“Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder.”—President John F. Kennedy, Former President of the United States
Ahmud is a graduate student studying business at a college on the East Coast of the United States. His hometown of Mumbai, India, is eleven time zones and some 8,000 miles away on the other side of the world. Modern communications such as Skype, however, have allowed him to stay in touch with family and friends. He is somewhat bemused at the stereotypes of India held by a number of his classmates: “They assume I’m a follower of the Hindu faith and expect me to be wearing a turban. In fact, I was raised as a Muslim and it is my Sikh friends who wear turbans.” While Hindus in fact total over 80 percent of the Indian population, Muslims account for some 13 percent of the population, making India the country with the third largest Muslim population in the world. “People also expect me to be some sort of expert on all of India, which is a huge and incredibly diverse country. Trying to generalize about India in a few sentences is like saying New York City, New Orleans, and Los Angeles are all alike. What I do hear from my business classmates is a lot of talk about India as a rising economic power.” Part of the reason for this is that while India is geographically one-third the size of the United States, it has 1.15 billion persons compared to the U.S. population of 310 million persons.

Any serious student of international relations and world politics is required to have a basic understanding of geography. Whether we are viewing the world through the lenses of politics, economics, history, or theory, all human actions must be played out on land, sea, air, or, in some cases, space. It is tempting to believe that globalization has reduced the importance of physical geography, at least, as the far side of the globe doesn’t seem too far away given modern transportation and communication. But if anything, the perception that the world is becoming a
more interconnected place means we should be all the more aware of how divergent political, religious, and ethnic entities can have an impact on our own lives.

**PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY**

There are two basic types of geography: *physical* and *human*. Most people think of *physical geography* in terms of the use of maps to depict material manifestations of terrain: continents, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans. *Human geography* (or cultural geography), on the other hand, involves the visual depiction of human activities overlaid on physical terrain maps. A diagram depicting population density on the European continent would be an example, with each dot representing 10,000 persons. Other examples would include a map depicting locations and extent of religions, languages, and even current locations and levels of political violence around the world. What both have in common is a graphic representation of spatial concepts. Without such basic understanding, it would obviously be difficult to understand political and economic trends in international relations and world politics, let alone make sense of day-to-day events. Let’s further discuss both types of geography and their importance to understanding international relations and world politics by reference to several historical and current examples.

**Physical Geography**

As a practitioner, you will find that maps will always be important tools. Some tasks may require getting a particular map or set of maps in hard copy or electronic form. Other maps are in our heads. When someone mentions a problem or issue in North Africa, for example, do you immediately see the desert region along the Mediterranean coast divided into states following independence movements from European colonial powers? From west to east (left to right in our mind’s eye) these countries are the Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia influenced earlier by French colonialism; Libya, which was an Italian colony; and Egypt, which was under British influence.

If someone says northeast Asia, do you immediately see China, two Korean states, and Russia on the Asian mainland with the Japanese islands offshore, Taiwan further south? How about southeast Asia? Do Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Brunei, the Indonesian archipelago, Singapore, Malaysia, and Myanmar come to mind, and, if so, what can you say about them—their history, colonial experiences, present relations within regional or international organizations like ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations)?

What countries come to mind and where are they located in relation to each other when one thinks of the Pacific Islands? Down Under in the Australian subcontinent, the two main islands of New Zealand offshore? Antarctica? South Asia and the Indian Ocean? Central Asia? The Persian (or, as it is sometime called, Arab) Gulf? Europe and the North Atlantic including the Arctic region, Greenland, and Iceland? Sub-Saharan Africa? North and South America? Our purpose here is that we all no doubt have locational-geography homework to do if we are to be effective as practitioners.
Understanding physical geography didn’t particularly matter thousands of years ago when human communities were essentially localized. But as communities grew in size and expanded outward, they came into contact with other communities. **Territoriality**, the attachment to a particular geographic area under the administrative control of an overriding authority, became important not just in terms of political and military competition, but also in terms of commercial competition as trade routes developed and expanded. Growing communities desired control over their expanding physical geography.

**Seaports**  Seaports and natural or humanly developed harbors were particularly important assets historically and politically, and indeed, they remain so today. Although aviation has become an increasingly important means for transporting people and cargo, global trade of goods still depends very heavily on sealift, accompanied on land by both road and rail connections. Great powers have always depended upon navies to secure trade routes and to deploy armed forces abroad—warships and army or marine units. Indeed, water covers more than 70 percent of the earth’s surface—a fact not overlooked by naval advocates. Command of ports helped and continues to facilitate a state’s exercise of territorial authority over a geographic region.

**Transportation Routes**  Transportation at sea, on land, and in the air depends heavily on infrastructure—not just seaports and harbors, but also airports and both road and rail lines that must cross geographical challenges posed by mountains, lakes, and rivers. Since the 19th century technological advances in transportation truly have been breathtaking—from wind power driving sailing ships to steam engines powered by wood or coal, combustion engines fueled by petroleum, and now some naval ships and submarines powered with nuclear energy. Civil and military aviation made the transition after World War II from piston-engine to turboprop and later to jet engines, the latter becoming prominent not only in combat applications, but also making possible greater airlift capacity for both passengers and cargo. High-speed rail in many countries is displacing 19th- and 20th-century technologies in train travel. Automobiles and trucks are moving finally to more efficient engines; cars to hybrid, electric, and other alternatives to gasoline or diesel-combustion engines. The net effect of all these technological advances in transportation is to make the world figuratively a smaller place, physical geography no longer the obstacle it once was to crossing oceans and continents. Who maintains control of the transportation routes, however, does impact access.

**Mapping the Physical World**  Cartography, the art and science of making maps, dates back in the West to Babylonian clay tablets from about 2,300 B.C.E. and has always had military and economic implications. The ancient Greeks and Romans made serious efforts to chart their spheres of influence and empires, and the Middle Ages witnessed an increase in interest in cartography in Europe and even earlier in Arab lands. With the Renaissance and the age of exploration, maps became essential as trade routes were charted and eventually reproduced for wider dissemination with the invention of the printing press. Gerardus Mercator of Flanders (Belgium) famously developed a cylindrical projection of the world that assisted...
navigation and exploration. The scientific revolution continually improved the accuracy and quality of maps.

Beyond trade and exploration, maps were obviously useful when it came to engaging in wars of conquest and planning military campaigns. Military theorists and practitioners such as Antoine Henri de Jomini discussed in great detail military lines of operations, while Carl von Clausewitz noted the importance of logistics for any army that hoped to be successful in foreign military campaign.

Maps were essential in depicting physical geographic obstacles to conquest. Island nations such as Great Britain benefited from the protection of the English Channel. The Pyrenees mountain chain of southwestern Europe formed a natural border wall between France and Spain. The United States had an entire ocean between itself and the political competition and wars of Europe and Asia. Lack of mountains, major rivers, and other geographic barriers helps to explain the troubled history of Poland, a land of plains from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Carpathian Mountains in the south, continually invaded from both east (Russia) and west (Germany)—not to mention historic invasions by Sweden entering from the Baltic Sea in the north and Austrian imperial encroachment from the south. Also a country largely composed of flat plains and itself a creation resulting from historic conflict among great powers, Belgium was quickly invaded and occupied by Germany in both of the 20th century’s two world wars.

**Natural Resources** Physical geography is also important in drawing our attention to the location of natural resources that can be critical components of state power. Oil is the obvious example and helps to explain the Western interest in Arab lands such as Saudi Arabia where the first concession for oil exploration was signed in 1923. Minerals such as tin and tungsten from war-torn Congo in Africa are essential to the world’s laptops, GPSs, and PDAs. Congo has seen upwards of five million persons killed in civil war and violence over the past ten years, often fueled by violent competition to control these mineral resources.

**Modes of Communication** Advances in communications have also made the world ever more interconnected. Mail transit by horse-driven carriage was replaced in the 20th century by trucks and aircraft. Nineteenth-century telegraph communications, followed by the introduction of the telephone, gradually removed geographical barriers to rapid communications within countries and across national borders. Transcontinental and oceanic cables were laid, but development of Earth satellites in the last half century coupled with the digital transformation and advances in both fiber-optic and wireless transmission have so increased global reach that we now take for granted how easy and relatively inexpensive communicating globally has become. The rapid pace by which transportation, telecommunications, and digital technologies are all still moving not only removes the geographical obstacles that were so foreboding in the past, but also facilitates transnational connections in this increasingly globalized world. The removal of the physical barriers makes communication much harder to regulate, as seen with China’s and other countries’ attempts to control their citizens’ internet access.

Today much is made of the process of globalization and the supposed shrinking of the world caused, among other things, by the virtually instantaneous
Physical and Human Geography

The dissemination of ideas via the internet, the dramatic expansion of global air freight and parcel delivery services, cost-free communications such as Skype, and the ability of individuals to board planes and be on the other side of the world in less than twenty-four hours.

But physical geography still matters. Consider the following:

- One reason for U.S. concern over the North Korean missile program is the fact that the North Koreans have apparently developed a missile capable of reaching Hawaii, Alaska, and perhaps the West Coast of the United States and Canada.
- The United States’ geographically contiguous border with Mexico of over 1,900 miles running through the U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, much of it open plains and desert separated by no more than identification markers, helps to explain why so much of the illegal immigration debate revolves around that portion of the hemisphere.
- The Suez Canal in Egypt connects the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea. The canal accounts for 7.5 percent of world trade. Should the canal be blocked as it was after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Egypt did not reopen the canal until 1975), ships would have to travel around the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa, significantly adding time and expense to the transport of goods.
- The fact that Israel is geographically located in the heart of the Arab Middle East and that Hutus and Tutsis are geographically located in the same region of central Africa obviously contributes to our basic understanding of the outbreak of wars between Israel and its neighbors beginning in 1948 and the genocide in Rwanda in the mid-1990s.

In recent years there has been a renewal of interest in physical geography. For example, Georgetown University’s undergraduates in the School of Foreign Service, which accounts for most of the students who major in international politics, are required to pass a rigorous geography exam before they are allowed to graduate. For graduates to be taken seriously in government, business, or nongovernmental organizations that deal with international relations, they must know map locations and physical geography (climate, terrain, bodies of water, and waterways) in order to make sense of our globalized world. The days of knowing only the geography of your own country are history.

The early literature on international relations used to devote a great deal of time to physical geography under the heading of geopolitics. This is exemplified by the work of Sir Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), who presented a paper entitled “The Geographical Pivot Point of History” to the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1904. He argued: “As we consider this rapid review of the broader currents of history, does not a certain persistence of geographical relationship become evident? Is not the pivot region of the world’s politics that vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships?” This is the “Heartland” of the world, and Mackinder then presented his famous, if not slightly bizarre, thesis: “Who rules east Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island [Europe, Asia, Africa]; who rules the World-Island commands the World.” Such geographical determinism is frowned upon nowadays by most historians and writers on international relations. Yet Mackinder’s thesis certainly

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gopolitics: an attempt to understand the issue of national power almost exclusively in terms of physical geography
resonated throughout the Cold War as presidents and prime ministers worked to contain the Heartland-occupying Soviet Union.

Mackinder popularized the concept of geopolitics, which, at its simplest, concerns the impact of geography on politics. But it also has policy implications when it suggests strategic prescriptions when dealing with such topics as the relative importance of land and sea power or where a state should engage in strategic planning to deal with a rising power.

**Human Geography**

A basic appreciation for the international landscape of human (or cultural) geography is also essential for students of world politics. While charts and tables can list data concerning such topics as arms expenditures, numbers of nuclear weapons, or the gross domestic product (GDP) of various states, such data have a greater impact if graphically presented or overlaid on maps. An outstanding example of this approach is the *Penguin State of the World Atlas*, now in its eighth edition. This book creatively uses color-coding to depict visually the geographic location and size of such figures as casualties of war, ethnicity, religion, peacekeeping missions, refugees, warlords, militias, human trafficking, sex tourism, and international terrorism hotspots. In some cases the data are configured to depict the relative size of state populations, economies, and energy use.

**Demography**

Demography is a part of human geography that focuses on populations, providing, for example, statistics on the number of people in close to 200 states (and their respective societies). These may be aggregated by regions: Africa, Europe, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, East Asia and Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere—North, South and Central America and the Caribbean islands. Using the same global, regional, and state-and-society categories we can find data on human conditions—literacy, life expectancy, health, population growth, per capita income, economic growth, production by sector (agricultural, manufacturing, and service), and the like. Demographic data of this kind can be extremely important in identifying trends and the relation between one or another of these factors.

