

## KEY ISSUE 3

## Why Do Conflicts Arise among Ethnicities?

- Ethnicities and Nationalities
- Ethnic Competition
- Dividing Ethnicities

### Learning Outcome 7.3.1

Explain the difference between ethnicity and nationality.

Ethnicity and race are distinct from nationality, another term commonly used to describe a group of people with shared traits. **Nationality** is identity with a group of people who share legal attachment and personal allegiance to a particular country. It comes from the Latin word *nasci*, which means “to have been born.”

## Ethnicities and Nationalities

Nationality and ethnicity are similar concepts in that membership in both is defined through shared cultural values. In principle, the cultural values shared with others of the same ethnicity derive from religion, language, and material culture, whereas those shared with others of the same nationality derive from voting, obtaining a passport, and performing civic duties.

### NATIONALITIES IN NORTH AMERICA

In the United States, *nationality* is generally kept reasonably distinct from *ethnicity* and *race* in common usage:

- Nationality identifies citizens of the United States of America, including those born in the country and those who immigrated and became citizens.
- Ethnicity identifies groups with distinct ancestry and cultural traditions, such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Chinese Americans, or Polish Americans.
- Race distinguishes blacks and other persons of color from whites.

The United States forged a nationality in the late eighteenth century out of a collection of ethnic groups gathered primarily from Europe and Africa, not through traditional means of issuing passports (African Americans weren't considered citizens then) or voting (women and African Americans couldn't vote then), but through sharing the values expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. To be an American meant believing in the “unalienable rights” of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

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▲ **FIGURE 7-24 QUÉBEC INDEPENDENCE RALLY** Supporters of independence for Québec march through the streets of Montréal prior to a 1995 referendum in which voters voted 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent to remain part of Canada.

In Canada, the Québécois are clearly distinct from other Canadians in language, religion, and other cultural traditions. But do the Québécois form a distinct ethnicity within the Canadian nationality or a second nationality separate altogether from Anglo-Canadian? The distinction is critical because if Québécois is recognized as a separate nationality from Anglo-Canadian, the Québec government would have a much stronger justification for breaking away from Canada to form an independent country (Figure 7-24).

### ETHNICITIES AND NATIONALITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Outside North America, distinctions between ethnicity and nationality are even muddier. An example of the complexity is the British Isles, which comprise several thousand islands, including Ireland (called Eire in Irish) and Great Britain. The British Isles contain four principal ethnicities (Figure 7-25):

- **English.** The English are descendants of Germanic tribes who crossed the North Sea and invaded the country in the fifth century (see Chapter 5).



▶ **FIGURE 7-25 ETHNICITIES AND NATIONALITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND** The British Isles comprise two countries: the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

- **Welsh.** The Welsh were Celtic people conquered by England in 1282 and formally united with England through the Act of Union of 1536. Welsh laws were abolished, and Wales became a local government unit.
- **Scots.** The Scots were Celtic people who had an independent country for more than 700 years, until 1603, when Scotland's King James VI also became King James I of England, thereby uniting the two countries. The Act of Union in 1707 formally merged the two governments, although Scotland was allowed to retain its own systems of education and local laws.
- **Irish.** The Irish were Celtic people who were ruled by England until the twentieth century, when most of the island became the independent country of Ireland.

Ireland and Great Britain are divided into two nationalities:

- **The United Kingdom** comprises Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The term *British* refers to the nationality.
- **The Republic of Ireland** comprises the southern 84 percent of the island of Ireland. The island of Ireland contains one predominant ethnicity—Irish—divided between two nationalities.

Within the United Kingdom, a strong element of ethnic identity comes from sports. Even though they are not separate countries, England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland field their own national soccer and compete separately in major international tournaments, such as the World Cup. The most important annual rugby tournament, known as the Six Nations' Championship, includes teams from England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as Ireland, Italy, and France. Given the history of English conquest, the other nationalities often root against England when it is playing teams from other countries.

