism indeed an almost anarchistic privatism, affects so many phases of our existence so deeply that no one can interpret either the geography or the history of the nation without coming to grips with it … a critical force … in shaping the cultural landscape” (Zelinsky, 1973, pp. 41–42).

Among the numerous patterns attributable to American individualism is American political fragmentation, the notoriously inefficient and costly legal and administrative maintenance of small geographic territories (towns, villages, etc.). These jurisdictions, maintained within larger regional contexts, with duplication of services (e.g., police and fire departments), represent enormous unnecessary costs to local taxpayers. Zelinsky argued that this landscape example of American individualism had resulted in “tens of thousands” of local expensive governments that, despite increasing costs and financial problems, persevere because of Americans’ need for autonomy and individualism. He argued that America’s “haphazard morphology” of metropolitan regions with their “lack
of aesthetic or functional association” with adjacent entities constitutes an additional landscape expression of American individualism. Further, the uniquely American drive for personal autonomy has been “symbolized by the metal-and-plastic bubble around each American,” the automobile, which gives uniqueness to another form of human cultural geography, the American transportation and commuting system, where non-auto modes struggle for survival and the auto culture thrives despite increasing costs and periodic fuel shortages. The automobile culture also serves the American drive for secluded living in an ever expanding metropolitan region, whose outer suburbs emphasize the maximum spaciousness and separation that money can buy.

During all of the post-1950 changes noted earlier, the American cultural-political economy guided the organization of space and the creation of American landscapes based on cultural motifs. Meanwhile, a growing number of recently arrived immigrant cultures, as well as the subcultures already occupying the nation, made their cultural marks in various places. The growing volume of immigrants in recent decades, along with their ability to settle in exclusively white American locations, has made contrasting cultural landscapes more visible and cultural conflict more apparent. Several geographic concepts and social science theories relate to these geographic settlement structures, social and economic assimilations, and cultural landscapes.

GEOGRAPHIC CONCEPTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORY

Human geography is influenced by numerous factors related to the creation, maintenance and changes in geographic patterns and, therefore, they are important to an understanding of American geography presented in this text. A few of the most important of the concepts are discussed below.

Globalization is a term frequently used by the popular media and in academic literature. Academically, it is a hotly debated topic because some see it as the modern-day tool of unbridled capitalism that exploits weak countries by connecting them to a world economy that serves the interest of corporations and lays waste to the global environment. Others use the rapidly expanding economies and declining poverty in China and India as examples of the positive outcomes of this process. Trade agreements between nations are a key part of promoting the globalization of capital and labor. There is no doubt that connecting the world’s economies has risks and opportunities, but the big question is for whom. Here we use the term to describe processes that have led to a more interconnected and interdependent world. In this context, globalization has resulted in the restructuring of national and regional economies due to global competition. It has led to the deindustrialization of the U.S. manufacturing base, the rise of the service and high-tech sectors with polarized skill and wage levels, and regional shifts in employment that created internal migrations and therefore the redistribution of the U.S. population since WWII. Perhaps most importantly for this text, it created employment shortages in high and low tech jobs in the U.S. that are increasingly filled by a growing number of immigrants, who not only fill jobs, but also are entrepreneurial in creating new small businesses that support ethnic immigrants.

Three additional geographic concepts are related and are important in subsequent chapters: movements, gateways, and networks. Movement refers to motion, which implies directionality between an origin and destination. It also recognizes that certain forces (push and pull) influence motion either by impeding it (barriers) or facilitating it (assisting in some way). Various phenomena spread throughout geographic space over time. Innovations are a good example. How they move, the direction they take and the speed with which they travel, are influenced by the nature of the innovation, the support it gets from opinion leaders, and any geographic and cultural barriers that may slow its acceptance. In the context of this text, the key movements influencing changing places and landscapes are immigration and migration. American history and geography of the 19th and 20th centuries were greatly influenced by both types of movements. More than 30 million immigrants, largely from northern and western Europe, came to the U.S. due to a variety of causes, but generally seeking better living conditions for themselves and their families. Most entered without financial or social capital and settled in the inner portions of American industrial cities, near their work places. In addition to urban ethnic neighborhoods, broader regional patterns also resulted from these processes, such as the Scandinavian logging and agricultural settlements in the Upper Midwest. Internal migrations have continuously reshaped American regions. A few
examples include the “Gold Rush,” the “Great Migration” that brought millions of African Americans to northern cities, and the more recent mass movement of northern and Midwestern residents to the “Sunbelt” states.

**Gateways** are cities that serve as entry ports, or receiving areas, for immigrants. However, as Audrey Singer notes, they also are the places that foreign-born enter to live and work. Thus, they are also places influenced by ethnic groups who may be different in terms of language, culture, and ethnicity. Singer states their functions:

“The word ‘gateway’ also implies that the region functions as a symbolic destination. Such portals hold out opportunities for newcomers, and beckon to others, as well-known centers populated by significant numbers of immigrants. As such, cities and localities become identified with immigrants, and their reputation itself may generate further settlement as social networks circulate information on employment, housing, and educational opportunities there” (Singer, 2004, p. 4).