For example, China’s one-child policy—limiting families, particularly in urban areas, to having only one daughter or son—is a government policy designed to bring population growth into line with expected economic growth. Were Chinese authorities to allow population size to grow faster than the economy, the already difficult conditions in peasant villages would grow even worse than they already are for some 75–80 percent of the country’s population. Critics, particularly outside of China, not only object to the loss of freedom to determine the size of one’s family, but also to the draconian measures including abortion—not to mention infanticide—that result from such a policy. Although there has been some loosening of the policy in recent years (it has never been completely enforced), the government’s response is always that restraints on population growth in a country approaching 1.4 billion people are essential for China’s economic growth. Keeping population growth within bounds is also part of the country’s pursuit of an improved regional and global position in world politics.
Global Civilizations  With the end of the Cold War in 1991, a number of ambitious works developed provocative theses that reflected a view of the world in terms of human geography. Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History* argued that democracy was the logical political outcome of the evolution of international society. Indeed, democratic movements came to the fore in a number of the states of the former Soviet empire. A very different view, however, was expressed by Samuel Huntington initially in his influential article, “The Clash of Civilizations?” in the journal *Foreign Affairs* (1993) and later in his full-length book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). His thesis was that post–Cold War conflict most likely would be due to clashes among civilizations marked by major cultural differences as opposed to the ideological clash between communism (e.g., the Soviet Union and the communist bloc) and democracy (e.g., the capitalist West led by the United States) during the Cold War. As he argued:

> The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations. In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities.” ¹

The world’s major civilizations were identified by Huntington as (1) Western, (2) Latin American, (3) Islamic, (4) Sinic (Chinese), (5) Hindu, (6) Orthodox, (7) Japanese, and (8) African. All more or less have a geographic focal point. This use of *civilization* as the principal unit of analysis contrasts with the usual international relations emphasis on the classical notion of sovereign states as the key unit of analysis. His policy prescription and warning was that Western nations, collectively constituting a *civilization*, would lose out to other civilizations if they failed to recognize the irreconcilable nature of this new global competition.

Huntington’s thesis drew a fair amount of criticism to include the charge that his list of civilizations was simplistic, monolithic, and failed to take sufficient account of the tensions within “civilizations.” Most of these critics (to include the authors of this book) prefer to speak of *state* and *society* as units of analysis, focusing not on alleged clashes between or among civilizations, but rather on cultural, economic, social, political, and other similarities and differences. Our purpose is simply to note that viewing world politics from a human-geography perspective is useful, but this requires an understanding of some of the major transnational trends that involve what we call identity politics.

**Identities**  Questions relating to religious, national, ethnic, tribal, clan, or other human identities are universal. Human beings are social creatures, as Aristotle observed, a fact that has both up and down sides. For the most part, we live and work together cooperatively, divided only by relatively small differences or conflicts. The great achievements of humankind have depended on our ability to pool talents and resources in social groups of one kind or another. At the same time, however, human beings who are organized into separate, conflicting groups can be the source of mutually destructive activities, as has been evident in recent years in parts of Africa and Asia.

An ongoing debate revolves around the question of whether identities are essentially primordial in origin, passed down through generations and a given almost as much as our genetics. Conversely, social constructivists argue that identities are formed, created, malleable, and subject to change and self-definition. Where one comes down on this issue has a dramatic impact on whether one is pessimistic or optimistic about the ability of groupings of individuals to live in relative harmony. From the perspective of international relations and world politics, the world is conventionally divided into single nation-states, multinational states, and nations dispersed in two or more states. Individuals may derive a sense of security or other value from having a particular national or ethnic identity, but this ethnic identification may make others, particularly minority groups, feel insecure. Mutually exclusive communities within, between, or across state boundaries appear to be the source of conflict based on these national, ethnic, religious, historical and cultural, racial and physical, or other differences. Conflicts may smolder for decades and even centuries, breaking out as interstate or civil wars, insurgencies, terrorism, or other forms of revolutionary violence.

One of the most vexing and important issues in world politics at the beginning of the 21st century involves conflicts relating to state sovereignty and national identity. Two interrelated questions involving physical and human geography arise:

- In the name of upholding the concept of state sovereignty, should the aspirations of a minority ethnic group for an independent country be ignored?
- On the other hand, if national self-determination is embraced across the board, then will the world witness increasing geographic fragmentation of the international state system? If so, is this such a bad thing in the age of globalization?

Such questions are not part of an abstract academic enterprise. For example, should all ethnic minorities within the boundaries of the current Russian state be granted independence? What about African tribes, which number literally in the thousands and whose communities cross many sovereign-state borders?

We devote the rest of this chapter to key aspects of human geography—religion followed by a discussion of nationality and ethnicity. We illustrate the obvious fact that the world is replete with conflicts and controversies related to religion, nationality, and ethnicity. These are all played out on the geographic terrain. We then turn to a discussion of approaches designed to foster peace among differing religions and nationalities.

**WORLDWIDE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

One impact of the Cold War was to overshadow the role of religion in global politics. Although from the perspective of some in the West the Cold War was a battle between Christianity and other religions against “godless communism,” most people saw it in nonreligious terms as a battle between two visions of the appropriate political and economic forms of governance—Western-style democracy and market capitalism versus centrally directed, state-socialist or communist economies.

Historically, however, religion has at times played a major role in international politics. Christian crusaders attempted to “liberate” the Holy Land in the Middle
Ages and dominate that geographic region. Conversely, Muslims fought to repel the “infidels” and retain sovereignty over the territory. The 17th-century Thirty Years’ War on the continent and the English civil war also concerned significant religious issues involving Protestants versus Catholics as well as various countries’ desires to improve their political positions by expanding their geographic reach. Not confined to Europe, religious conflict spread to the western hemisphere and later to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, as Protestant and Catholic missionaries competed with each other in a quest to “save the souls” of indigenous peoples they regarded rather uncharitably as “heathens.”

In more recent times, the Iranian revolution of 1978–1979 and the coming to power of Shiite Muslim religious leaders were seen as harbingers of things to come. But observers of international relations almost universally failed to foresee the significant challenge to modern, secular regimes posed by a global resurgence at the end of the 20th century of religious ideas and movements. What is fascinating about this global phenomenon is that it has occurred within diverse cultures, different types of political systems, and in countries with varying levels of economic development. In this regard, Figure 4.1 graphs the relative numbers of people who identify with one of the major religions with worldwide following.

**FIGURE 4.1**
Religions of the World

Source: Based on data in the 1997 Britannica Book of the Year (Chicago: 1997), 311.
The global rediscovery of religion has some obvious and some contradictory implications. First, transnational organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, and the Society for the Propagation of Islam presumably would assume more important roles. The pronouncements of various religious organizations over the years, of course, supposedly have had universal application, no matter where the flock may reside. But thanks to the internet, Skype, and other modern telecommunications technologies, religious organizations have found it even easier to communicate their messages. Their global religious networks reach out across and beyond the more confining physical borders of states. It seems, however, that it is not the mainstream religions that have benefited most from the communications revolution, but rather some of the smaller, more extreme elements who preach religious intolerance, if not hate, toward adherents of other religious faiths.

Second, transnational religious movements and beliefs also strengthen the development of transnational identities not constrained either by state borders or secular, nonreligious forms of nationalism. For some, religious identity is more important than any particular national identity. To these people, loyalty to their faith comes first with the state a more distant second or third.

Third, if such a trend continues, its implications for global conflict are uncertain. On the one hand, some religious movements have spearheaded peace movements and crusades for human rights and justice. On the other hand, as discussed above, Samuel Huntington suggested that religious identity could be a key component of a broader clash of civilizations with the fault lines of conflict, for example, between civilizations or cultures influenced by Judeo-Christian religious traditions on the one hand and those influenced by Islam on the other—not to mention periods of intercommunal strife between peoples of Buddhist and Hindu identities that have occurred in Sri Lanka.

**Religion and International Relations Theory**

In this section we explore briefly and apply the images or understandings in international relations theory discussed in Chapter 2 to religion as a factor in domestic or international politics. We start with realism, liberalism, the English School, and economic structuralism as images and then add some of the interpretive understandings offered by constructivists, feminists, postmodernists, and critical theorists.

From a realist perspective, religion remains less important than other factors in relations among states. While religious groups will undoubtedly continue to influence government policies around the globe, most realists argue that the governments themselves will continue to operate in international politics primarily on the basis of national interests and security. Even the Iranian and the now defunct Afghani Taliban governments, for all their Islamist pronouncements, have used religion not as the exclusive road map for foreign policy, but rather as a means to legitimate among their followers the pursuit of power linked to both domestic and foreign policy objectives. Thus, to realists, power and national interest remain the dominant factors—essentially secular objectives cast in religious garb in order to make them more appealing to peoples whose support they seek.
Religious diversity can be a positive element not inevitably associated with conflict, as liberals are prone to point out. It is one of the defining elements of an emerging global civil society. To liberals, national or other common identities that transcend religious or ethnic differences already exist in many countries and, over time, can be constructed in others. Moreover, international, transnational, and nongovernmental organizations can facilitate development over time of greater understanding, tolerance, and even acceptance of religious diversity within and across national boundaries. Indeed, to liberals increasing globalization may reduce or ameliorate conflict among religious groups professing different faiths.

A synthesis of these realist and liberal understandings can be found in the English School that combines the insights of Hobbes on power and balance of power as core factors in international politics with the rule-oriented approach offered by Grotius as a remedy to the ongoing problem of finding order in international society. These rules, compatible as they are with the essentially secular, enlightened self-interests of states, often have religious or moral underpinnings, which Grotius and scholars following in his path have explored. That said, secular factors are most prominent in international society, although some in the English School, following Kant, see the global norms with morally binding content accompanying the transition from an international to what will become a world society. Religion as such is not explicitly part of this construction, but the idea of a world society built on observance of morally binding norms (as opposed merely to agreed rules based on interest) is expressed in secular terms, but is not without its religious underpinnings. Critics within the English School, wedded as they are to the idea of international society, are prone to see those anticipating the emergence of world society as idealistic—religious utopianism expressed in secular terms.

For economic structuralists influenced by Karl Marx, economic class identities are what dominate in both domestic and international politics. Marxists have always recognized (and bemoaned) the pervasive power of religion as an “opiate” to induce “false consciousness” on the part of the working class, effectively subordinating them to the will of the owners (and managers) of capital who use state power and authority to secure their dominance. More often than not, churches usually side with the ruling powers and thus legitimize their dominance over mass publics.

Social constructivists see religious identity as something socially constructed, not a given. It is acquired, not present at birth. There is nothing inherently violent and warlike or pacifist and peace-oriented about any particular religion apart from the meanings those who construct these understandings give them. These meanings do matter, of course, since religious and cultural understandings are ideational factors that impact the ways and means by which both domestic and international politics are conducted.

Skeptical of churches or organized religions that relegate women to the generally submissive, supportive roles customarily assigned to women, many feminists see even mainstream religions reinforcing the already militant, masculinist tendencies found cross-culturally among political leaders—a perspective that contributes to exacerbating intercommunal strife and acceptance of war as somehow the answer to human conflicts. Instead of settling matters through force of arms, religious understandings that favor peaceful remedies are more likely to inspire
leaders to pursue conflict resolution or, at least, management of these differences short of resorting to violent means.

Finally, postmodernists and critical theorists see religion—embedded as it is in culture—as worthy of research precisely because written and spoken religious words and phrases contain important meanings we need to unpack if we are to grasp their political significance. It is the critical theorist who takes this inquiry to the next step—examining the extent to which religious pronouncements and the beliefs they foster among their followers are cover stories for underlying political realities of power and dominance. Like Marx to whom many acknowledge an intellectual debt, many critical theorists tend to see religion advanced institutionally by churches or other religious forms of organization as legitimating the status quo among their followers, thus sustaining the various forms human exploitation takes, whether within a particular state and society or among them in their international relations.

**Overview of the Major Religious Traditions**

The five major religious traditions representing over 4.5 billion people are comprised of the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, with more than 2 billion people influenced by their teachings from India to China, Korea, and Japan; and the Western religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with more than 2.5 billion in their ranks or directly influenced by them worldwide. The remaining human population on Earth fall outside these five traditions, their spiritual identities found in polytheistic or other naturalist understandings grounded deeply in the human experience over the millennia.

Hinduism is itself a complex aggregation of many different sects with different theological understandings that have developed over several millennia. Likewise, Buddhism has divided into different strains: Theravada and Mahayana, the two major branches—the former in Sri Lanka and much of southeast Asia, and the latter in most of northeast Asia. Buddhism in China is mixed culturally with Confucian and Taoist understandings, also influenced by the secularism of the communist revolutionary period. Japan alone is home to four schools of Buddhism. Moreover, these Japanese Buddhist divisions are overlaid not only with the same Confucian and Taoist philosophies that spread historically from China to Japan, but also with indigenous Shinto religious understandings.