Sorting out ethnicity and nationality can be challenging for many, including prominent sports stars. The golfer Rory McIlroy's ethnicity is Irish Catholic, and his nationality is United Kingdom, because Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. But many Catholics in Northern Ireland feel closeness to the Republic of Ireland (see Chapter 6).

Tiger Woods has the reverse situation. His nationality is clearly the United States, but his ethnicity is less clear. His father was a mix of African American, Native American, and possibly Chinese, and his mother was a mix of Thai, Chinese, and Dutch. Woods describes his complex ethnicity as "Cablinasian."

### Pause and Reflect 7.3.1

If Scotland becomes an independent country, how would the arrangement of nationalities in the British Isles change?

## NATIONALISM

A nationality, once established, must hold the loyalty of its citizens to survive (Figure 7-26). Politicians and governments try to instill loyalty through **nationalism**, which



▲ **FIGURE 7-26 NATIONALISM** Ukrainians celebrate independence day on August 24 by waving flags while walking along Khreshchatyk Street in the capital, Kiev. Ukraine declared its independence from the former Soviet Union on August 24, 1991.

is loyalty and devotion to a nationality. Nationalism typically promotes a sense of national consciousness that exalts one nation above all others and emphasizes its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations. People display nationalism by supporting a country that preserves and enhances the culture and attitudes of their nationality.

States foster nationalism by promoting symbols of the country, such as flags and songs. The symbol of the hammer and sickle on a field of red was long synonymous with the beliefs of communism. After the fall of communism, one of the first acts in a number of Eastern European countries was to redesign flags without the hammer and sickle. Legal holidays were changed from dates associated with Communist victories to those associated with historical events that preceded Communist takeovers.

Nationalism can have a negative impact. The sense of unity within a nation-state is sometimes achieved through the creation of negative images of other nation-states. Travelers in southeastern Europe during the 1970s and 1980s found that jokes directed by one nationality against another recurred in the same form throughout the region, with only the name of the target changed. For example, "How many [fill in the name of a nationality] are needed to change a lightbulb?" Such jokes seemed harmless, but in hindsight reflected the intense dislike for other nationalities that led to conflict in the 1990s.

Nationalism is an important example of a **centripetal force**, which is an attitude that tends to unify people and enhance support for a state. (The word *centripetal* means "directed toward the center"; it is the opposite of *centrifugal*, which means "to spread out from the center.") Most countries find that the best way to achieve citizen support is to emphasize shared attitudes that unify the people.

## Ethnic Competition

### Learning Outcome 7.3.2

Identify and describe the principal ethnicities in Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

We have already seen in this chapter that identification with ethnicity and race can lead to discrimination and segregation. Confusion between ethnicity and nationality can lead to violent conflicts. Lebanon and Sri Lanka are examples of countries that have not successfully integrated diverse ethnicities.

### ETHNIC COMPETITION IN LEBANON

Lebanon has 4 million people in an area of 10,000 square kilometers (4,000 square miles), a bit smaller and more populous than Connecticut. Once known as a financial and recreational center in the Middle East, Lebanon has been severely damaged by fighting among ethnicities since the 1970s.

Lebanon is divided between around 60 percent Muslims and 40 percent Christians (Figure 7-27). The precise distribution of religions in Lebanon is unknown because no census has been taken since 1932:

- **Christians.** Lebanon's most numerous Christian sect is Maronite, which split from the Roman Catholic Church in the seventh century. Maronites, ruled by the patriarch



▲ **FIGURE 7-27 ETHNICITIES IN LEBANON** Christians dominate in the south and the northwest, Sunni Muslims in the far north, Shiite Muslims in the northeast and south, and Druze in the south-central and southeast.

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of Antioch, perform the liturgy in the ancient Syrian language. The second-largest Christian sect is Greek Orthodox, the Orthodox church that uses a Byzantine liturgy.

- **Muslims.** Most of Lebanon's Muslims belong to one of several Shiite sects. Sunnis, who are much more numerous than Shiites in the world, account for a minority of Lebanon's Muslims. Lebanon also has an important community of Druze, who were once considered to have a separate religion but now consider themselves Muslim. Many Druze rituals are kept secret from outsiders.