A **network** is the path connecting two or more points. In geography, the network concept has multiple applications. For example, in the physical world, a system of networks is highways (termed “edges” or “ties”) that connect markets (“points”) with services and retail operations (“points”) by providing easy access and movement between two or more points. In this context, contemporary applied geographers consider the existence and strength of such linkages when analyzing store productivity or when locating a new facility (a “new point”). Historically, transportation systems (“networks”), including the canals and rail roads, were vital to American economic development and urbanization because they efficiently linked resources (“points”) and markets (“points”), while also providing easy access for arriving European immigrants to work in the exploding factory system of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in various cities. The development of Chicago, for example, occurred because of the linkages provided by the canal and rail networks. Chicago became the nation’s rail hub and the primary industrial center of the American interior, linking agriculture, timber, meat production, and industrial outputs with various U.S. markets and served as a magnet for European immigrants.

Networks are also important to geography because they represent the social linkages between people and places. The spread of innovations over space and time, discussed above, provides as an example of movement. Diffusion theory was developed to explain the spread of ideas and innovations and utilizes social networks in part to explain the timing of the adoption of an innovation. In this sense, social networks involve influential people, such as opinion leaders, and friends and family, who influence the adoption of a new product or idea by the broader population. These social relationships involve nodes (points) and linkages (ties), or the paths that connect people. The individual actors are points within the network and the linkages are the social ties between them. Social networks are known to be important to immigration and internal migration. Migrants keep connected (tied) to their previous communities and influence future migration decisions. For example, if a migrant communicates to others in the homeland that she has been successful in finding employment and is happy in her new location, then her social contacts at her previous home location are more likely to consider migrating to the same destination. There are other more complicated relationships, such as the “socio-spatial networks” discussed by Marie Price in chapter 16. She examines the ways in which Bolivian immigrants stay connected to their homeland and how these connections and perceptions of place influence their behaviors.

Two central geographic concepts are space and place. These are guiding principles in geographic research. The **spatial theme** of geography emphasizes the importance of location and its linkages, or connections, to other locations. Geographers theorize about locations and about identifiable patterns associated with locations. Geography poses the theoretical questions: What forces create a geographic pattern (why has a particular group clustered in a particular area)? How and why do spatial patterns change (Why have new Latino subregions emerged in Northeastern cities)? This implies that a region with spatial structure exists, i.e., it contains a geographic distribution of points that is non-random. Phenomena are distributed as the result of some process, or set of processes, and assume a spatial form. Accordingly, before WWII, the distribution of U.S. Latinos could be characterized as a region in the borderlands of the American Southwest and California, due to what Haverluk termed the “Mexican Legacy,” America’s long association with Mexico, the Mexican War, the Mexican Cession, and the Gadsden Purchase, among other factors (Haverluk, 1998). However, this U.S. Latino geography
changed significantly with the influx of Puerto Ricans and Cubans. Similarly, the early 20th century distribution of African Americans involved a geographic pattern that reflected the legacy of slavery. The Great Migration changed the nature of African-American geography and the contemporary reverse migration of blacks to the South will likely add a new geographic dimension in the future. These are examples of the application of the spatial theme in human geography. It focuses on the analysis of population distributions and movements at the regional scale that bring spatial variation and spatial structure to the nation. There, of course, are many other examples as well.

**Space** also is a commodity, something of value. Because space has economic or social value, it can become “contested space,” desired by more than one group. Space also can be manipulated for a specific purpose, as in the “Chinatown” example presented earlier. A related geographic concept is place. Its meaning overlaps with space but place has a more specific connotation. Place is space at a micro-scale, which has been infused with cultural and ethnic meaning. Groups shape space to symbolize what they value and hold dear; in this sense, place becomes a part of their identity. Place is a dynamic concept particularly suited to the study of local geographies. Harner nicely summarized the dimensions of place that make it suitable for the study of human geography:

>“Place is process, continually constructed and transformed…. Place is the interaction between extralocal forces, local histories, cultural constructs, and individual human agency…. Through struggle, meaning is built into inanimate objects that give place symbolic significance. This meaning can become part of social identity” (Harner, 2001, p. 661).

Geographic studies of place are localized and typically field-oriented analyses of landscapes that differentiate an ethnic group and its territory, and sometimes become contested space between two groups.

Because race and ethnicity are distinguishable concepts, it is important to make a distinction between ethnic and racial geography. Both are parts of multicultural geographies.

**ETHNIC, RACIAL AND MULTICULTURAL GEOGRAPHIES**

Earlier it was noted that race and ethnicity are not equivalent. Both are social constructs but race is a social classification created by another culture, often the culture in control of the broader society in which a minority ethnic group lives. Ethnicity refers to the self-construction of an identity that amplifies particular cultural traits for the purpose of creating a group distinction and a set of common aspirations. Racism and persecution can contribute to feelings of vulnerability. Therefore, racism can contribute to the formation of an ethnic identity. Given this distinction, it is important to clarify the difference between racial and ethnic geography. McKee has defined *ethnic geography* as “the study of the spatial and ecological aspects of ethnicity” (McKee, 2000; Preface, p. xv). Numerous examples of ethnic geography are available, including those dealing with the new Latino geographies (Areola, 2005), emerging Latino settlements in the South (Smith and Furuseth, forthcoming), the creation of ethnic spaces and places in multi-ethnic cities (Chacko, 2003), the formation and evolution of urban and suburban ethnic enclaves (Allen and Turner, 1996; Li, 1997), and the ethnic transformation of places (Miyares, 1997), among others. In all of these cases, ethnic groups are creating new human geographies by their actions, often times due to migration, adjustment, and conscious decisions to create places of their own.