The Shinto religion was impacted by political ambition when, in the late 1800s, Emperor Meiji declared Shinto the state religion and himself its divine leader. His imperialistic perspectives set Japan on a militaristic path and eventually led to the dismantling of the State Shinto religion by the Allied Forces after World War II. Only now is the Shinto religion reemerging in Japan. When one considers cultural differences among followers in many countries, different theological understandings, and other political factors, it is not surprising that all of the five major religions (not to mention those with smaller followings) split into many, sometimes competing denominations or sects.

Sometimes we easily jump to wrong conclusions about particular religions being more or less warlike. In fact, human conflict and warfare can be found in peoples of all faiths. Both biblical history and current events makes clear that security
of the Jewish people has been an elusive quest over the millennia. More blood was shed in the three decades between the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the end of World War II in 1945 in predominantly Christian Europe (either in actual numbers or in proportion to population size) than ever occurred before then or since. For its part, the Islamic world has its own set of experiences, caught historically between imperial struggles of the Ottoman and Russian empires, later European colonial competition for spheres of influence, and in recent decades conflicts among themselves and wars or the threat of war with Israel.

Interstate conflict between India, a predominantly Hindu country, and Muslim Pakistan has continued since the end of the British imperial presence in 1948 when the country was partitioned at independence, creating separate Muslim areas in the west (Pakistan) and the east (now Bangladesh). Conflict between Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka makes clear the universality of intercommunal strife that can occur within and across all of the five major religious identities. Put another way, the thesis that some religions are more warlike than others doesn’t stand the empirical test. Human beings seemingly engage in conflicts and use force—sometimes even leading to genocide—against one another regardless of religious identity or theological conviction.

**Culture and Religious Beliefs**

Religions are deeply embedded in cultures and, as such, influence both believers and nonbelievers. The place of religion as part of culture in society has been compared metaphorically to the cat in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Sometimes you see the cat, sometimes the cat seems to dissolve to only its smile, but the cat is always there! Even in more secular societies where religion is separated from politics or the affairs of state, the values people hold often have deep religious underpinnings.

Reflecting different interpretations that developed historically, each of these religions has deep divisions among adherents who identify with particular denominations or sects. Judaism, for example, is divided into orthodox, conservative, and reformed (as well as more secular) communities. From its earliest days, Christianity included many different sets of interpretations. The first major split occurred in Europe in 1054 C.E. between the church in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) and the pre-Reformation church in Rome. Some four centuries later, the Reformation quickly spread in the northern states of western Europe. The Reformation began in Germany when, in 1520, Luther posted his theses and in England, in 1533, when Henry VIII separated the English church from Rome. Henry VIII’s separation may have had as much to do with power and land ownership as it did with his desire to divorce his wife, a right he claimed that was denied by the papacy in Rome. Before the split, the Roman Catholic Church owned the majority of land within Henry’s kingdom. Henry separated from the Church and the Pope, seized the Church’s assets, formed the Church of England, and declared himself the head of his new church. The outcome of these divisions in England and Germany was a further split in Christianity between a post-Reformation Roman Catholicism and various Protestant denominations that appeared throughout Europe and America, splitting further over time into many other sects.
If we are to understand the culturally diverse people with whom we deal in a globalized world—whether in business, government, or socially—knowing and respecting the beliefs of others are essential components of the professional’s toolkit. We each have a right to our own religious beliefs or, alternatively, to choose not to follow any of these traditions. As professionals, however, if we are to navigate successfully in a world of religious diversity, all of us can develop tolerance and acceptance of religious diversity in the world around us. Fuller understanding of these religions, of course, goes well beyond the space we can allocate here to this important topic. We apologize that we are only able to present a short overview of four of these culturally rich religious traditions.

Given the misunderstandings about the Islamic religion that are rampant in other parts of the world, we’ve given more attention to it here. With one out of every five human beings identifying as Muslim, international relations practitioners need to know and understand the extraordinarily important role Islam plays both at the surface and subsurface of politics, economics, and other social matters in societies from Morocco in the West to western China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and even some islands in the Philippine archipelago in the East. With ongoing globalization, the numbers of Muslims in Europe, the Americas, and other countries also have increased substantially. We encourage readers to be like the authors—still seeking to know more about not only all of these world religions and the denominations or sects that divide them, but also the many other religious or philosophical currents present in and across the societies in which we live. As both professionals and fellow human beings, we need to know how other people think.

**Eastern Religious Traditions**

Hinduism is, perhaps, the oldest of the major religious traditions with ancient roots in prehistoric India more than five millennia B.C.E. This ancient Indian foundational religion also saw the emergence of Buddhism half a millennium before the birth of Jesus. Deeply set in the cultures of non-Islamic India, Hinduism does not have the degree of codification of beliefs one finds in a generally accepted creed or formal teachings from religious authorities.

Hinduism is to many, however, more a “way of life” with both cultural and philosophical roots. As such, the religious tradition is also more open to multiple interpretations on metaphysical questions relating to one’s soul or spirit (Atman) to God (referred to by some as Vishnu) and other heavenly figures. Many Hindus take a more polytheistic view—multiple gods or God in many forms, perhaps linking Vishnu to two other gods—Brahma and Shiva. In this three-part formulation are Brahma, the god of creation, Vishnu, the great global spirit, and Shiva, a complex figure seen in one or another interpretation as purifier, transformer, or, perhaps, destroyer of ignorance—the three god-figures referred to as a triad or Trimurti. Different Hindu sects elevate one or another of these gods over the others.

More important for our purposes here, however, are the principles that define the Hindu way of life. Dharma refers in effect to the ethics of right conduct—the duties, for example, one has in relationships with others; artha, the search in life to prosper and achieve economic well-being; kama, satisfying the sensual needs in life; and moksha—freedom or liberation from suffering in the successive process
of reincarnation from one life to the next. One achieves through spiritual development, which for many Hindu believers brings the soul into an identity with the godliness of brahma—a heavenly state of nirvana. The term karma captures cause-effect relations linking one’s deeds to bearing the consequences of one’s actions. In this regard, the religion also provides guidance or suggested methods (yogas) for attaining these lofty ends in one’s life—right conduct in relationships with others, knowledge or wisdom, meditation that develops the mind, and devoted love that links a person to a supreme being.

Born in this Hindu cultural context, Siddhārtha Gautama (perhaps 566–483 B.C.E.) became the Buddha—the enlightened or awakened one who set aside human concerns for material things, discovering in his meditations the ways to get beyond human suffering that begins at birth and continues throughout our lives. He found the origin of suffering in our cravings that, if set aside, can get us beyond this human travail. Buddhists thus focus more on how human beings deal with life’s processes than on questions of God and eternity that often are central concerns in other religions. We seek enlightenment, nirvana—becoming a Buddha means achieving perfect enlightenment that typically occurs over the course of several lifetimes. We carry marks of our past lives as we proceed—one on the way to becoming a Buddha is referred to as bodhisattva.

### CASE & POINT | Religious Intolerance

**CASE** Religious intolerance, of course, is not restricted to Muslim jihadists. It is a global, human problem involving peoples identified with all (or, in some cases, none) of these religious traditions. In this regard, murder, rape, torture, and other forms of injustice are contrary theologically to all five religious traditions. Nevertheless, contrary to religious teachings:

- In 2002 we witnessed Hindus in Gujarat, India, killing several hundred Muslims with the collaboration of local officials.
- Muslims and Hindus have attacked each other in the disputed Kashmir region between India and Pakistan over more than half a century since the partition of India at independence from Britain in 1948.
- Apparently with government backing, Sinhalese of Buddhist identity, the majority in Sri Lanka, conducted genocide against Hindus as a response to terrorist and other violent actions by the “Tamil Tigers”—a decades-long insurgency reacting against discrimination perpetrated against the Hindu minority in the small island state.
- Genocide in the former Yugoslavia in World War II and, more recently, in the 1990s, cost the lives of both Muslims and Christians.
- Semitic peoples—both Jews and Arabs, Muslim or Christian—all too often have been the victims of discrimination that sometimes takes lethal form.
  1. The Holocaust (or Shoah) killed more than six million Jews in the late 1930s and early 1940s during World War II.
  2. Many Palestinian Arabs were dispossessed of their lands upon creation of Israel as a Jewish state, settlement of this issue along with Israeli settlements in lands taken by force in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war remaining major obstacles in the peace process between the two communities.
- Many in Western countries have a dangerous tendency to equate all of Islam with terrorism when, in fact, only a very small number of Muslims engage in such activity, usually for political or other purposes.

**POINT** It is not religion or religious teachings per se, but rather the use of them by people to serve their own purposes that has been so corrosive of the human condition worldwide.
From the Buddha’s meditations, he offered eight very practical prescriptions—the Noble Eightfold Path that helps followers put suffering behind them:

a. WISDOM
   1. A correct understanding—seeing things as they really are, not as they may appear to be
   2. Acting with the right intention

b. ETHICAL BEHAVIOR
   1. Truthful speech
   2. Right actions that avoid harm
   3. Everyday work—a livelihood that causes no harm

c. CONCENTRATION—DEVELOPING THE MIND
   1. Genuine effort to improve
   2. Mindfulness—paying attention and looking within oneself
   3. Meditation—right concentration

Western Religious Traditions

Monotheism—belief in a single god or creator—is essentially a Western idea found in Egypt during the seventeen-year reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten, who died about 1334 or 1336 B.C.E. This radical departure from Egypt’s polytheistic tradition was reversed after Akhenaten’s death, but the idea was not lost. Indeed, it was fully developed in the Judaic tradition that preceded both Christianity and Islam.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims constitute the grouping of three Western religions that share belief in a single creator. Most historians see Judaism as a recognizable religion three millennia ago, although it is difficult to specify precisely when Judaism emerged. A matrilineal passing of the Jewish identity is core to the Judaic tradition—regardless of whatever a father’s religious identity might be, one is a Jew if one’s mother is a Jew. Unlike both Christians and Muslims, Jews generally do not proselytize or try to convert followers. They believe Abraham made a covenant with God, who identified them as “chosen” people. In this covenant, Abraham concurred that henceforth all males would be circumcised as a mark of their select standing before God.

Jesus lived just over two millennia ago. As a monotheistic religion, Christianity initially was a sect of Judaism in the 1st century after the death of Jesus. Sacred books of the Judaic tradition were retained as an “Old” Testament, but new ones were selected from many that were written to constitute what became a “New” Testament—the new covenant that identified believers and followers of Jesus, displacing the earlier Abrahamic covenant with God. The new Christian theology articulated in the Nicene Creed was not finally agreed upon until the 4th century. The document affirmed monotheistic belief in a single God, but one in three divine persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This most significant departure from the Judaic tradition was the belief in the divinity of Jesus as an integral part of a godly Trinity.

This belief so central to Christians marked a permanent theological breach between Judaism and Christianity. In this respect, Islam shares with Judaism an understanding of Jesus as a holy man—to Muslims he is a prophet or messenger.
of Allah, not God himself. These three Western religions are all monotheistic, but each defined its monotheism separately as each historically took its place on the world stage.

Seeing itself as something of a capstone of the three Western religions—Muhammad the last of Allah’s messengers—Islam accepts the holy scriptures of both Judaism and Christianity. The Bible is foundational to the Qur’an and other Islamic scriptures. As such, the biblical prophets recognized by Islam start with Adam and end with Jesus and Muhammad. In the Islamic tradition, both Jews and Christians are also “people of the Book,” accorded mutual respect for being so.

Of the ancient prophets it is Abraham and his son, Ishmael, who have a particular place of distinction among Muslims, particularly those with Arab identity. In the tradition accepted by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, one of Abraham’s wives, Hagar, gave birth to Ishmael, who led his Arab brothers and sisters into the desert where they live to the present day—many in large cities, of course. Ishmael’s half brother, Isaac, was born of Abraham’s first wife, Sarah. Isaac and, later, his son, Jacob, were the early Jewish patriarchs in a long line of descent from Abraham. As constructivists remind us, human identities often stand on traditions we internalize. If one accepts this tradition, Jews and Arabs could see themselves as cousins.

The Koran (in some transliterations from Arabic, the Qur’an) is at the core of Islam, understood to be the word of God passed by the angel Gabriel to the
prophet Muhammad. Muslims annually celebrate this enlightenment of Muhammad in the holy days of Ramadan. Written in Arabic, the Koran is the most sacred of texts to Muslims. Anyone able to read Arabic can experience the poetry and prose of the *Koran* as a work of great literary art.

To Muslims, Muhammad is the last of the prophets. The belief that there is only one God named *Allah* (the name in Arabic for God) was an Islamic reaction not only to polytheistic religions then prominent in the Middle East, but also to the Christian belief of God as a trinity of three divine persons. Accordingly, among their obligations the first is that all Muslims are to recite the *Shahadah*—a clear, unambiguous statement of faith: “I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.” Indeed, reciting this statement is the most important obligation in Islam.