Lebanon's diversity may appear to be religious rather than ethnic. But most of Lebanon's Christians consider themselves ethnically descended from the ancient Phoenicians who once occupied present-day Lebanon. In this way, Lebanon's Christians differentiate themselves from the country's Muslims, who are considered Arabs.

When Lebanon became independent in 1943, the constitution required that each religion be represented in the Chamber of Deputies according to its percentage in the 1932 census. By unwritten convention, the president of Lebanon was a Maronite Christian, the premier a Sunni Muslim, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies a Shiite Muslim, and the foreign minister a Greek Orthodox Christian. Other cabinet members and civil servants were similarly apportioned among the various faiths.

Lebanon's religious groups have tended to live in different regions of the country. Maronites are concentrated in the west-central part, Sunnis in the northwest, and Shiites in the south and east. Beirut, the capital and largest city, has been divided between a Christian eastern zone and a Muslim western zone. During a civil war between 1975 and 1990, each religious group formed a private army or militia to guard its territory. The territory controlled by each militia changed according to results of battles with other religious groups.

When the governmental system was created, Christians constituted a majority and controlled the country's main businesses, but as Muslims became the majority, they demanded political and economic equality. The agreement ending the civil war in 1990 gave each religion one-half of the 128 seats in Parliament. Israel and the United States sent troops into Lebanon at various points in failed efforts to restore peace (Figure 7-28). The United States pulled out after 241 U.S. marines died in their barracks from a truck bomb in 1983. Lebanon was left under the control of neighboring Syria, which had a historical claim over the territory until it, too, was forced to withdraw its troops in 2005.

### Pause and Reflect 7.3.2

What country borders Lebanon on the south?  
What conflict has been ongoing in that country, as described in Chapter 6?

### ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

An island country of 19 million inhabitants off the Indian coast, Sri Lanka is inhabited by three principal ethnicities



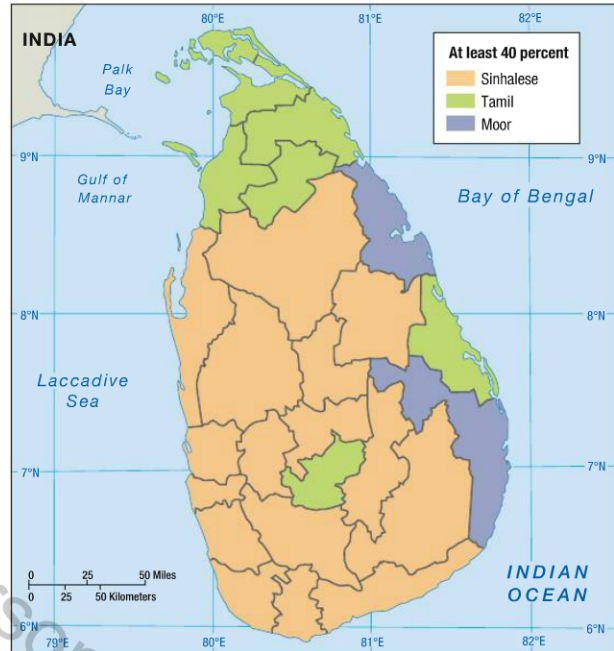
▲ **FIGURE 7-28 ETHNIC CONFLICT IN LEBANON** U.S. Marines patrol the streets of Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983.

known as Sinhalese, Tamil, and Moors (Figure 7-29). War between the Sinhalese and Tamil erupted in 1983 and continued until 2009. During that period, 80,000 died in the conflict between the two ethnicities:

- **Sinhalese**, who comprise 74 percent of Sri Lanka's population, migrated from northern India in the fifth century B.C., occupying the southern two-thirds of the island. Three hundred years later, the Sinhalese were converted to Buddhism, and Sri Lanka became one of that religion's world centers. Sinhalese is an Indo-European language, in the Indo-Iranian branch.
- **Tamils**, who comprise 16 percent of Sri Lanka's population, migrated across the narrow 80-kilometer-wide (50-mile-wide) Palk Strait from India beginning in the third century B.C. and occupied the northern part of the island. Tamils are Hindus, and the Tamil language, in the Dravidian family, is also spoken by 60 million people in India.
- **Moors**, who comprise 10 percent of Sri Lanka's population, are ethnic Arabs, descended from traders from Southwest Asia who settled in Sri Lanka beginning in the eighth century A.D. Moors adhere to Islam but speak either Tamil or Sinhalese.