McKee presented the broad ethnic core regions of the U.S., including the broad settlement patterns of African Americans and provided an explanation for the “spatial zonation” of American ethnicity. Such a classification is acceptable for ethnic purposes because it entails group description of common ancestry and the formation of cultural tradition, living as a minority in a larger or “host culture” (p. 41). This broad living area includes the region where the African-American ethos was formed. African-American landscapes emerged there over time. However, this broad classification makes no mention of the processes that resulted in black settlement and restrictions within this geographic zone. Such discussion mandates a movement from ethnic to **racial geography.** Clearly, the factors cited by McKee, distance decay, environmental affinity, and the nature of internal,
John W. Frazier

voluntary migration streams, to explain the formation of other ethnic regions of his classification, did not apply to African-American geography prior to the Great Migration. The discussion of historical and contemporary African-American geography must include the persistent role of racial ideology that shaped their geography and disproportionately the poor and unequal living conditions of many African Americans. Race as a social construct not only created the initial forced migration of blacks, but also guided forced migration streams from the northern section of the South to the plantation agriculture of the Cotton Belt. The same construct would limit housing choice and employment opportunities in the North, lead to three periods of ghetto formation (Rose, 1971) and explode into the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Today, that legacy continues to haunt numerous American cities. It would be ludicrous to refer to such racial geographies as “just another set of ethnic patterns.”

Racial and ethnic geographies, then, are distinctive by purpose. Ethnic geography explores the impact of movements, adjustments and the formation of landscapes and places forged by the actions of ethnic groups. Racial geography recognizes the role of the controlling society in the creation of the racial ideology that governs the use of space, often restricting access to places and to resources to preserve the privilege of the controlling group. It is important to note that the creation of racial geography does not preclude the creation of cultural/ethnic landscapes. As Wiese has illustrated, for example, despite white racism and often violent actions to keep African Americans out of white suburbia, blacks struggled and pushed their way into suburban areas, where they created African-American landscapes and “places of their own” (Wiese, 2004).

Thus, racial and ethnic geographies evolve and change, creating new settlement geographies. Quality of life in the places that result is determined by the actions of individuals and agencies, technology, and the resources of the environment. The living quality also depends on the goodwill and fairness of others. This involves power relationships, which sometimes become the most important forces in shaping the quality of life and the geographic patterns in an area.

Multicultural geographies are the study of both racial and ethnic geographies. They consider at several geographic scales the processes that determine the nature of spatial patterns, cultural landscapes, and places. They pay particular attention to spatial inequities and other group differences that result in a particular lifestyle and quality of life. Multicultural geographies examine the processes, particularly the social institutions that influence, control, and transform geographic space. They recognize and interpret the unique attributes of the spaces and places, including their expression and problems, as they influence the groups that occupy them. Multicultural geography courses provide students with perspectives on the importance of complex geographic patterns and the processes that produce them. In the process they inform us about the persistence and changes associated with the American scene. This volume is a compendium of works by geographers and other social scientists who have been working on both the ethnic and racial geographies of the U.S. Together, they inform us of America’s multicultural geographies, both past and present.

THE NEED TO REVISIT THE MULTICULTURAL PAST

America, like most societies, is extremely complex. Knowledge of the cultural histories and geographies subsumed within the dominant Anglo-American culture is necessary to understand this complexity in contemporary society and its challenges. While some of the very basic facts related to American subcultures and increasing ethnic diversity are presented in small doses in the secondary education curriculum, a comprehensive context for these issues in contemporary America is rarely provided. Among the historical and geographic stories too infrequently detailed in the American educational system are those of even the broadest ethnic groups that have long been present and contributed to the evolution of the American economy, including African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

The United States began as an agrarian society that supported its Southern economy through slavery. The legacy of slavery is a uniquely American racism that maintains a black-white divide. The Great Migration of the 20th century resulted in millions of African Americans relocating to northern and western cities, and in
the formation of a national ghetto system. Despite the rise of an African-American middle class, racial inequalities created by discriminatory institutional practices and white avoidance behavior remain obvious in the nation’s segregated metropolitan regions, and disproportionately place blacks and other minorities in schools with much higher poverty rates than their white counterpart schools. These conditions remain a challenge.

The 19th century experienced rapid industrialization and urbanization based on rapid technological change and related transportation improvements that connected the nation by canals and rails. This growth and expansion necessitated a large, cheap labor force, which was provided largely by Western European immigrants. The Northern economy was built on unfair wages and harsh working conditions that led to labor unrest and unionization. Over a period of time, the diverse European groups that provided much of that labor were observed to have assimilated, socially and spatially, into the broader American society and its host Anglo culture. This was the basis of the “straight-line assimilation” model of the Chicago School.