Even in ordinary conversation, when Muslims say they are hoping or planning for something to happen, they frequently add the word *Insha’llah*—“if it is God’s will,” or more simply “God willing.” Another common expression in everyday Arabic is *Alhumdulillah*, or “Praise God.” Acknowledging God’s supremacy over human beings or seeing oneself, correctly or otherwise, as carrying out God’s will may lead one to assert “*Allah Akhbar!*”—“God the Almighty!” Of course, such phrases—“God willing, praise be to God, and Almighty God”—are by no means foreign to many devout or practicing Christians and Jews. The three religions are, after all, cut from the same Western religious cloth deeply grounded in Middle East traditions that extend over several millennia.

Muslims also have four other duties. One is to pray five times a day (dawn, noon, midafternoon, dusk, and before midnight but after darkness has set in), normally with head covered, shoes off, and kneeling on a carpet in the direction of the holy city of Mecca where Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. In earlier times, many Christians did much the same thing—in addition to prayer upon rising and going to bed at night, they prayed the *Angelus*, the call to prayer customarily signaled by the ringing of church bells at the beginning of the workday, at noon, and upon leaving the fields or other place of employment at dusk.

Another Islamic obligation is to give alms or charitable contributions, thus putting more abstract notions of generosity and humanitarianism routinely into practice. For those financially able, contributions should be at least 1/40th or 2.5 percent of one’s total wealth; using total wealth rather than annual income as a base often means a much greater sacrifice by the truly wealthy than a tithe based on 10 percent of annual income typically required in some Christian or other religious communities. Moreover, one is to fast in daytime (from dawn to dusk) as an act of self-denial during the holy month of Ramadan. Finally, at least once in one’s life, one should make the *Hajj*—a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia—if one can. The *Kaabah* is located there—a sanctuary or small cubelike structure in the Great Mosque of Mecca that contains the sacred black stone believed to have been given by God to the patriarch Abraham, father to both the Arabs and the Israelites.

God’s guidance and the rules by which one is to live one’s life are to be found not only in the *Koran* but also the life of Muhammad in the *Hadith* (sayings) and *Sunnah* (deeds) of the Prophet. Upon these sources rests the *Shariah*, or Islamic law, that extends beyond the mosque in many Muslim countries to society as a whole.
whole. To be a Muslim is to be “one who submits”—the meaning of *Muslim*—to the will of God. As with other religions, culture often matters in defining how Muslims actually practice their religion in daily life. How the *Shariah* is interpreted is also subject to cultural variations with some interpretations differing across the vast Islamic world.

Islam not only allows but also encourages trade and commerce so long as transactions between buyer and seller are just or equitable. Indeed, along with conquest, trade was a most important vehicle for the rapid spread of Islam to the far reaches of the world in the 7th, 8th, and subsequent centuries. In this understanding, so long as one is honest or just, to become wealthy through commerce is a good thing, pleasing to God. That said, much as in pre-Reformation Christian communities, making money through lending and charging interest is contrary to Islamic teaching. Mobilizing capital for investment through equity shares, joint ventures, or other creative approaches thus avoids direct loans for which interest would have to be paid.

The *Koran*’s opening command that one should read and thus educate the mind exemplifies the very down-to-earth nature of the religion. Islam is concerned with the affairs of day-to-day living, including both work and commercial activities. This interest in practicality underscores Islam’s deep, religiously based commitment to knowledge and explains why Euclidian geometry and the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greeks were retained throughout the Muslim period in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world long after the fall of the Roman Empire and the European “dark ages” that followed.

This created a favorable academic environment that no doubt contributed to discovering algebra and the concept of zero in mathematics; perfecting an ability to perform cataract removal and other delicate surgeries unheard of in Europe during the late Middle Ages; developing a medical art and science that understood details of human anatomy—skeletal, nervous, and circulatory systems. By the early 11th century Islamic scholars already had found fault with the ancient Greek Ptolemaic view of Earth as the universe’s center, an understanding held long before formulations of a solar system offered by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543) and his later Italian counterpart Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). Consistent with this commitment to knowledge, great universities were established in Damascus, Baghdad, Bukhara, Seville and Cordoba in Spain, and Cairo (which became the intellectual center for Islam).

As with Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism, Islam also has its sectarian divisions. Most Muslims are *Sunni*; however, most in Iran are *Shiah*, a division that dates from a dispute on succession to the Prophet in the century after Muhammad’s death. Shiah Islam holds that Ali was selected by Muhammad as his successor, a claim disputed by Sunnis. Ali was succeeded in the line of the Prophet by other *imams* (leaders), the twelfth being Muhammad al Mahdi, whom Shiites believe disappeared but never died; his immanent presence is understood as a source of guidance to the present-day religious leadership.

Indeed, the Islamic clergy plays an important role, particularly in the Shiite understanding of Islam. The Shiites believe Mahdi eventually shall reappear one day to establish a new Islamic golden age. Although different in details, this belief is similar in some respects to the Judaic belief in the coming of a messiah or the

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Sunni ■ largest of the two great divisions of Islam

Shiah ■ second largest of the two great divisions of Islam
Countries with 90% to 100% Islamic population
Gambia, Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Albania, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia

Countries with 50% to 90% Islamic population
Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Chad, Algeria, Mauritania, Libya, Egypt, Djibouti, Somalia, Albania, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

FIGURE 4.3
The Islamic World
Christian belief in the second coming of Jesus (also accepted by Muslims). Most Sunnis, although they accept the second coming of Jesus, reject the Shi’ah belief in the immanent presence of Mahdi as heretical. With a few exceptions, Sunnis also place much less emphasis on the clerical role in daily life.

The Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia takes a very strict Sunni Islamic fundamentalist view and disagrees with the Shi’ah and Sufi (a more mystical approach) interpretations of Islam. Influences from other cultures and what they perceive to be false interpretations of the Koran are to be eliminated. Particularly in rural areas of the desert kingdom, clergy educate the populace religiously and enforce compliance with the Shariah, informed as it is by this particular interpretation of the Koran, Hadith, and Sunnah. Religious leaders authorized to do so from time to time when circumstances dictate may issue a decree (or fatwah) for religious guidance on various topics to include calling for jihad or holy struggle as against infidels, whether non-Muslims or Muslims who have strayed from their religious obligations.

The establishment of madrassas, or religious schools, is seen by many faithful as a blessing. A large number are funded by Saudi Wahhabists in countries such as Pakistan where public schools are often poor or nonexistent, and the madrassas provide meals for the young boys who attend. The curriculum, however, essentially emphasizes the rote memorization of the Koran and only educates men. It was out of such madrassas that the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, and a number of his associates emerged. While much is made of the potential of conflict between Islam and other faiths, of equal concern should be the internal struggle within Islam. Muslim fanatics, or jihadists like al-Qaeda, have carried out fearful acts of violence in the name of Islam, and voices have been raised that such persons are threatening to hijack Islam and use it to justify their extreme worldview.

**NATIONS AND STATES**

While the role of religion in international politics seemingly only recently has been rediscovered, the concepts of nation and state have been at the forefront of studies of global politics for years. These are examples of human geography: religion, nation and state—all social constructions. A certain amount of confusion, however, continues to exist over their meanings and the meanings of related terms.

The terms nation and state are frequently used interchangeably as if they were synonyms. To use the terms this way, however, is to miss important differences. The term state is a legal concept that refers to a population administered by a government or other administrative authority on a given territory with a claim to sovereignty recognized by other sovereign states. Therefore a state is depicted as a geographical entity on a map and is an example of physical geography. When a particular state is composed of a single nation or people with a common identity, we enter the realm of human geography. We call it a nation-state because the people who compose the “nation” live on the geographic territory of that “state.” Nation and state may be coterminous or overlapping, as in the United States where most of the people consider themselves to be American, notwithstanding the diversity of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences among them.
The Kaabah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is the most sacred site in Islam. The Koran states it was constructed by Abraham and his son Ishmael. A visit to it is part of the hajj or pilgrimage for Muslims. The concentration of Muslims in various parts of the world such as Indonesia, South Asia, and the Middle East is an example of human geography.

This slideshow depicts two types of geography—physical and human. Oil, critical to the world economy, was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938. Until recent claims by Venezuela, the Saudi reserves were the largest in the world, accounting for one-fifth of the world’s total.
Geography plays an important role in a state’s security. The development of long-range missiles by North Korea is of concern to neighbors such as Japan, but also the United States as North Korea continues to develop its missile capabilities.

War is the most destructive of all human activities. Whether a civil war or a war among states, its ravages can be depicted on a map of the world. In this photo an anti-Kaddafi rebel examines a military aircraft destroyed by NATO forces prior to Kaddafi’s death.
Race refers to identifiable physical differences used to categorize people, whether or not individuals share a common identity. Although race can be a basis for identity, it is also a very problematic basis for establishing unity. Racial distinctions that are used to justify divisiveness, discrimination, or unequal treatment are common enough. In the extreme, racism can also lead to genocide—the mass murder of people because of their race or other identity. Because of this, many prefer not to draw racial distinctions among peoples at all; it is better from this perspective to identify only with the human race. Focusing on a common humanity avoids the scourge of racism that may come from accentuating separate identities based on physical or other differences.

The distinction between a nation and an ethnic group is often difficult to make. One reason is that the terms are subjective; people themselves are the ones who make the choice when they define their identities in either national or ethnic terms. Adding to the confusion, the two terms are frequently used interchangeably. In the United States, people tend to identify nationally as Americans while at the same time holding other ethnic identities that define them as individuals or groups within society.

Nationality involves a significant degree of self-definition and refers to a people with a sense of common identity, if not destiny. In other words, a nation is whatever a group of people says it is. This common identity may be the result of such diverse factors as race, ethnicity, religion, culture, shared historical experiences, or some combination of these. When this common identity has political consequences and serves as a basis for national mobilization, the result is nationalism.

Constructivists remind us that when we consider race, ethnicity, national, or other forms of identity, we are talking about social constructions. These distinctions do not exist in nature, but have become part of a human narrative. When we deconstruct these narratives, as postmodernists are prone to do, we find that physical or other differences are not decisive in drawing discriminatory distinctions. More often than not, they amount to establishing a community’s own identity by defining an “other” as being somehow different.

Matters get even worse, of course, when this “other” community is described not only as different, but also inferior to one’s own community—all of which has been constructed. Unfortunately, this is not just abstract, but as discussed below, becomes dangerous when different communities view themselves as mutually exclusive—having few, if any, links that would bring them together as fellow human beings. Intercommunal violence is often the expected outcome when policymakers foster these mutually exclusive constructions or allow them to simmer for years, perhaps decades or longer.

Nationalism

The birth of modern nationalism is generally traced back to the 18th century. More than a mere change of political regime and authorities, the French Revolution that began in 1789 was a watershed of political ideas and ideologies—some democratic and others authoritarian—that would take root throughout Europe and later spread primarily through colonialism throughout the rest of the world. The mobilization of the masses in politics, which had previously been the exclusive
domain of upper classes or elites, was one important legacy; nationalism was another.

Local and even national identities were not new to Europe. In the 15th century, Machiavelli had written in The Prince that the ruler of the city of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici, needed to use his resources to unify Italy and thus avoid continual warfare among Italian city-states and invasion or other intrusions by France and Spain. Because they were without unity, Machiavelli observed rather emotionally that Italians had been “more enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, and more scattered than the Athenians.” They were “without a head, without order, beaten, despoiled, lacerated, and overrun,” having “suffered ruin of every kind.”  

Machiavelli is honored in present-day Florence for having been among the first advocates of Italian unity.

In fact, however, unification of Italy would have to wait until the 1880s. It was the French in their revolution and its aftermath who first put to practical use the notion of nationalism to inspire an entire nation of people to act as a unit. This idea dominated much of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In past centuries, French and English kings had raised armies to fight one another, but they had relied heavily on professionals or mercenaries in their employ. Departing from this tradition, Oliver Cromwell’s “new model army” was raised from the general population during the 1640s to fight the king’s forces in the English civil war. This very successful approach was used to fill the ranks of Napoleon’s mass armies as they set forth on military campaigns across the European continent. The French employed a draft—conscription for national service (the levée en masse)—as an effective means to raise popular armies galvanized in their fervor by nationalism and nationalist appeals. It was a model followed in Europe and elsewhere, often with disastrous consequences, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Nationalism can be a benign force or even make a contribution to peace, as when fostering a common national identity within a geographically bounded state, and is used to overcome conflicts in an ethnically or racially diverse population. Nationalism can be a basis for improving the welfare of the people within a state and society. It has also been used to unify a people and lead to the formation of a single nation-state, as was true in Germany and Italy in the 1870s and 1880s and Israel in 1948.