The dispute between Sri Lanka's two largest ethnicities extends back more than 2,000 years but was suppressed during 300 years of European control. Since the country gained independence in 1948, Sinhalese have dominated the government, military, and most of the commerce. Tamils feel that they suffer from discrimination at the hands of the Sinhalese-dominated government and have received support for a rebellion that began in 1983 from Tamils living in other countries.

The long war between the ethnicities ended in 2009, with the defeat of the Tamils (Figure 7-30). With their defeat, the Tamils fear that the future of Sri Lanka as a



▲ **FIGURE 7-29 ETHNICITIES IN SRI LANKA**

The Sinhalese are Buddhists who speak an Indo-European language, whereas the Tamils are Hindus who speak a Dravidian language.

multinational state is jeopardized. Back in 1956, Sinhalese leaders made Buddhism the sole official religion and Sinhala the sole official language of Sri Lanka. The Tamils fear that their military defeat jeopardizes their ethnic identity again.

▼ **FIGURE 7-30 ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA** Tamils demonstrating in Switzerland for international support a few days before losing the war in 2009.



## Dividing Ethnicities

### Learning Outcome 7.3.3

Describe how the Kurds, as well as several ethnicities in South Asia, have been divided among more than one nationality.

Few ethnicities inhabit an area that matches the territory of a nationality. Ethnicities are sometimes divided among more than one nationality.

### DIVIDING SOUTH ASIAN ETHNICITIES AMONG NATIONALITIES

South Asia provides vivid examples of what happens when independence comes to colonies that contain two major ethnicities. When the British ended their colonial rule of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, they divided the colony into two irregularly shaped countries—India and Pakistan (Figure 7-31). Pakistan comprised two noncontiguous areas, West Pakistan and East Pakistan, 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) apart, separated by India. East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. An eastern region of India was also practically cut off from the rest of the country, attached only by a narrow corridor north of Bangladesh that is less than 13 kilometers (8 miles) wide in some places.

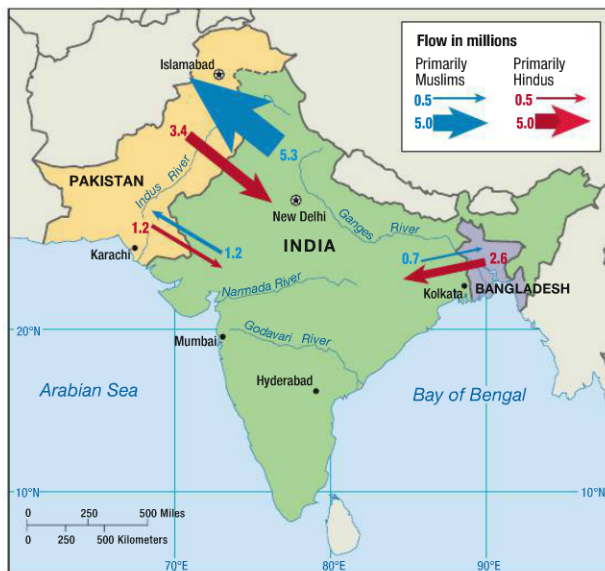
The basis for separating West and East Pakistan from India was ethnicity. The people living in the two areas of

Pakistan were predominantly Muslim; those in India were predominantly Hindu. Antagonism between the two religious groups was so great that the British decided to place the Hindus and Muslims in separate states. Hinduism has become a great source of national unity in India. In modern India, with its hundreds of languages and ethnic groups, Hinduism has become the cultural trait shared by the largest percentage of the population.