This model was developed to explain urban expansion. It was influenced by physical concepts of the period, especially ecological niche, the social fluidity attributed to the factory system, and rapid changes in transportation technology that permitted relative ease of access to urban core and periphery. A series of concentric zones (ecological niches) containing residents, radiated from a circular central business district and constituted its conceptual diagram. Adjacent to the CBD was the zone of transition, an area of varied uses, including rooming houses for recent poor immigrants seeking factory work. New and old slums mixed with warehouses, factories, and other uses there as well. Subsequent zones contained niches of residential land use, ranging from the adjacent zone of working-class homes, to higher valued and, finally, to even better homes in the commuter zone.

Key to this conceptualization was the desire and ability of immigrants and their descendents to move to a better zone based on their socioeconomic success made possible by the class fluidity of capitalism. This amounted to spatial absorption by the host culture of immigrants who fit the new niche. This process became known as straight-line assimilation.

However, the other American cultural histories and geographies that are less often told and much less understood include Hispanics. The shared border with Mexico and the rapid expansion of western agriculture in the 20th century resulted in a “Mexican Legacy” that shaped early Hispanic and Mexican American settlement geography and interactions between Anglos and Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. Mexicans frequently lost their lands and became part of the lower stratum of the American socioeconomic-political hierarchy by virtue of their changing land ownership and occupational status. Restrictions and guest worker programs became the norm for Mexicans residing in the western U.S. In the early decades of the 20th century, increase in the Mexican population, especially in California, led to low-quality residences in overcrowded barrios for many Mexican Americans. While new colonias were constructed and a modest size Mexican-American middle class emerged, Anglos relocating from the eastern U.S. had become the dominant political, economic, and cultural force in the region. Discrimination and animosity remained and inequality prevailed. Since the 1970s, millions of Latinos have entered the American middle class but millions of other Latinos, including Mexican Americans, remain locked in barrios, living in the shadow of wealth that surrounds them. Also, after the Cuban Revolution that established Fidel Castro’s regime, large numbers of Cuban exiles migrated to Florida and were classified as refugees. Many of these early arrivals represented the wealthy fleeing Cuba and, with U.S. government assistance, were able to develop a strong base for future Cuban arrivals. This picture stands in strong contrast to other Hispanic migrant cases, including Puerto Ricans, who are American citizens, and Dominicans, who represent some of the poorest Latinos residing in the U.S. These trends greatly diversified American Latino ethnic groups and created an entirely new set of Latino geographies in Post-WWII America. These are complex scenarios that deserve more than a passing glance in the social studies curriculum.

Asian ethnic groups have a heritage in the American West somewhat similar to Mexicans. Initially praised for their willingness to work hard for a fair wage, they later were attacked as “Coolie labor” and restricted geographically. Their groups were sharply restricted from entering the U.S. after the Great Depression, until immigration laws changed after WWII. Similar to the Mexicans, the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino groups contributed a great deal to the construction of western infrastructure and to its cheap labor force that built a strong economy. Like African Americans, they were resented, racialized as different and inferior to the Anglo
culture, and restricted socially, economically and geographically. Today, Asian immigrants are among the most rapidly growing percentage of the total U.S. population and represent a vast number of ethnic groups of multiple origins. Some come with their social capital in hand and enjoy almost immediate economic success. Others are unskilled refuges with little hope for assimilation or economic success. These groups are forcing a reconsideration of traditional straight-line assimilation theory because many have moved directly to American suburbs (Li, 1998).

The cultural and geographic histories of these important ethnic groups are part of the American heritage and must be incorporated more fully into the story of America’s incredible and unprecedented economic and technological gains. These need not replace coverage of traditional accounts of American’s founding fathers, which some analysts fear. Rather, such accounts must be more fully and accurately reported. Similarly, social scientists must reconstruct theories of settlement and assimilation to explain the forces of inclusion and exclusion of particular groups in American society, past and present. Finally, given the emergence of new geographic settlement forms, such theory must move away from singular explanations, as though they apply to all and become the basis for political arguments for English-language only and other non-inclusive remedies to America’s social problems. One of America’s biggest challenges in confronting the legacy of racial and ethnic inequalities lies in transforming educational institutions and the policies that control their well-being. The multicultural settlement patterns, organization of school district boundaries, funding mechanisms, and the curriculum are problems that require attention. The levels of government that are theoretically controlled by the electorate have commandeered the system and made the electorate pawns. The result is a Prussian-style education system that marches lock step through the academic year, in spite of the needs of students, and then tests them each June, in spite of what they have not learned. Such a system has minimized the cultural histories and contemporary issues associated with the legacy of slavery and racial ideologies. It also has not addressed the significance of a rapidly changing ethnic population mix that will dramatically reduce the significance of the historically strong host culture.

Before exploring some of the new patterns emerging across the U.S., it is informative to examine some of the numerical trends in America’s prominent minority groups and the growth of particular ethnic groups in recent decades.