The Italian patriot and revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) and the Hungarian Jewish newspaper correspondent Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) are representative of writers in the 19th-century nationalist genre.  

Mazzini argued that God had “divided humanity into distinct groups upon the face of our globe, and thus planted the seeds of nations.” He wrote that Italians were a people “speaking the same language, endowed with the same tendencies, and educated by the same historic tradition” and Italy “the home that God has given us, placing therein a numerous family we love and are loved by, and with which we have a more intimate and quicker communion of feeling and thought than with others.”

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In a similar line of argumentation, Herzl asserted that Jews throughout the world “are a people—one people.” He and fellow Jewish nationalists, or Zionists, referring to ancient biblical lands that were home to the Israelites, called for “restoration of the Jewish State.” Observing that “no nation on earth has endured such struggles and sufferings,” he saw “the distinctive nationality of the Jews” as best preserved within a Jewish state.

Early 19th-century nationalism in Latin America took the form of independence movements that ended Spanish and Portuguese empires there. Nationalist political movements in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s also succeeded in ending European colonial rule in most of Africa and Asia, thus creating new states in these geographic regions.

Nationalism, however, also can serve darker purposes when it is used at the expense of others and contributes to civil strife and warfare. In these circumstances, there is a mutual exclusivity or intolerance of differing national and ethnic groups. Extreme nationalism, often expressed by those feeling that their people have been oppressed, usually fosters an intolerance of others, particularly if they are seen as the oppressors.

In some cases, as in Germany during the 1930s, the extreme-nationalist appeal may take the illusory form that the oppressed are actually a superior people who have been downtrodden unjustly by so-called inferiors. Adolf Hitler’s 20th-century ultranationalist and racist supremacy arguments went well beyond those of Johann Fichte (1762–1814) and other 18th- and 19th-century German nationalist writers. Hitler (1889–1945) and his National Socialist movement portrayed Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and other non-Germanic peoples as racially and culturally inferior. Germans were said to be Aryans—a “master race”—who deserved to be treated as such and given the territory needed to expand and grow. In certain regions, this geographic expansion led to the elimination of the indigenous population. Nationalism pushed to this racist extreme was the rationale used in an attempt to “justify” Germany’s aggression against non-German nation-states in World War II and the Holocaust, in which more than six million Jews as well as approximately five million Slavs, Gypsies, ethnic Poles, homosexuals, disabled, mentally ill, and others were murdered or worked to death.

Other ethnic groups have suffered from genocide as well. Beginning in 1894, nearly 200,000 Armenians were slain in two years by Turkish soldiers and police. In 1909 the renewed massacre of Armenians began again and ended only because of the intervention of outside powers, including the United States. Armenian support for the Allied cause in World War I led to the estimated elimination of one million Armenians. More recently, ethnic conflict in the African state of Rwanda resulted in the massacre of at least 500,000 Tutsi at the hands of the Hutus. Genocide in the former Yugoslavia has also claimed large numbers of Muslims, Croats, Serbs, and Kosovars as victims.

Countries that enjoy a relatively strong sense of unity, as is true for most Americans in the United States, tend to characterize additional identities among peoples as ethnic distinctions rather than seeing them as differences in nationality. Thus Native Americans, Hispanics, Jews, and other Americans of European, African, or Asian origin are referred to customarily as ethnic groups, although some Native Americans see themselves as “nations” within the United States. Whatever their differences, they still identify themselves as Americans.
In this usage, ethnic groups retain a separate identity within the larger, more ethnically diverse nation. Members of ethnic groups may speak the same language, share cultural values, or even have physical similarities; however, all of these groups still maintain an overarching or common national identity.

Although most French are of European origin, many of African or Asian derivation (often from local elites in 19th- and 20th-century French colonial populations) consider themselves as French nationals despite racial differences compared with those of European origins. More homogeneous as a nation-state than either the United States or France is Japan. Indeed, with the exception of a small proportion of Korean or other origin, most of Japan’s population share a common language, history, culture, physical characteristics, and national identity.

Things get more confusing when we talk of a state made up of several “countries,” as in the United Kingdom (U.K.), which is composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. States are countries, but not all countries are states. Although the Irish, Welsh, and Scottish communities are separate from each other, their Celtic identity differentiates them collectively from the English who descended from Angles and Saxons. Of course, these different identities are examples of what we’ve been discussing—social constructions that have come down over the centuries, in some cases millennia, to the present time (see Figure 4.4).

Scotland and England, which already had established dominance in earlier centuries over Wales and Ireland, did not unite as a single state until they finally became a united kingdom in 1707. English and Scottish monarchs were almost always at odds and had often been at war with each other. Although the United Kingdom is a single state, frictions and conflicts among the different national or ethnic groups continue to the present day. Scottish nationalists, a minority within Scotland, certainly see “Scottishness” as much more than a mere ethnic distinction. If they had their way, their country would again become a separate state. It remains to be seen whether the creation of Scottish and Welsh parliaments at the end of the 1990s as well as an Irish Assembly in Belfast to handle many regional affairs will satisfy nationalist sentiment or simply spur demands for even greater autonomy, if not complete independence.

**Binational States**

Very often two or more nations exist within the borders of a single state. After World War I, the victorious allied powers created a single Czechoslovak state from some of the territory that had been part of the just-defeated Austro-Hungarian empire. Physically the same people, Czechs and Slovaks shared the same language and, although there were some Protestants and Jews in the population, most were Catholics.

Of course this focus on physical, linguistic, and religious similarities overlooked significant cultural differences related to their separate development over some 500 years. Among other factors, for example, Czechs were subject more to Austrian and Slovaks more to Hungarian influences. Complicating reconciliation of these Czech-Slovak cultural differences were ethnic (at times “national”) differences between Bohemian Czechs in the western part and Moravian Czechs in the eastern part of the present-day Czech Republic.

Separate identities between Czechs and Slovaks proved to be more than just ethnic differences, leading in 1993 to the formal breakup of Czechoslovakia into
FIGURE 4.4
The United Kingdom and Ireland

Many people think when they use the term “England” they are referring to Great Britain or the United Kingdom. Actually, Great Britain is composed of England, Wales, and Scotland. The United Kingdom is composed of Great Britain plus Northern Ireland.
separate Czech and Slovak states. Czechoslovakia is thus an example of a binational state that has become separate Czech and Slovak nation-states.

There are other binational states, by contrast, that thus far have stayed together. One example is Belgium, with its separate Flemish- and French-speaking national groups. Some see the Belgian state as being composed of two separate countries or nations—Flanders to the north with its Flemish-speaking Flemings and Wallonia to the south with its French-speaking Walloons. Different language groups in a particular country usually are an indicator of diverse cultures with different histories and, as a result, separate national identities that tend to be reinforced by being concentrated in different geographic locations as in the case of Belgium.

Keeping Belgium together as a single state has been a formidable challenge for more than a century and a half. A common religious affiliation (most Belgians are Catholics) has not been enough. Indeed, the church in Belgium has come to reflect Flemish-Wallonian cultural differences. In such circumstances, choosing a common form of governance proved to be as difficult in the 20th century as in the 19th. In the winter of 1830–1831, the great powers meeting in London brought in a king from one of the German states (Leopold of Saxe-Coburg) in an effort to keep the country together. The monarchy of Belgium continues its efforts (as it has for over 170 years) to perform the same national-unity function. To accommodate aspirations of the different communities, the Belgian government has separate institutions that deal with education, labor, and other issues of importance to Flemings and Walloons.

Canada is yet another example of a binational state with its separate English- and French-speaking national groups. Some Canadians say “binational” is inaccurate because it excludes Canada’s Inuit, the Arctic peoples, or other Native Americans referred to by many Canadian ethnologists as First Nations. In any event, the extent to which these peoples identify themselves as Canadians or choose instead to have separate national identities is a crucial distinction if we are to understand the complexity of the Canadian society. Of course, a feeling of national unity as Canadians, notwithstanding considerable national diversity, contributes to keeping the country together. In other words, as the Canadian example demonstrates, it is possible to have different levels of national identity. Thus one can be Canadian first and English- or French-speaking Canadian second. More troublesome for national unity, however, is when French- or English-speakers see themselves as separate (and separable) nations. In 1995, for example, a referendum in Quebec to create an independent state was barely defeated.

Multinational, Multitribal, and Multiethnic States

Switzerland is an example of a relatively successful multinational state composed of German, French-, Italian-, and Romansch-speaking Swiss. (Romansch, a language closely related to Latin, the language of the Roman Empire, survives among a minority of Swiss, mainly in the very mountainous area in the southeast part of the country.) The Swiss confederation allows a considerable degree of local autonomy, while still allowing broad Swiss identification.

In fact, Swiss citizenship is not established by the central government in Bern; it is determined instead by the canton (the state or provincial level) and more specifically by the local Gemeinde (to use the German word) or community of one’s
family at birth. Key to keeping the country together over centuries has been de-centralization of as many matters as possible. Over time, however, there has been agreement to collaborate in such matters as establishing a common currency and to cooperate centrally in other ways to promote commerce, maintain common defenses (although with considerable local authority), and conduct a common foreign policy.

Unsuccessful examples of multinational states include the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, both of which have broken apart into separate states since 1991. Given a changed international climate and much domestic turmoil after the end of the Cold War, national groups in both countries found that most of the obstacles to separatism had been either removed or weakened substantially. Use of coercive means to maintain unity—actions by the police and armed forces—failed in both countries.

FIGURE 4.5
The Ethnic Composition of the Former Yugoslavia
The rapid changes in Eastern Europe during the close of the 1980s intensified long-standing ethnic tensions in the former Yugoslavia. This figure shows where Yugoslavia’s ethnic population lived in 1991 before internal conflicts escalated.
The boundaries of states in much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America were determined by divisions agreed upon by the former colonial or imperial powers for reasons often having very little to do with respecting national, tribal, ethnic, or other local identities. In fact, containing peoples with diverse identities within the same borders and establishing geographic boundaries that countered the homogeneity of groups allowed colonial powers to maintain control by capitalizing on these differences, thus making national unity against their rule more difficult to achieve. This was particularly true in Africa where in Nigeria, for example, boundaries of this former British colony include three separate tribal groups (Ibo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani) that outnumber the populations of many countries. After independence and the departure of British administrators and security forces from Nigeria, civil war broke out there with fighting among tribal groups continuing into the 1970s. “Nigerian” as a national identity has proven to be elusive at best. People continue to identify by tribal group and resent advantages taken by some groups over others.

While one could call Nigeria a multinational state, it is referred to more commonly as a multiethnic or multitribal state. It is interesting to note that in the case of Africa, it is common to use the terms tribes and tribalism rather than nations and nationalism. For some observers tribalism carries negative (if not pejorative) connotations, while nationalism has more positive overtones. Hence the massacres that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 were ascribed to tribalism, whereas much of the slaughter occurring in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s was generally attributed to Serbian or Croatian nationalism. Whether the different use of terms is an accurate reflection of regional or local preferences or instead is indicative of bias or ignorance on the part of the observer is often unclear.

By no means are Nigeria and Rwanda isolated cases in Africa or elsewhere, especially in less-developed areas of the world. Divisions by tribe or clan in Africa are often much stronger than any pretense of national unity. To avoid civil war and other forms of ethnic strife as have occurred in places as diverse as Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Liberia, and Sudan, postcolonial governments have tried with varying degrees of success to build working arrangements to manage this diversity.

While tribalism is associated with Africa, group identities in many countries throughout the rest of the developing world are often characterized in terms of ethnicity. Hence civil strife occurs involving Sikh, Tamil, and other religious and ethnic minorities in India and in Sri Lanka (the island state we’ve discussed above, known as Ceylon when it was part of British India). The potential for (or reality of) ethnic strife persists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and other multiethnic societies in South and Southeast Asia, as elsewhere in the developing world. Again, what is characterized as nationalism in Europe is often termed tribalism or ethnicity in other regions.

Neocolonialism refers to foreign influence by the former colonial power that persists despite an end to its physical, controlling presence. Although neocolonialism is sometimes criticized, some unity among elites has been found through their linguistic, cultural, and commercial ties with the former colonial powers, particularly in Africa and Asia. Quite apart from local identities along tribal, familial, or
other ethnic affiliation, elites who initially came to power in these countries had developed strong European associations. To varying degrees they acquired either British, French, Belgian, Dutch, or Portuguese linkages that have been retained in the postcolonial period to the present day. As a practical matter, the European colonial language provided a means of communication across tribal and linguistic groups, particularly by elites. In addition, aspects of European social and political values were either blended with or grafted onto local cultures and customs.