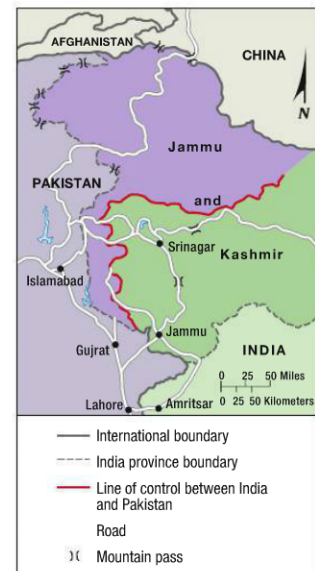
Muslims have long fought with Hindus for control of territory, especially in South Asia. After the British took over India in the early 1800s, a three-way struggle began, with the Hindus and Muslims fighting each other as well as the British rulers. Mahatma Gandhi, the leading Hindu advocate of nonviolence and reconciliation with Muslims, was assassinated in 1948, ending the possibility of creating a single state in which Muslims and Hindus could live together peacefully.

The partition of South Asia into two states resulted in massive migration because the two boundaries did not correspond precisely to the territory inhabited by the two ethnicities. Approximately 17 million people caught on the wrong side of a boundary felt compelled to migrate during the late 1940s. Some 6 million Muslims moved from India to West Pakistan and about 1 million from India to East Pakistan. Hindus who migrated to India included approximately 6 million from West Pakistan and 3.5 million from East Pakistan. As they attempted to reach the other side of the new border, Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India were killed by people from the rival religion. Extremists attacked small groups of refugees traveling by road and halted trains to massacre the passengers.

Pakistan and India never agreed on the location of the boundary separating the two countries in the northern region of Kashmir (Figure 7-32). Since 1972, the two countries have maintained a “line of control” through the region, with Pakistan administering the northwestern portion and India the southeastern portion. Muslims, who comprise a majority in both portions, have fought a guerrilla war to secure reunification of Kashmir, either as part of Pakistan or as an independent country. India blames Pakistan for the unrest and vows to retain its portion of Kashmir. Pakistan argues that Kashmiris on both sides of the border should choose their own future in a vote, confident that the majority Muslim population would break away from India.



**▲ FIGURE 7-31 ETHNIC DIVISION OF SOUTH ASIA** In 1947, British India was partitioned into two independent states, India and Pakistan, which resulted in the migration of an estimated 17 million people. The creation of Pakistan as two territories nearly 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) apart proved unstable, and in 1971 East Pakistan became the independent country of Bangladesh.



**▲ FIGURE 7-32 KASHMIR** India and Pakistan dispute the location of their border.



◀ **FIGURE 7-33 KURDS** Kurds in northern Iraq hold burning torches to celebrate their new year, which they call Newroz, on the first day of spring.

India's religious unrest is further complicated by the presence of 25 million Sikhs, who have long resented that they were not given their own independent country when India was partitioned (see Chapter 6). Although they constitute only 2 percent of India's total population, Sikhs comprise a majority in the Indian state of Punjab, situated south of Kashmir along the border with Pakistan. Sikh extremists have fought for more control over the Punjab or even complete independence from India.

## DIVIDING THE KURDS AMONG NATIONALITIES

A prominent example of an ethnicity divided among several countries in western Asia is the Kurds, who live in the Caucasus Mountains (Figure 7-33). The Kurds are Sunni Muslims who speak a language in the Iranian group of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European and have distinctive literature, dress, and other cultural traditions.

When the victorious European allies carved up the Ottoman Empire after World War I, they created an independent state of Kurdistan to the south and west of Van Gölü (Lake Van) under the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. Before the treaty was ratified, however, the Turks, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Atatürk), fought successfully to expand the territory under their control beyond the small area the allies had allocated to them. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 established the modern state of Turkey, with boundaries nearly identical to the current ones. Kurdistan became part of Turkey and disappeared as an independent state.