**IMMIGRATION TRENDS: INCREASING DIVERSITY BY THE NUMBERS**

America has been changing from a predominantly white, non-Hispanic nation to a more multicultural and multiracial society. Using the broad racial/ethnic categories of the U.S. Census, this shift is quite obvious between 1940 and 2000. In 1940, nearly 90 percent of Americans were non-Hispanic white. In the year 2000, a half-century later, that proportion had dropped to seventy-five percent. By 2050, whites are likely to be a slim majority of about 52 percent (Frazier, Margai, and Tettey-Fio, 2003). This racial/ethnic diversification is due to a number of factors, especially immigration and birth rate differences between white non-Hispanics and Hispanics.

The major racial/ethnic categories and their changes in the share of the total U.S. population between 1940 and 2000 also are reported in Table 1.1. These data indicate that the African-American population changed little in its proportion of the total U.S. population between 1940 and 2000, especially relative to the other two growing minority groups. The black proportion of the total population increased only 1.3 percent between 1940 and 1970 and only 1.2 percent in the following thirty years, 1970 to 2000. However, the total black population increased from just under 13 million in 1940 to more than 34 million by 2000. Latinos, on the other hand, accounted only for slightly more than 1 percent of the total U.S. population in 1940 but jumped to 4.5 percent by 1970, and to 12.5 percent of the total in 2000. Thus, while the black population experienced very modest gains in the sixty years reported in Table 1.1, the Hispanic total reached over 35 million in 2000 and became America’s largest minority group.
The Asian population was relatively miniscule in 1940, when approximately a quarter of a million Asians resided in America, less than 1 percent of the total American population. The Asian total had increased to about 1.5 million by 1970 but still accounted for less than 1 percent of the U.S. total. However, although a relatively small percentage of the total in 2000, at 3.7 percent, Asians realized the largest percentage increase between 1970 and 2000, and therefore were America’s fastest growing minority on a percentage basis.

While these numbers indicate the substantial increase in diversity in the American population, they do not express the cultural diversity within each group that contributes to an increasingly multicultural society. Table 1.2 clarifies this within-group diversity by reporting the national origin for each unique foreign-born population in the U.S. with a minimum of a half-million people in 2000. A number of observations are possible from that table.

1. Fourteen different source nations are represented, indicating the diversity of foreign-born in the U.S. in 2000 for those groups with at least one-half million people. These 14 foreign-born groups together account for only about 61 percent of the 31,107,889 total foreign-born population in 2000, suggesting an even greater diversity if all source nations had been listed in the table.
2. Mexico stands out as the chief source nation of the U.S. foreign-born. It alone provided nearly 30 percent of the total in 2000.
3. The sources of the next four largest foreign-born American populations are in Asia and together account for nearly five million foreign-born and about 12 percent of the U.S. total.
4. Of the 14 sources, six are in Latin America and five are in Asia. This illustrates the shift in U.S. immigration policy since 1952 and especially since 1965, when immigrant sources shifted from Europe to Latin America and Asia.

Many of these groups have shaped their new landscapes so that they are reminded of their culture and homeland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Year and Population in Thousands</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>116,353</td>
<td>169,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(88.5%)</td>
<td>(83.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12,866</td>
<td>22,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.8%)</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,861</td>
<td>9,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
<td>(4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&lt;1%)</td>
<td>(&lt;1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>131,669</td>
<td>203,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Source is U.S. Census Bureau and all numbers are rounded.
Not shown in the table are 2.5 million American Indians and Native Alaskans. The 2000 Census data are not directly comparable to previous census years due to a change in the race/ethnicity question in the 2000 Census, which requested respondents to self-identify as being of one-race, two or more races, or some other race. Those reporting two or more races and other race totaled more than 21 million people and do not appear in the table.

Table 1.2
Source Nations of U.S. Foreign-Born, 2000, with a Minimum Population of 500,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Nation by Rank</th>
<th>Foreign-born Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mexico</td>
<td>9,177,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. China</td>
<td>1,518,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Philippines</td>
<td>1,369,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. India</td>
<td>1,022,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vietnam</td>
<td>988,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cuba</td>
<td>872,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Korea</td>
<td>864,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Canada</td>
<td>820,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. El Salvador</td>
<td>817,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Germany</td>
<td>706,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dominican Republic</td>
<td>687,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. United Kingdom</td>
<td>677,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Jamaica</td>
<td>553,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Columbia</td>
<td>509,872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


CHANGING U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW

Immigration Policy Between Two World Wars

As mentioned earlier, social institutions may take the form of legal and political actions designed to protect the host culture, as in the case of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act that attempted to eliminate Chinese immigration into the U.S. By the beginning of the 20th century, American labor’s dissatisfaction had turned toward the Japanese immigrants who were perceived as flooding the U.S. labor market and unfairly displacing honest Anglo workers. This perception was particularly acute in California and resulted in the Gentlemen’s Agreement in 1907 between the leaders of Japan and the U.S., wherein Japan promised to limit Japanese immigration and avoided an international incident (details are provided in chapter 20). By the 1920s, already involved in a period of isolationism, the U.S. had become generally suspicious of involvements with foreign nations, especially in terms of formal agreements in trade and military treaties. Many Americans believed that the U.S. could set the standard for global democracy and peace by its independent example. Isolation did not mean the U.S. would cease its economic and territorial expansion policies, but it would refrain from unnecessary foreign entanglements with European nations. Of particular relevance to the evolution of American culture in this period were the actions by the U.S. Congress related to new immigration policies. As noted earlier, the entry of three waves of European immigrants totaled about 30 million in less than a century. The first two waves attracted cultures...
Race, Ethnicity, and Place in a Changing America