English, for example, is the common language of the political, social, and commercial elites in both Indian and Pakistani societies. After World War II, when the British and local nationalists negotiated independence in India in 1947–1948, a decision was made to divide India and Pakistan along Hindu-Muslim lines as separate countries. This division did not accommodate the Sikhs’ desire for a separate Punjab nation. Partition into different states did not prevent war, continuing tensions, and more recently, a nuclear weapons development competition between India and Pakistan. Moreover, partition still left India itself as a very heterogeneous society with many religious and ethnic divisions.

**Nation-States and Nations without States**

As noted earlier, it is possible for a nation to exist without being associated with a particular state. The Irish were a nation without a state until 1922, when nationalists finally were successful in establishing a separate state after several centuries of British rule. Omitted from the new Irish Republic, however, were six of the nine counties in the northern region known as Ulster. Protestant majorities in Ulster with their historical ties to Scotland and the English crown remained under British protection as part of the United Kingdom.

Although the strife in Northern Ireland is commonly understood as being strife between Catholics and Protestants, the conflict is really not about religion *per se*. Religious difference between the two communities is only a surface-level indicator of much deeper historical, cultural, and political cleavages underlying recurrent intercommunal strife. Great strides have been made toward peaceful relations between the communities in recent years. As an indicator of how much better things are, the political climate between London and Dublin made it possible for Queen Elizabeth to make a state visit to Dublin in 2011—a symbolic gesture of goodwill on both sides that would not have occurred just a few years ago. Still, some minority factions identified with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) remain discontent with any settlement that leaves a British presence in Ulster and, from time to time, still resort to violence.

Until the creation of Israel in 1948, Jews were dispersed in any number of countries (as they still are). The late 19th- and 20th-century Zionist movement sought a state, or at least a homeland, for Jews in the ancient biblical lands. The horror of the Holocaust of the 1930s and 1940s in which some six million Jews died in concentration camps primarily in Germany and occupied Poland contributed to the international decision to create a Jewish state in Israel. Although many ethnic Jews have chosen to retain American or other national identities, those who wish to make their homes in Israel have been able to emigrate there and formally become Israeli nationals.
ARGUMENT-COUNTERARGUMENT | Explaining Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism

ARGUMENT  David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild argue that many popular explanations for ethnic conflict are incomplete or simply wrong.

A tremendous amount of literature has been produced on nationalism. Typologies abound, and numerous hypotheses, frameworks, and theories have been advanced to explain the origin of nationalism and the conditions under which it contributes to international conflict. David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild have developed an interesting framework and argument concerning the circumstances under which ethnic conflict arises within a state, which may result in civil wars and genocide.

Ethnic conflict is not caused directly by intergroup differences, ancient hatreds, or the stresses of modern life caused by a global economy. For them, intense ethnic conflict is most often caused by collective fears of the future. This occurs when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantees of protection for groups. In other words, a crisis of confidence in the state or the actual specter of state failure is the key underlying factor they identify for the rise in ethnic conflict. The effects of international anarchy—fear and a feeling that self-help is the only option—take effect at the societal level of analysis.

Groups may arm out of a sense of fear, but the result is to stimulate competition among groups, raising the collective fear factor even higher. Groups become suspicious of the intentions of other ethnic groups—the security dilemma is at work. State weakness, therefore, is a precondition for violent ethnic conflict within states, just as the absence of a superordinate authority in the international system of world politics is a permissive cause of war.

Once groups begin to fear for their safety, other factors come to the fore. Of particular importance is the rise of ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs who build on group fears. Political memories and historical symbols are stirred and utilized to whip up nationalist feeling and gain broader support. Once political minorities realize they cannot rely on the state for their protection, they usually look outward to the international community for protection. The international response has been, in the minds of Lake and Rothchild, feeble and unconvincing; states are reluctant to intervene to end systematic, state-sanctioned ethnic killing. When they do, as in Rwanda in the mid-1990s, it is often after hundreds of thousands of people have already died.

COUNTERARGUMENT  Stephen Van Evera has suggested that four primary attributes of a nationalist movement determine the potential to produce violence. First is the movement’s political status: Is statehood attained or not? If national self-determination is denied, he argues this raises the risks of war in the international system. A struggle for national freedom can produce wars of secession, risking the conflict spilling over into the international arena. For example, at the time of his writing 15 of the 104 nationalities of the former Soviet Union had achieved statehood, but the other 89 had not. Chechnya is one example. Such stateless nationalities total approximately 25.6 million people, or 10 percent of the former USSR’s total population. Furthermore, even if a nationalist movement successfully creates a new state, the seeds of future conflict may be planted if other groups are displaced. For example, Zionism’s displacement of the Palestinian Arabs in 1948 set the stage for later Arab-Israeli wars as well as terrorist activities. Finally, successful nationalist leaders may reject the old “rules of the game” of interstate politics, creating regional instability.

The second factor that determines the potential of a national movement producing violence is the movement’s stance toward its national diaspora (the dispersion or scattering of persons across different lands): If the movement has a national state, will it try to incorporate its nationals via territorial expansion or by encouraging immigration? The latter policy has been pursued after World War II by both German and Israeli governments. The territorial expansion route was pursued by pre-1914 pan-Germanism and by pan-Serbianism in the 1990s.

(continued)
The third factor is the movement’s attitude toward other independent nationalities: Is it one of tolerance or hegemony? In other words, does the nationalist ideology respect the freedom of other nationalities or does it assume a right or duty to rule them? Hegemonic nationalism is the rarest and most dangerous variety. The obvious examples are interwar Nazi nationalism in Germany, fascist nationalism in Mussolini’s Italy, and militarist nationalism in imperial Japan.

Fourth is the nationalist movement’s treatment of its own minorities: Are the rights of minorities respected or abused? The nationalism of many immigrant nations (such as the United States and Canada) tend to be more likely to respect minorities. By contrast, nonimmigrant nationalisms tend to discriminate against or even suppress or oppress their minorities; for example, Iraqi and Turkish policy against the Kurds, China’s actions in Tibet, and Serbian oppression of Slavic Muslim and Albanian (Kosovar) minorities, which contributed to the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

According to Van Evera, these four attributes constitute a “danger scale,” highlighting the level of danger posed by any given nationalism. If all four attributes are positive or benign, such nationalisms may actually dampen the risk of war. Conversely, if all four attributes are negative or malign, the nationalism at issue is bound to clash with others, increasing the risk of war.

APPLICATION For practical tips on how to actually go about facilitating compromise and—hopefully—eventually peace among parties in conflict, reference the material provided by the United States Institute of Peace (www.usip.org). Many of its pamphlets and practical toolkits are written by practitioners skilled in the art of diplomacy, prevention, mediation, and conflict resolution. What new ideas for facilitating compromise emerge from your reading? On this website you also can sign up for numerous eNewsletters and access relevant podcasts.


Palestinians and Kurds are two national groups, many of the latter having distinct tribal identities as well, without single states to call their own. The Kurds were promised a state in the peace settlements after World War I, but have remained dispersed in and near mountainous areas of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and elsewhere in the trans-Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union.

Palestinians, a population with many highly educated people, live in a number of countries including Israel, Jordan, southern Lebanon, Syria, and the Gulf states. Palestinians also remain in the Israeli-occupied territories taken in the June 1967 war, primarily in and around Jerusalem and territory on the West Bank of the Jordan River, which is referred to by those Israelis laying ancient claim to the area as the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria. One also finds Palestinians in many cities throughout the Middle East, where they often hold highly skilled positions as well as providing clerical, information technology, and other commercial services.

Palestinians and Kurds, as minorities in the countries in which they live, have suffered from severe forms of discrimination. Turkish government policy at one time was to deny the very existence of Kurds as a separate national group, referring to them instead as “mountain Turks.” As noted above, many Palestinians felt dispossessed of their homes and homeland in Palestine when Israel was established as a Jewish state in 1948. Aside from routine forms of discrimination, governments have conducted military campaigns and other attacks against Kurdish and Palestinian groups.
For their part, involvement in insurgent or terrorist activities by Kurds and Palestinians have added to hostilities, promoting further discord and no doubt encouraging further recriminations against them. At least in the Palestinian case, the 1990s witnessed a move toward a degree of political autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Terrorism, however, was continued by Palestinian factions such as Hamas. Most Palestinians hope that self-rule in areas of the West Bank will eventually lead to an independent Palestinian state with worldwide recognition of its sovereignty.

**NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY**

The principle of **national self-determination** as a policy option asserts nations have the right to choose their political status, whether that be an autonomous unit within an existing state or a new state based on this common identity. This obviously entails some degree of political control over a geographic area. The principle, advocated by American President Woodrow Wilson and other leaders after World War I, was used as a criterion for determining the geographic boundaries of states in their efforts to redraw the map of Europe. The aim was to create new nation-states to take the place of the defeated German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish empires that had dominated East-Central Europe.

However well intentioned the principle was at its inception, national-self-determination has been abused. Hitler, for example, claimed in 1938 that the Sudetenland—that part of Bohemia in Czechoslovakia that was added to that nation’s borders after World War I, which had a predominantly German population—should be a part of Germany. Hitler got his way at a 1938 summit conference held in Munich. After all, and quite apart from German aggressive designs on the territory of Czechoslovakia, supporters of the Munich concession could point to the arrangement merely as a line-drawing adjustment to post–World War I maps, an exercise consistent with the principle of national self-determination.

In recent years, with the seeming explosion of ethnic conflict within some states, the international community has been forced to come to terms with two conflicting principles: respect for territorial sovereignty of the state and the right of national self-determination. During the Cold War this was less of a problem. When political independence movements in the Third World struggled to end colonialism, they were not calling for the partition of a state but rather its complete independence from foreign rule. Leaders in emerging less-developed states agreed to respect colonial borders. There were exceptions: Tibetans in China, the Ibos in Nigeria, and Kashmir in India. Still, the one major successful breakup of an existing state during the Cold War occurred in 1971 when Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), with India’s help, shattered the unity of Pakistan at the cost of tens of thousands of deaths and the flight of ten million refugees to India. The British formula in 1948 of creating alongside predominantly Hindu India two Islamic Pakistan—one “East” and the other “West” Pakistan—had now become two sovereign states, Bangladesh and Pakistan, respectively.

Limiting self-determination was actually endorsed unanimously by the U.N. General Assembly in the 1970 Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning
Friendly Relations among States. This resolution sought to sustain the international stability resulting from reaffirmation of the primacy of the sovereign state over people on its own territory. The years since end of the Cold War, however, have seen substantial erosion of this idea. The outbreak of nationalist sentiment, particularly the unraveling of the Soviet Union with the recognition of the independence of the Baltic states and other republics in central Asia, set a different precedent: Self-determination could be achieved even at the expense of the unity of an existing state.

What was largely a voluntary and peaceful development in the former Soviet Union, however, played out quite differently as the former Yugoslavia broke apart in the early 1990s, spawning a series of Balkan wars accompanied by widespread civil strife. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, during the Cold War both Moscow and Washington as well as former European colonial powers worked to keep their favorite strongmen in control as the two superpowers engaged in fierce global competition. In the 1960s and 1970s, China also competed for favor in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. With the end of this political and military competition on the African continent, countries such as Zaire or Congo were no longer strategic battlegrounds, and outside powers seemed to lose interest in the fate of many of these ethnically diverse states. The exceptions were those states that contained valuable minerals within their geographic borders.

Maintaining Unity in Binational, Multinational, and Multiethnic States

With varying degrees of success or failure, several different strategies or approaches have been adopted to manage two or more nations within a given state. Keeping binational and multinational states together in intercommunal peace and mutual acceptance has proven to be a formidable task wherever it has been tried. What can be done to stem a potential tide of ethno-nationalist conflicts that threaten to undermine regional if not international stability?

Partition  Partition or formal separation can be used to stop or reduce national and ethnic strife, at least for a limited time. Separating national and ethnic groups into distinct, mutually exclusive communities—drawing solid-line boundaries around them—is at best a short-term approach or coping mechanism as long as they remain within a single state. It is not by any means a long-term solution to the problem of national and ethnic or racial strife.

Intercommunal fighting in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, could be stopped only by creating what amounted to strict territorial zones for different religious and cultural groups, policed by Syrian and other troops as well as multinational peacekeepers. At best, such informal or de facto partition could produce only a very fragile peace, which easily could (and did) break down again into intercommunal warfare. Similarly, de jure or formal, legal division into separate Pakistani and Indian states in 1948 did not resolve differences between Muslim and Hindu communities either. As already noted, hostilities (actual warfare or continual threat of warfare) have remained a fairly constant condition in Pakistani-Indian relations. These conflictual relations, moreover, have contributed substantially to efforts by both countries to acquire nuclear-weapons capabilities,
which poses a threat to security in South Asia that goes well beyond differences between India and Pakistan.