Today the 30 million Kurds are split among several countries; 14 million live in eastern Turkey, 5 million in northern Iraq, 4 million in western Iran, 2 million in Syria,

and the rest in other countries. Kurds comprise 19 percent of the population in Turkey, 16 percent in Iraq, 9 percent in Syria, and 6 percent in Iran (refer ahead to Figure 7-34 on the next page).

To foster the development of Turkish nationalism, the Turks have tried repeatedly to suppress Kurdish culture. Use of the Kurdish language was illegal in Turkey until 1991, and laws banning its use in broadcasts and classrooms remain in force. Kurdish nationalists, for their part, have waged a guerrilla war since 1984 against the Turkish army. Kurds in other countries have fared just as poorly as those in Turkey. Iran's Kurds secured an independent republic in 1946, but it lasted less than a year. Iraq's Kurds have made several unsuccessful attempts to gain independence, including in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1970s.

A few days after Iraq was defeated in the 1991 Gulf War, the country's Kurds launched another unsuccessful rebellion. The United States and its allies decided not to resume their recently concluded fight against Iraq on behalf of the Kurdish rebels, but after the revolt was crushed, they sent troops to protect the Kurds from further attacks by the Iraqi army. After the United States attacked Iraq and deposed Saddam Hussein in 2003, Iraqi Kurds achieved even more autonomy, but still not independence. Thus, despite their numbers, the Kurds are an ethnicity with no corresponding Kurdish state today. Instead, they are forced to live under the control of the region's more powerful nationalities.

### Pause and Reflect 7.3.3

Refer ahead to Figure 7-34 on the next page. What is the largest ethnicity in Pakistan?

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN WESTERN ASIA

### Learning Outcome 7.3.4

Identify and describe the principal ethnicities in western Asia.

The lack of correspondence between the territory occupied by ethnicities and nationalities is especially severe in western Asia. Four nationalities in the region—Iraqi, Iranian, Afghan, and Pakistani—encompass dozens of ethnicities, most of whom inhabit more than one of the region's countries (Figure 7-34):

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN IRAQ.** Approximately three-fourths of Iraqis are Arabs, and one-sixth are Kurds. The Arab population is divided among Muslim branches, with two-thirds Shiite and one-third Sunni.

The United States led an attack against Iraq in 2003 that resulted in the removal and death of the country's longtime president, Saddam Hussein. U.S. officials justified removing Hussein because he ran a brutal dictatorship, created weapons of mass destruction, and allegedly had close links with terrorists (see Chapter 8).

Having invaded Iraq and removed Hussein from power, the United States expected an enthusiastic welcome from the Iraqi nation. Instead, the United States became embroiled in a complex and violent struggle among ethnic groups:

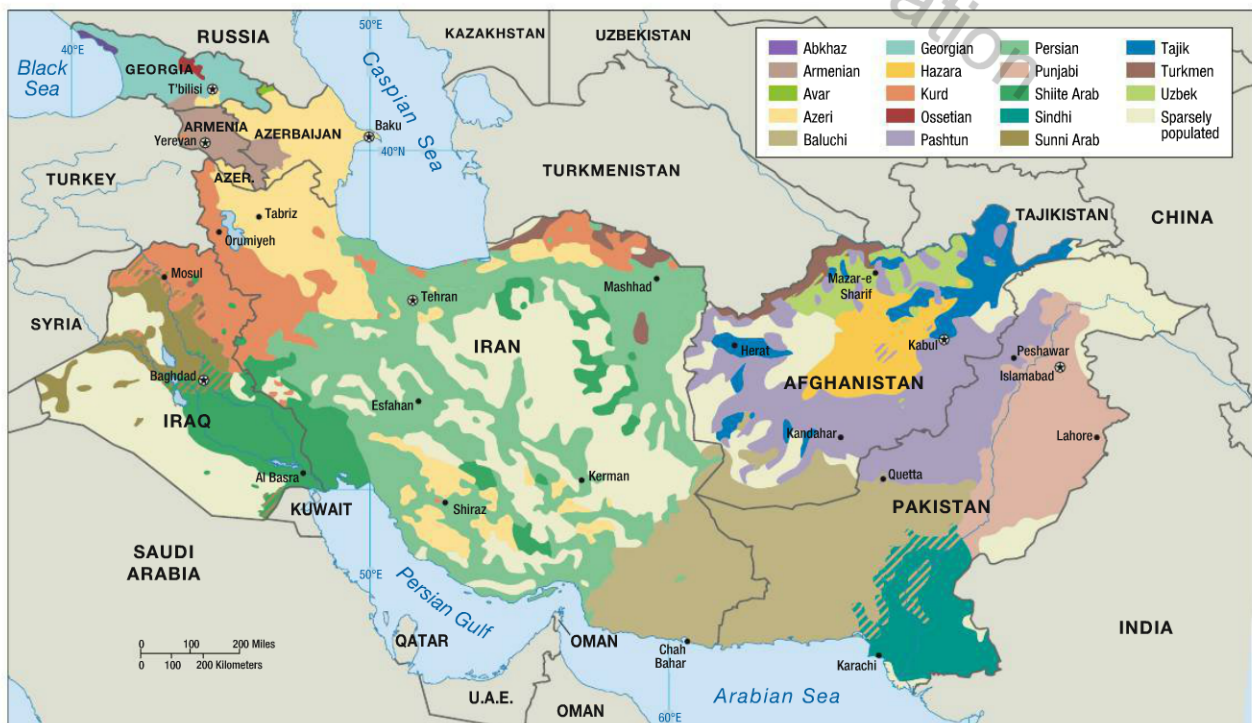
- Kurds welcomed the United States because they gained more security and autonomy than they had had under Hussein.
- Sunni Muslim Arabs opposed the U.S.-led attack because they feared loss of power and privilege given to them by Hussein, who was a Sunni.
- Shiite Muslim Arabs also opposed the U.S. presence. Although they had been treated poorly by Hussein and controlled Iraq's post-Hussein government, Shiites shared a long-standing hostility toward the United States with their neighbors in Shiite-controlled Iran.

Iraq's principal ethnic groups are split into regions, with Kurds in the north, Sunnis in the center, and Shiites in the south.

The capital, Baghdad, where one-fourth of the Iraqi people live, has some neighborhoods where virtually all residents are of one ethnicity, but most areas are mixed. In many of these historically mixed neighborhoods, the minority ethnicity has been forced to move away (Figure 7-35).

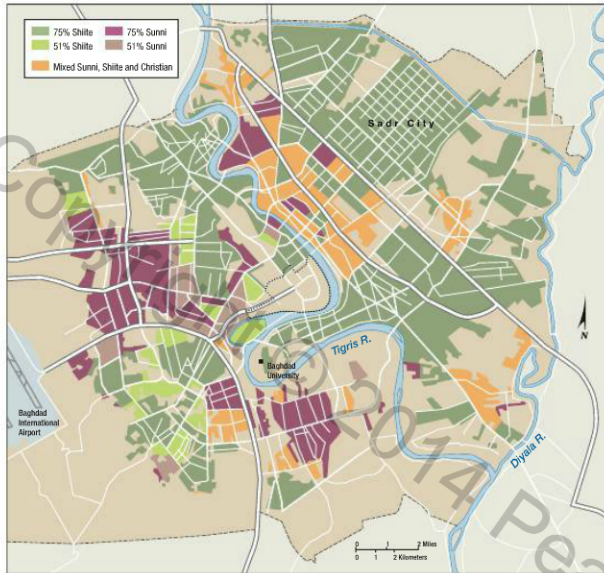
The major ethnicities are divided into numerous tribes and clans (Figure 7-36). Most Iraqis actually have stronger loyalty to a tribe or clan than to the nationality or a major ethnicity.