from northern and western Europe: Irish, English, German and Scandinavian populations. The third European wave differed sharply from the previous two in that it attracted eastern European and Italian immigrants who spoke different languages and had very different customs and cultural features than the earlier northern and western European groups, many of whom had assimilated into the Anglo-American culture by the 1920s. Various actions by the Congress illustrated their desire to protect Anglo-America from being diluted by those who were culturally dissimilar.

In 1917, Congress passed a law to impose literacy testing as a means to slow unwanted immigration. After nearly another million immigrants entered the country in 1920, Congress passed the 1921 Emergency Immigration Act as an immediate stop-gap action that established the quota system, an annual limit of 350,000 and a 3 percent national limit based on foreign nations share of the U.S. population in 1910. Given the dominance of western and northern European nations during the previous century, this law, by design, provided immigrants from those regions a significant numerical advantage. Congress continued to debate the immigration issue during the early 1920s and, in 1924, passed an even more restrictive act that President Coolidge signed into law. The 1924 Immigration Act had the clear intention of restricting eastern and southern Europeans immediately, and ending the entry of all Asians (especially the Japanese), who were ineligible for U.S. citizenship. The law continued the favorable status of northern and western Europeans. It set the national limit at 2 percent of the 1890 U.S. Census, which further strengthened the position of the Irish, English and other Europeans that had dominated the first two waves of immigration. By 1927, an annual cap of 150,000 was to be instituted. For a period, exceptions were made for the Americas and resulted in Canada and Mexico providing large numbers of immigrants in the 1920s. However, the pattern of immigration remained the same in the 1930s, although annual numbers dropped significantly due to the Depression; Western hemisphere nations of Great Britain, Germany and Mexico provided the most immigrants. The large influx of Mexicans during the 1920s led to the U.S. Census Bureau’s initial effort to count those of the “Mexican race” by 1930. Congressional action soon restricted the influx of immigrant Mexican workers.

Immigration Policies Since 1952

American immigration policies changed dramatically after World War II beginning with the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (amended as the McCarran-Walter). America emerged as a superpower after WWII and contributed substantially to the rebuilding of Europe and Japan. The American economy expanded and labor shortages in key fields led to a different attitude toward immigration. The impact of communism also was influential; the “Red Scare” associated with the McCarthy era not only frightened many Americans, it increased their awareness and sympathy for foreigners who had fallen victim to the spread of communism. The new policy established in 1952 recognized both of these forces and also took a more tolerant attitude about admitting the close relatives of existing American citizens. Thus, while maintaining the quota system, the new law established a new preference system for skilled workers (preferred occupations based on employment shortages), and for immediate family members (e.g., unmarried children, siblings, and parents of American citizens), and an emergency entry provision for those fleeing immediate danger related to political crises. The latter led to the admission of refugees, including hundreds of thousands of Latin American and Asian refugees.

Undoubtedly the most dramatic change in immigration law since the establishment of the quota system, however, occurred with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Celler Act), which abolished the quota. By this time, America had entered the Civil Rights Era and was involved in a war in Vietnam. A more liberal element of Congress (including Ted Kennedy, Claiborne Pell, and Philip Hart) argued that the proposed changes associated with this Act would not significantly alter the cost or magnitude of immigration. Of course, history has proven them wrong. The unanticipated impacts of this law were extremely significant. The new law abolished the quota system and replaced it with numerical limits and a multiple category preference system. Under its terms, it mattered less where you were from, and more who you were in terms of skills, family relationships, and refugee status. The new limits were hemispheric as opposed to nationality-based: 170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere (to compensate for previous biases) and 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere.
All non-refugee immigrants theoretically had an equal chance of admission either in the occupational or family preferences categories, specifically under family reunification or in preferred professionally-based occupations in six categories. Most importantly, however, the new law also created exemptions for immediate relatives (spouses, offspring and parents) from the numerical limits established by this legislation. This caused the number of annual immigrants to increase dramatically, an unanticipated impact of the Hart-Celler Act, especially in the numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asian countries. The impact has increased cultural and ethnic diversity in the U.S.

There have been other immigration acts passed since 1965 that permit temporary or permanent status to certain immigrant applicants. Not all of these laws are examined here. However, there are many ways for foreign nationals to secure lawful permanent residents status, popularly called the “green card,” in America. Among the possibilities are employment, family member, lottery, adoption, business investment, and refugee/political asylum. Decisions related to this status are based on the preference system mentioned previously. Among the modifications in the law are those that address unforeseen bias outcomes. For example, due to the impact of the family reunification clause in the existing law, a “lottery” system was created under a new law passed in 1990. This was to address the fact that the reunification clause favored particular underdeveloped nations, while excluding others. The 1990 U.S. Immigration Act addressed this problem by the addition of 55,000 immigrants drawn by “lottery” from those nations who had been excluded.