Similarly, dividing peoples by national and ethnic identity into separate states in the former Yugoslavia did not promote peace. Civil strife became international war as each new state sought to expand or defend its territorial base. Not surprisingly, some of the worst fighting occurred in Bosnia, the state that was most ethnically diverse. These examples should give one pause when considering whether partition along religious-sectarian lines in Iraq will bring stability to the country. Furthermore, some of the most vicious fighting is among competing groups within the Shiah community.

One of the most severe examples of separation policies was racial division of blacks and whites in South Africa. Universally criticized for its injustice, South African apartheid, a policy of strict racial segregation, allowed a white minority to maintain a dominant position over the black majority. Moreover, as a white-dominated state, South Africa became isolated from neighboring black African states, giving the latter ample incentive to support antigovernment, black-nationalist groups in South Africa. Ending formal apartheid by the early 1990s, of course, did not resolve black-white problems, much less tribal and other differences within the black majority. Efforts were in fact taken in the 1990s to expose abuses by all parties during the apartheid period in an attempt to achieve reconciliation. As elsewhere, prospects for a long-term peace in South Africa rest instead on improved economic well-being and greater social tolerance or acceptance across ethnic communities, aspirations always much more easily stated than achieved.

Assimilation  
Another strategy or approach, sometimes a very oppressive one, is assimilation of diverse populations into a single national grouping. This may entail denying that national differences exist at all, or if they do, denying their legitimacy as separate identities. Assimilationist policies were adopted in the Soviet Union during Stalin’s time in an effort to “Russify” non-Russian peoples. The Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein conducted military campaigns to suppress or maintain control over the non-Arab Kurdish population in the northern part of the country. Turkish policies mentioned previously that denied Kurds a separate identity, referring to them merely as “mountain Turks,” are another example of assimilationist policy.

The United States has also tried to assimilate diverse populations, establishing “American” as a common national identity. Earlier in its history, particularly in the 19th century, military campaigns were conducted to gain control over Native American populations, later placing them on reservations. This policy of formal exclusion gradually changed, as many Native Americans were encouraged to leave the reservations and become part of the larger American society.

Slavery in the United States lasted until the 1860s and effectively denied African Americans in slave states any degree of autonomy. Racial segregation policies that formally separated blacks from whites, particularly in the American South, survived into the 1960s. Segregationists did not intend that blacks should ever see themselves as a separate nation as many American Indians did; the goal of segregationist policies was to impose on blacks a separate (and lower) status within American society. Similarly, mainstream civil rights reformers opposed the few who advocated separation into different, racially distinct states or societies. The aim instead was racial integration, a view perfectly consistent with assimilationist strategy.
Consistent with the assimilationist idea, Indians are referred to in present-day parlance as Native Americans and blacks as African-Americans, in much the same way as European and Asian populations came to be identified as Polish-Americans, Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, Norwegian-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and so forth. There are those, of course, who object to any such hyphenation of the American nationality, preferring the complete assimilation or unity implied by the single term American. But those who want to retain ethnic identities as part of the American fabric, particularly those living in and identifying as part of ethnic communities, tend not to object to hyphenation or ethnic labels in which they take pride. Thus from this perspective to acknowledge explicitly that one is of Japanese, Finnish, Hispanic (or Latino) origin, for example, is still to be very much an American.

Wherever assimilationist policies have been relatively successful, adopting a common national identity has not necessarily meant dropping all other identities. There can still be unity in diversity. Separate ethnic and racial identities have survived, if not flourished, in the United States. The important point, however, is that almost all members of these groups still commonly identify themselves as “Americans.” The common bond is a commitment to the idea of being an American or to the democratic ideals expressed in the national Constitution, not to any single or separate ethnic identity.

A commitment to multiculturalism allows for the richness of cultural diversity while still retaining an overarching national identity. It is when cultural diversity is interpreted as separatism that controversy ensues. One sees this in the United States in the debate over national language. Most assimilationists in the United States, for example, acknowledge that different ethnic and cultural groups have a right to speak Spanish, Mandarin or one of the other Chinese dialects, Italian, Vietnamese, or whatever. On the other hand, they voice opposition to giving other languages equal status with English. To be bilingual or multilingual is a matter of choice, not a requirement for other Americans who choose to communicate only in English. They refer to English as the traditional, spoken language in the United States that cuts across—and thus contributes to uniting—different ethnic, cultural, or other identities. The controversy is particularly acute in major cities such as New York and Miami or in the American Southwest where large numbers, in some cases approaching a majority, of people speak languages other than English.

Consociationalism in Multinational Unitary States In a unitary state, all political power and authority come to rest in the institutions of a central government. Although almost all countries have at least one or more ethnic minorities in their societies, those coming closest to being single nation-states—states with one common or overarching national identity and lacking deep national and ethnic divisions—may choose to vest central government institutions with significant political power and authority. This is the case in France, Japan, the Scandinavian countries, the Republic of Korea, and most nation-states throughout the world.

On the other hand, when unitary states are composed of two or more nations or strong ethnic communities, a consociational model may be the means for maintaining peace and keeping the state together. Through agreements and formal rules that share or divide the powers and positions of government among different national and ethnic groups, consociationalism typically allows a maximum of local autonomy for the different communities within binational and multinational states.
Prior to its breakdown into civil war in the 1970s, Lebanon was viewed by many as a model of consociational arrangements among different cultural communities. Strict rules were followed for several decades that allocated positions of political authority and representation among the different Christian and Muslim communities. It proved extraordinarily difficult to renegotiate these arrangements, partly because any such alteration was seen by many Christian Lebanese as undermining their position in favor of increasing the representation of one or another of the Muslim communities. Differences among familial and other factions vying for power in the different communities contributed to the complexity of recasting political relationships. The interests of outside states as diverse as Syria, Iran, and Israel made an already difficult problem next to impossible to resolve. Interc communal bloodshed, direct and indirect interventions by outside powers, and *de facto* partition of the different communities ensued. Although consociationalism can contribute to unity and civility among diverse peoples within a state, the Lebanese example underscores how fragile these arrangements can be.

Belgian accommodation of different Flemish and Wallonian interests has required continual attention. Establishing duplicate governmental ministries, political parties, and even universities for the separate Flemish- and French-speaking communities is an approach consistent with the consociational model. A central government has remained in Brussels even as there has been considerable decentralization of political authority to the separate communities.

If diverse communities are to stay together within a single state, considerable efforts are required continually over time to refine, modify, correct, and legitimize these power-sharing and power-dividing arrangements. For this to work, political elites must be dedicated to maintaining the system as opposed to exacerbating ethnic tensions to their particular advantage.

**Federal and Confederal Approaches**  
As noted, unitary states establish single, centralized governments. By contrast, a federal state is one composed of separate state or provincial governments that have important functions to perform independently, but must coexist with a strong central government that may well take the upper hand on many matters. The United States is an example of a federation, although the reasons for Americans choosing federalism were not related to problems of nationality and ethnicity. The American rationale for establishing a federated state had more to do with distrust of unchallenged centralized power, geographic distances that were significant in the 18th century when the U.S. Constitution was written, and a desire to provide for security as well as some degree of local autonomy to states that had developed historically as separate colonies.

In Canada, on the other hand, the rationale for federalism goes beyond such geographic and other concerns to provide a vehicle for managing differences between separate French-speaking and English-speaking communities. Thus francophone Quebec has a separate distinction and some local authority even as it remains part of the Canadian federation. Separatists, thus far still a minority, find present arrangements unsatisfactory. Efforts have been made, however, to accommodate the national and ethnic concerns they represent. Agreements have been made protecting separate language and cultural identities and allocating additional funds and more local authority over issues of importance to the different provinces. These agreements have served a similar function to the consociational
arrangements discussed above, which is to keep different peoples together within a single (in this case, federal) state.

The terms perhaps can be best understood as different points on a continuum. The distinction between federation and confederation is not always clear-cut. Federations and confederations are both composed of states, republics, provinces, cantons, or other political units with their own separate governments. Confederations, however, have much weaker central governance than federations and put relatively more political authority at local levels. In short, confederalism takes a major step further in the direction of greater local autonomy through decentralization.

Decentralized governance, for example, has been a key ingredient in Switzerland’s success in keeping its Italian-, French-, German-, and Romansch-speaking peoples together in a single state—a confederation. Cantons the size of many American counties retain considerable authority over education, health care, law enforcement, and even the conveying of citizenship. Important functions are entrusted to central authorities—making a common foreign policy, planning for defense against invasion by outside powers, and maintaining the country’s economic and monetary systems. Even these are subject to scrutiny by authorities representing local interests.

Rather than having a single president of the Swiss Confederation, for example, there is a seven-person presidency that (similar to consociational arrangements in some unitary states) assures representation in national councils of diverse interests among the different cantons. This is in addition to a national legislature constituted to bring representatives together to deal with issues that cannot be dealt with at the local (or cantonal) level. Important questions are frequently given to the people to vote on directly in a referendum. Such direct democracy is consistent with a “town meeting” tradition still practiced, particularly in smaller Swiss cantons.

The former USSR, or Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, formally had been a federation, even though in practice political authority always was concentrated within the central leadership of the Communist Party. Given this experience, breakaway national republics found even confederation too strong a set of ties for their political taste. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the most that could be worked out at the time was agreement on establishing a commonwealth—a very loose association of sovereign states.

**Outside Intervention, Social, and Economic Approaches**

How can intercommunal conflicts be halted? Over a half century of experience in United Nations and other multilateral efforts to establish and maintain peace in places as diverse as Cyprus, the Sinai, and the Balkans, three functions have been identified. A first step is to establish peace. Diplomatic efforts to end fighting among the groups is the peacemaking function. An alternative or supplement to diplomatic efforts is peace enforcement—the threat or actual use of force by local or multilateral authorities as when actions are taken under U.N. auspices designed to stop the fighting and halt or at least reduce bloodshed among national or ethnic groups. This may be followed by peacekeeping, a maintenance function that typically involves monitoring or enforcing in a neutral fashion a cease-fire or peace already agreed to by the contending parties. The problem with all three, however, is that they are stopgap or short-term measures and do little to address the underlying causes of intercommunal strife.
As noted above, when the social orientation of human beings takes a turn toward the mutual exclusivity of different national, ethnic, or other group identities, we are usually observing a problem with deep psychological or social-psychological roots. From peace theory we learn that prospects for peace are greatest if there at least can be an acceptance or tolerance of people with diverse identities. Some degree of intercommunal tolerance or acceptance is a minimal condition for maintaining peace over time.

Of course, no easy remedy can be found to solve problems of national, ethnic, or racial strife. In the short term, we may need to draw lines on maps to partition or separate people just to keep them from fighting. Peace theorists do look, however, to a longer-run transformation of these solid lines that divide peoples (dividing them from one another in mutually exclusive categories) into dotted or permeable lines that allow for passage across intercommunal boundaries of people, their ideas, and economic resources. This prescription for peace is based on liberal principles. The idea is hardly new.

That there can be tolerance or acceptance of diverse peoples has roots in the 17th- and 18th-century Enlightenment, in the cosmopolitan sense of unity among peoples that prevailed in the Middle Ages, and in the ancient Greco-Roman Stoic idea that whatever our differences, it is common humanity that unites us. Such tolerance or acceptance of cultural diversity and different identities within, between, and across societies is a minimum condition for a durable domestic peace. Difficult as it may be to achieve, this intercommunal peace can be strengthened still further when social relationships go beyond mere tolerance to a higher level of mutual respect for diverse cultures.

A durable peace, of course, cannot rest on mere assertion, however pleasing or enlightened cosmopolitanism may sound. When it has been achieved it is the outcome of policies pursued patiently over time. Although peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping provide security in the short term by stopping the violence and bloodshed of intercommunal strife, it is not enough merely to establish law and order through the use of force or otherwise. Two kinds of development—social and economic—are necessary to provide a firm, long-term basis for lasting peace among diverse peoples.

Social development means establishing over time a greater degree of mutual acceptance or tolerance among different peoples. It involves education, cultural exchanges, communications, and other constructive efforts that over decades tend to bring diverse peoples together. Commercial and professional ties, friendships, and marriages that cross intercommunal lines are indicative of a relatively high level of social development.

Social development involves values that are usually slow to change. Education of younger generations, reeducation of older generations, and building new human associations across communal lines are core tasks in social-developmental efforts. This is central to the social-constructivist perspective on identity, which is equally applicable to societal relations as it is to international relations. Social constructivism emphasizes the ability of people to redefine how they look at the world and hence their conception of how they relate to others. One’s identity is not something one is simply born with, but is the result of interactions with society. As the term suggests, identity is a matter of social—that is, shared—construction.
Even so, measures intended to promote greater tolerance or acceptance proceed at a glacial pace, with progress measured only over decades. Older generations are least likely to change their outlook, particularly if they have experienced the human costs of civil strife or intercommunal warfare. Memories are long. Such memories often block the best-designed reconciliation efforts.