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN IRAN.** The most numerous ethnicity is Persian, but Azeri and Baluchi represent important minorities. Persians constitute the world's largest ethnic group that adheres to Shiite Islam. Persians

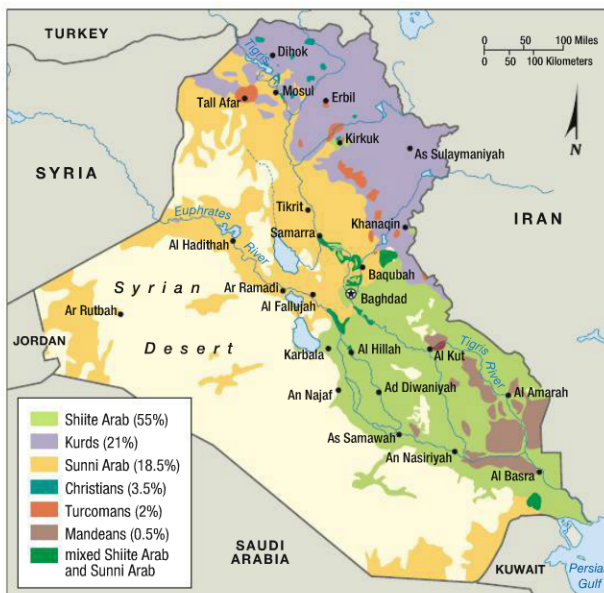


▲ **FIGURE 7-34 ETHNICITIES IN WESTERN ASIA** The complex distribution of ethnicities and nationalities across western Asia is a major source of conflict.

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▲ **FIGURE 7-35 ETHNICITIES IN BAGHDAD** Baghdad contains a mix of Sunnis, Shiites, and other groups. Many neighborhoods were traditionally mixed, but in recent years the minority group has been forced to migrate.



▲ **FIGURE 7-36 ETHNICITIES IN IRAQ** Iraq is home to around 150 distinct tribes. Some of the larger ones are shown on the map.

are believed to be descendants of the Indo-European tribes that began migrating from Central Asia into what is now Iran several thousand years ago (see Chapter 5). The Persian Empire extended from present-day Iran west as far as Egypt during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. After the Muslim army conquered Persia in the seventh century, most Persians converted to Sunni Islam. The conversion to Shiite Islam came primarily in the fifteenth century.

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**ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN AFGHANISTAN.** The most numerous ethnicities in Afghanistan are Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara. The current unrest among Afghanistan's ethnicities dates from 1979, with the start of a rebellion by several ethnic groups against the government, which was being defended by more than 100,000 troops from the Soviet Union. Unable to subdue the rebellion, the Soviet Union withdrew its troops in 1989, and the Soviet-installed government in Afghanistan collapsed in 1992.

After several years of infighting among ethnicities, a faction of the Pashtun called the Taliban gained control over most of the country in 1995. The Taliban imposed very harsh, strict laws on Afghanistan, according to Islamic values as the Taliban interpreted them (see Chapter 6). The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and overthrew the Taliban-led government because it was harboring terrorists (see Chapter 8). Removal of the Taliban unleashed a new struggle for control of Afghanistan among the country's many ethnic groups, including the Taliban.

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN PAKISTAN.** The most numerous ethnicity in Pakistan is Punjabi, but the border area with Afghanistan is principally Baluchi and Pashtun. The Punjabi have been the most numerous ethnicity since ancient times in what is now Pakistan. As with the neighboring Pashtun, the Punjabi converted to Islam after they were conquered by the Muslim army in the seventh century. The Punjabi remained Sunni Muslims rather than convert to Shiite Islam like their neighbors the Pashtun, who comprise Pakistan's second-largest ethnicity, especially along the border with Afghanistan. Fighting between Pakistan's army and supporters of the Taliban forced Pakistanis to leave their homes and move into camps, where they were fed by international relief organizations.

#### Pause and Reflect 7.3.4

How do the ethnic complexities of western Asia make it difficult to set up stable democratic governments?

#### CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 3

#### Why Do Conflicts Arise among Ethnicities?

- ✓ Nationality is identity with a group of people who share legal attachment and personal allegiance to a particular country.
- ✓ Countries such as Lebanon and Sri Lanka have difficulty peacefully combining ethnicities into one nationality.
- ✓ Some ethnicities, such as the Kurds, are divided among more than one nationality.
- ✓ Lack of correspondence between ethnicities and nationalities is especially severe in western Asia.