The labor market in the U.S. also continues to influence immigration law. There are two general types of visas (permission to enter the country), issued by the U.S. government: immigrant and non-immigrant visas. An immigrant visa recognizes the immigrant’s intention to live and work in the country permanently. The non-immigrant visa is for a temporary visitor to work, study, receive training, and engage in other short-term activities. The 1990 Act and subsequent immigration legislation modified existing law and also increased the number of immigrant visas in the occupational/employment category. Also, in recognizing the market needs for high-tech skills and managerial personnel, the new law encouraged non-immigrant visas. This category has L-1 and H-1B visas to promote non-immigrant entry. The L-1 visa supports the establishment of multinational corporation investment through the creation of branch operations with skilled employees. Once non-immigrants hold the L-1 visa, they are eligible to apply for permanent residency after one year of successful operation of the new business. In the same vein, high-tech corporations have lobbied Congress to increase the number of annual H-1B visas for non-permanent immigrants for various skilled and educated foreigners. Congress has responded by raising those limits, which in 2003 reached 195,000 visas. Just as L-1 visa holders are eligible for permanent residency, so too are the holders of H-1B visas during their six-year approved work status.

All of these changes have contributed to the continued growth in the number of annual immigrants entering the U.S. and to an increasing number securing permanent status. Beyond these changes in the laws regulating legal immigration, America has experienced a tremendous influx of millions of illegal immigrants in recent decades. Various efforts to better control the international border have been undertaken but none have had a lasting impact on this problem. Mark Reisinger addresses some of the dimensions of illegal immigration in chapter 14. Legal and illegal immigration have led to major changes in the spatial distribution, settlement, and cultural landscape patterns of the U.S.

RETHINKING APPROACHES AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

American society has changed a great deal in many ways since the periods described in the preceding paragraphs. It has welcomed cultures from around the globe as prospective citizens or as temporary workers. Just as American social institutions mistreated and restricted various non-white groups, they changed immigration law in order to permit a broader representation of ethnic groups in the U.S. What remains uncertain is how well the new multicultural diversity will avoid the pitfalls of American history and how well it can fare in an economic and political system that remains dominated by the Anglo perspective. Illegal immigration has reached a magnitude that allows it to cloud the issues surrounding the prospect of national unity under multiculti-
tural diversity. Global terrorism has profoundly influenced the average American and the media. A 2005 editorial in a major U.S. news magazine illustrates the conservative perspective on multicultural diversity issues:

“Multiculturalism is based on the lie that all cultures are morally equal. In practice, that soon degenerates to: All cultures are morally equal, except ours, which is worse. But all cultures are not equal in respecting representative government, guaranteed liberties, and the rule of law. And those things arose not simultaneously and in all cultures but in certain specific times and places — mostly in Britain and America but also in other parts of Europe” (M. Barone, 2005, p. 26).

Multiculturalisms’ focus on the treatment of subcultures should not be interpreted as a vote to destroy western democracies. Rather, it is self-criticism and an effort not to perpetuate the wrongs of the past. It also recognizes that a multicultural society will not abide by a narrow set of ideals and restrictions that favor a group whose influence will undoubtedly shrink in coming decades. The data provided in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 clearly illustrated the diversity trends in the U.S. It seems equally clear that, while cultural traits persevere, the American culture will not remain fixed in the face of an increasing multicultural society. The bigger issue for American leadership is how to find a course that supports ethnic and cultural diversity, while keeping the nation bound together by ideals that can be fairly realized by all, regardless of ethnic background. This is a tall order for a society steeped in feelings of Anglo-cultural superiority and white entitlement, as well as by a history of neglect and discrimination of minority cultures.

Perhaps a vital first step, after reviewing the multiple cultural histories and geographies of the U.S., is to examine the nature of ethnic and racial settlements in contemporary America, to understand the processes at work in places where the newest Americans are reshaping regions and landscapes, using their own culture and ethnic identities. At the same time, we can explore the settlement experiences and challenges of these groups as they attempt to “fit” and, change American landscapes into a set of different images. We are likely to unveil places where non-white racial groups, foreign-born, and particular ethnic groups are still unwelcome and experience resentment and discrimination. We may discover where and why conflicts are occurring, or may be likely to occur, and where the types of issues, such as education and health, may provide our greatest challenges. Finally, we may uncover places of success, places where multicultural geographies are a reflection of the future and serve as models for other communities.