In such circumstances, peace practitioners adopt a patient stance, waiting for the eventual passing of older generations while, at the same time, hoping to foster cosmopolitan values among younger generations. To a considerable degree, this has been the approach followed in Western Europe after World War II. Even though old antagonisms have not been eliminated entirely, there is today an extraordinarily higher degree of tolerance or mutual acceptance than many would have thought possible among the Germans, French, British, Belgians, Dutch, Danes and other Scandinavians, Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, and others.

This Western European achievement did not just happen; it was the result of a decided effort to change the mutual exclusivity of national and ethnic mind-sets. European international organizations were established and expanded into what is now the European Union (EU). In addition to the specific purposes of particular organizations or channels of communication across national borders, the attempt was to go beyond the national and ethnic divisions that had contributed to the bloodshed of two major world wars in the first half of the 20th century.

Economic development that reduces disparities in levels of living among different communities is also an essential ingredient. It is difficult to have open frontiers when disparate economic levels on different sides of borders result in migration of large numbers of people from poorer countries or areas to richer ones.

Even the better-off economies of advanced industrial countries have limits on how many immigrants they can absorb before suffering real economic costs. This is as true in North America as in Europe. Thus attempts have been made to restrict the flow of labor from Mexico into the United States. In Europe during the early post-Cold War years, limits were placed on flows of people from Eastern countries moving to Germany and other highly developed Western countries. Only when levels of economic development become somewhat less disparate (if not equalized) is it conducive to open borders fully with unrestricted movements of peoples. In the case of Europe, there is no doubt that immigration from the developing world has exacerbated tensions at a time when many economies are in difficulty. No one expects many African states, for example, to achieve a level of economic development sufficient to encourage those without economic prospects to stay home.

The problem is that we are talking, in some cases, of no less than a long-term international endeavor and commitment to save failed states and their peoples. In this regard, some advocates favor an international “conservatorship” to administer critical government functions of “failed states” until the country can govern itself. But how long might that take if ethnic war has destroyed the social and economic infrastructure? How patient would outside powers be? Even if basic state functions are reestablished, how can the memories of ethnic violence be muted in the case of those who have witnessed atrocities perpetrated on their communities?

Some may think, therefore, that relying on social and economic development over time is simply a utopian approach to countries ravaged by ethnic conflict. It may be. On the other hand, to proceed as if national and ethnic strife are insoluble
problems becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although there is no certainty that social and economic development conducted in a physically secure environment will put national and ethnic strife to rest, the degree of civility among nations that has been achieved in Western Europe supports the view that such social and economic development policies can be fruitful.

CONCLUSION

Without a basic understanding of the earth’s physical and human geography, it is difficult to understand the significance of current international events. This is why this is designated a toolbox chapter. Mahmud is like many students who have studied overseas in that they develop a much better grasp of the physical and cultural diversity of the world. How can one understand what is unique about one’s country or culture unless one has some basis of comparison?

The growing importance of religion and the continual relevancy of nationalism are essential aspects of the cultural geography of world politics, yet are also associated with geographic locations. Witness, for example, the importance of Saudi Arabian oil fields and the important role that Islam plays in that region. While Islam tends to grab the headlines in the West, the reality is that aside from Europe many parts of the world have seen an increasing relevancy of religion in the realm of both domestic and international politics. Any student who aspires to work in government, business, or international and nongovernmental organizations must grasp at least the basic dynamics of these phenomena.

From the perspective of many realists, nationalism, or serving the national interest, is perhaps the single biggest reason the state will continue into the indefinite future. Crises of authority may cause a state to be torn in two, but the result will be the seceding territory joining a neighboring state or the creation of a newly independent state. Similarly, if a state motivated by extreme nationalism and an expansionist ideology successfully conquers a neighbor, the result is simply a larger state. The point is that whether nationalism helps to keep a current state together or tears it apart, the end result is the same—a state. Nationalists are not interested in transferring power and sovereignty upward to an international organization, let alone a world government. They also are suspicious of regional associations among states, which helps to account for the fact that even in the European Union people still tend to call themselves Germans, French, or English first, not “European.” Younger generations, however, have been somewhat more prone than their parents and grandparents to adopt a European identity first.

Liberals also recognize that nationalism is a primary cause of conflict in the world. But they tend to be more optimistic about the possibility of taming nationalism. This will not happen by either avoiding or somehow transcending politics; it will happen through politics. Following the logic of the social constructivists, people can learn from the past and from past mistakes and internalize new norms. International organizations and regimes can facilitate the more orderly conduct of interstate relations. Nongovernmental organizations and the growing global civil society provide other voices for moderation in the relations among peoples. The state will not wither away, as predicted by orthodox Marxists and idealistic world federalists. The state and the people it encompasses within its borders likely will continue to be a major focus of identity. But that does not
mean necessarily that the state’s function is to be the vehicle for expressing national prejudices against other states and peoples.

Nationalism and religion, therefore, are two of the most significant phenomena in world politics. Perhaps the ideological competition between East and West after World War II obscured the ongoing relevancy of religion in other parts of the world. Certainly with the end of the Cold War after the events of 1989, the suppressed nationalisms of Central and Eastern Europe (to include the former Soviet Union) burst forth. On the one hand, nationalism can be a force for unity and solidarity and be supportive of democracy. On the other hand, it can also tear a society apart. Nationalism can buttress existing political authority or be the rallying cry of those who wish to overthrow it. It can be a progressive as well as a repressive force, fostering at the same time unity at home and wars of aggression abroad. As we have seen, the constitutive elements of nationalism vary from case to case. Despite its importance and the amount of research and thought conducted on the subject, it remains complex, elusive, and often difficult to grasp.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES REVIEW

4.1 Explain the differences between physical and human geography and why a basic understanding of both is necessary when studying international relations and world politics.

Physical geography involves the depiction of material manifestations of terrain such as continents, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans. Human geography, on the other hand, involves the visual depiction of human activities overlaid on physical maps. What both have in common is a graphic representation of spatial concepts. Without such basic understanding, it would obviously be difficult to understand political and economic trends in international relations and world politics, let alone make sense of day-to-day events.

KEY TERMS
Physical geography 102
Human geography 102
Territoriality 103

Cartography 103
Geopolitics 105
Demography 106
Identity politics 107
Social constructivism 108

ADDITIONAL READINGS
Andrew Boyd and Joshua Comenetz, An Atlas of World Affairs (New York: Routledge: 2007). International issues and conflicts since the end of World War II (1945) are placed in their geographical contexts through the integration of over one hundred maps.

4.2 Evaluate the impact of religion in global politics, particularly with regard to conflict.

Observers of international relations almost universally failed to foresee the significant challenge to modern, secular regimes posed by a global resurgence of religious ideas and movements at the end of the 20th century. Established transnational religious organizations but also the more extreme elements that preach religious intolerance have taken advantage of modern means of communications, strengthening the development of transnational identities not constrained either by state borders or secular nationalism. If
Compare and contrast the concepts of nation, nation-state, and nationalism, and explain how they can be a source of conflict in global politics.

The separate identities peoples construct result in nations coterminous with states of which they are a part—nation-states, binational or multinational states, and, in some cases, nations without states. The liberal idea of national self-determination, if pursued to its logical extreme, would produce a world composed of many more states than exist today, but creating ever-smaller entities is not always in the interests of the populations who may have more to gain from greater national diversity, larger markets, and greater economic and other resources available in larger states.

**KEY TERMS**

Religion 108
Polytheism 114
Monotheism 116
Shariah 118
Sunni 119
Shiah 119
Wahhabi 121

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

Joanne O’Brien and Martin Palmer, *The Atlas of Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007). Maps the nature, extent, and influence of each of the major religions and shows, country by country, how religions are spread, how they relate to government, laws, and world hunger, and the role they play in wars. It also locates the origin and the sacred places of each of the major religions and provides essential background with a valuable table showing the fundamental beliefs of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism.

Karen Armstrong, *Islam: An Introduction* (New York: Modern History, 2000). Traces the development of Islam from the 6th-century days of the Prophet Muhammad to the present, arguing that the picture of Islam as a violent, backward, and insular tradition should be laid to rest. Maps show the geographic ebb and flow of Islam, and there is also a useful historical timeline and a guide to the key figures.

Identify the different policy approaches to dealing with nationalism and ethnicity and identify their limitations.

The concept of national self-determination refers to the principle that nations have the right to determine their own political status, which might include the creation of a new nation-state. This principle has clashed with the concept of state sovereignty and can thus potentially result in political violence and even civil wars. Approaches to maintaining unity within existing multinational states include political ones (partition, assimilation, consociationalism, federalism, confederalism, outside intervention to include

**KEY TERMS**

Nation 121
Nation-state 121
Race 124
Nationalism 124
Tribalism 131
Neocolonialism 131

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**


peacekeeping missions) as well as social and economic programs. All have their limitations, but pursued effectively in tandem may succeed in reducing intercommunal strife.

**KEY TERMS**

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**ADDITIONAL READING**


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### CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Physical geography can deal with the graphic representation of
   a. mountains.
   b. rivers.
   c. oceans.
   d. all of the above.

2. Human geography can deal with the graphic representation of
   a. populations.
   b. religions.
   c. size of economies.
   d. all of the above.
   e. none of the above.

3. Geopolitics involves
   a. the politics of geothermal energy.
   b. understanding the national power almost exclusively in terms of physical geography.
   c. how politics influences our understanding of geography.
   d. none of the above.

4. Religious conflicts tend for the most part to be about
   a. religious doctrine.
   b. quarrels among religious leaders.
   c. different religious identities and politics.
   d. theological differences.

5. At the beginning of the 21st century, religious ideas and movements
   a. take second place to political ideology.
   b. are basically irrelevant in modern materialistic societies.
   c. are constrained by international organizations.
   d. have seen a general global resurgence.

6. According to Samuel P. Huntington, the clash of states will be replaced by
   a. clash of NGOs and the state
   b. clash of IOs and the state
   c. clash of civilizations
   d. none of the above

7. All of the following are considered to be duties for Muslims EXCEPT:
   a. pray five times a day and, if one can, make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in one’s lifetime.
   b. recite the Sunna once a month.
   c. give charitable contributions—one-fortieth of one’s wealth each year.
   d. fast (not eat) during the day in the holy month of Ramadan.

8. Terms used to describe the way the world is conventionally divided include all of the following categories EXCEPT:
   a. nation-states.
   b. multinational states.
   c. nations.
   d. ethnic groups.
9. The term “ethnic group” is often used to refer to a
   a. tribe.
   b. clan or extended family.
   c. people with a separate identity within the nation or society.
   d. church organization.

10. Nationalism is
    a. an ideology that mobilizes national identity.
    b. the same as ethnicity.
    c. inherently dangerous.
    d. patriotism.

11. Binational states include all of the following EXCEPT:
    a. Germany.
    b. Belgium.
    c. Canada.
    d. the former Czechoslovakia.

12. An unsuccessful multinational state that has broken apart is each of the following EXCEPT:
    a. the Soviet Union.
    b. Yugoslavia.
    c. Czechoslovakia.
    d. Belgium.

13. Nations without states
    a. are banned under the Charter of the United Nations.
    b. are given voting status in the U.N. General Assembly.
    c. are only represented in the European Union.
    d. at times have achieved statehood.

14. Neocolonialism is associated with all of the following EXCEPT:
    a. influence of former colonial rulers.
    b. maintaining elite ties between European countries and their former colonies.
    c. compensating former colonies for previous injustices committed by Europeans.
    d. sustaining European social and political values among former colonial elites.

15. Nationalities or nations without a state include all of the following EXCEPT:
    a. Basques.
    b. Armenians.
    c. Kurds.
    d. Palestinians.

16. Donald Rothchild and David Lake feel that the main cause of ethnic conflict is
    a. fear of the future.
    b. intergroup differences.
    c. ancient hatreds.
    d. economic differences.

17. The social process whereby various ethnic groups are merged under a new identity is called
    a. integration.
    b. assimilation.
    c. consociationalism.
    d. cultural genocide.

18. Another term for a state in which all political power and authority come to rest in the institutions of a central government is
    a. communism.
    b. totalitarianism.
    c. dictatorship.
    d. unitary state.

19. States composed of two or more nationalities and which through agreements and formal rules share or divide powers and positions of government are said to be
    a. mixed.
    b. consociational.
    c. confederations.
    d. decentralized governments.

20. States in which separate state or provincial governments have important functions to perform independently or share with a central government are called
    a. mixed political-economy states.
    b. consociational states.
    c. federal or confederal states.
    d. decentralized states.