In the process of examining the various settlement paths of recent immigrants, social science researchers have found it necessary to recast existing theories and create new theoretical concepts to help explain the complexities of the settlements of the multicultural population. The Chicago School’s assimilation model served as a singular concept that explained how European immigrants were absorbed into Anglo society. However, recent critiques and newer formulations recognize both the attributes of the host culture and the non-European mix as important elements requiring different formulations to explain emerging racial and ethnic settlement geographies. More recent approaches have included issues of gender, race, ethnicity and other factors. Among the most cited works are those that emphasize the multiple paths that immigrant assimilation can follow. Collectively, these multiple options are termed “segmented assimilation” (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes, 1995; Zhou, 1997). This concept recognizes that, in addition to the possible straight-line assimilation concept discussed earlier, immigrants have the option of other paths that either lead to their partial absorption into the host culture or lead to separate maintenance. Zhou has expressed two options beyond the ecological model’s direct spatial absorption, including one involving “downward mobility,” which implies immigrants are pushed into a lower socioeconomic status, and another option for middle class absorption by “economic integration,” which involves “lagged acculturation” with “deliberate preservation” of the immigrant’s ethnicity. These multidirectional paths are due to America’s class structure and racial constructs that together influence immigrant options and behaviors. Wei Li will discuss this further in chapter 5 because she believes race has a key role in American settlement geographies.

Zelinsky’s text raised the issue of changes in American cultural composition and its implications for landscapes in 1992. He noted the increasing interdependencies between places and cultures, the transnationaliza-
tion trends due to globalization and its associated mass migrations. He suggested that “America is at a turning point, some sort of crisis of identity” (Zelinsky, 1992, p. 184). He recognized that the changes in American immigrant sources were raising questions about the future of American culture. A few years later, Zelinsky and Lee suggested that the ecological straight-line assimilation model alone no longer adequately explained immigrant settlement patterns, especially those who had entered America with social and economic capital. Termed “heterolocalism,” their concept recognized that local settlements by some immigrant populations took on a unique form unlike that of ethnic enclaves of the past. This concept described cases wherein “recent populations of shared ethnic identity … enter an area from distant sources, then quickly adopt a dispersed pattern of residential location, all the while managing to remain cohesive through a variety of means” (1998, p. 281). The relationship of this concept to “segmented assimilation” should be obvious.

The debate over immigration in some ways can be reduced to the same issue of the last century: acculturation and assimilation for the good of American society. However, not all Americans agree that assimilation is necessary to maintain a healthy nation. Further, the rapid change in cultural diversity is unprecedented in American history and is likely to change the position of the white majority. It is unlikely that the nearly one-half of the American population by 2050 will be as eager to tow the Anglo-line of acculturation and assimilation as did their white European predecessors of the last century. A new attitude by the traditional white European population likely will be necessary to meet the demands of a new American populace.

In short, more recent theories and concepts dealing with immigrant assimilation and settlement geography recognize the growing importance of pluralism, multiculturalism, and class in the U.S. As Chacko noted, “race/ethnicity and socioeconomic class” are among the most prominent barriers to the assimilation of first- and second-generation U.S. immigrants (Chacko, 2003, p. 494). These viewpoints also recognize the importance of race as a social construct that shapes the institutional controls of the host culture toward the immigrant group and the importance of ethnic identity in the path of the subculture decisions related to geographic space. As we explore America’s increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, it should become clear that the future demands careful and thoughtful attention of all Americans as we look to the future.

**RACE, ETHNICITY, AND PLACE: PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN AMERICA**

This text provides a number of examples of some specific ethnic groups that represent the broad racial/ethnic categorizations provided by the U.S. Census, Hispanics/Latinos, Blacks, Asians and native cultures. Part I of the book serves as an introduction to key terminology and illustrates a broad range of thought on American multicultural geographies, ranging from social criticism to a policy viewpoint, and from ethnic impacts on gateways to the racial ideology that has influenced immigrant settlement geography. Each of the next three sections (Parts II, III, and IV) of the text focuses on some of the major relevant processes and patterns associated with Blacks, Latinos, and Asians living in America. Part II of the book examines patterns and processes that have produced and continue to produce black geographies in America. This section, like the others, contains an overview chapter, followed by case studies that reveal at least one dimension of the persistence or change related to that group’s human geography. Ethnic case studies also indicate the increasing diversity within the broadly defined census categorization (Blacks) and the impact of that ethnic group on a landscape or place.

Part III of the book focuses on Latinos in America and is organized in the same fashion as the previous section. Part IV, which follows the same format, examines various Asian ethnic experiences in the U.S., including their settlement geography, using both historical and contemporary examples. We cannot possibly cover all aspects of all groups, but we endeavor to provide some insight into America’s broader heritage and changing places over time through several examples.

The final section, Part V, provides perspectives on several dimensions of American ethnic diversity. It begins by reviewing the changing economic development contexts for American Indians. It then examines a few examples of white-European ethnic groups in the U.S., revealing the continuing presence of Europeans as part of America’s complex ethnic mix. The first case study looks at the contemporary settlement experiences of Rus-
sian immigrants in the Pacific Northwest, while the second explores the persistence of an established group, Greek Americans. As the foreign-born continue to enter the U.S., they find themselves settling in cities where they must compete for employment and housing with established native-born populations. Paterson, New Jersey, has a diverse population, including many foreign-born. Analysis of this group with the established native population illustrates important disparities between groups in a diverse community. Ethnically diverse cities are becoming more common in the U.S., including in the American Heartland. This section uses Louisville, Kentucky, to explore the dimensions of multicultural diversity. Finally, racial and ethnic diversity have led to serious issues related to education and healthcare. The final chapter in this section examines both equity issues and health conditions due to diversity.