



CHAPTER SIX

ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND ACCULTURATION

There is a broad and deep literature on ethnic identities and ethnic identity development. The preponderance of literature on the topic resides in four areas of social science: anthropology, sociology, psychology, and counseling, although education, the arts, political science, and religion also increasingly address the topic. Some anthropological and sociological perspectives are based on ethnicity and nationalism, often examining how minoritized groups assimilated into a national identity (Fuller-Rowell, Ong, & Phinney, 2013), but more perspectives, particularly those in psychology and counseling, examine individual or group ethnic identity. Much of what we present in this chapter originates from these later sources.

In this chapter, we examine ethnic identity and describe its varied meanings, research, measurement, and application to college students. Partially due to its dynamic, fluid, multidimensional, and context-specific form (Burton, Nandi, & Platt, 2010), no consensus exists on a universal definition of the concept of ethnic identity or how the term is perceived and used (Cokley, 2015). Still, ethnic identity is a central organizing concept of the self in the United States and may be beneficial to psychosocial wellbeing (Umaña-Taylor, 2011). There are useful models for understanding students' ethnic identification and identity development, and we present several in this chapter. First we frame ethnic identity within several academic disciplines. Next, we consider college students' ethnic identity and discuss acculturation and its tie to students' ethnicity. Then we review universal models, highlight ethnic identity related to several major ethnic groups in the United States, and examine some of

the more commonly used instruments designed to measure the concept. We conclude the chapter with a critique and offer future directions for studying college students' ethnic identity.

Just as there is no one definition of ethnicity, there are a number of ways to group and name various ethnicities. In this chapter we use the term Indigenous Peoples in the United States to reference Native American, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Native Alaskan. We use Native American and American Indian interchangeably, a practice supported in the literature (Native American Journalists Association, 2014). In addition, in this chapter we use the term European American instead of the more generic "White," which represents a racial category, not an ethnicity. If scholars use other terms, such as White or Caucasian, when reporting their research or presenting a model, then we use their original language.

Framing Ethnic Identity

Social scientists agree that ethnicity is a culturally and socially constructed phenomenon rather than a biological one. Psychologists, counselors, researchers, student affairs educators, and the general public often use the term ethnicity synonymously with race (Cokley, 2005; Spencer, 2014). Some scholars argue for a conceptual conflation to "race/ethnicity" because for many communities these terms are in effect identical (Grosfoguel, 2004). Scholars also defend the interchange of racial and ethnic identity as a natural evolution of language in which popular speech becomes integrated into "official definitions" (Quintana, 2007, p. 259). Others consider ethnic and racial identity related but different constructs (Cokley, 2007; Spencer 2014). For clarification, in this chapter *ethnicity* means a pattern of culture, traditions, customs, and norms unique to, but also shared within, an ethnic community. *Race* (see Chapter Five) is socially constructed as an "arbitrary classification system based in positions of power and privilege" (Inman & Alvarez, 2014, p. 289). As an example of these distinctions, in the United States many people consider "Asian or Asian American" to be a racial category, while within this racial grouping, people of Hmong descent may celebrate their ethnicity differently from people of Han Chinese or Gujarati Indian heritages.

Ethnic identity is "the identity that develops as a function of one's ethnic group membership" and "is conceptualized as a component of one's overall identity," varying "in its salience across individuals" (Umaña-Taylor, 2011, p. 792). Developing through experiences of similarity and difference, ethnicity ties the individual to the group in important ways: "Ethnicity, when it matters

to people, really matters ... Ethnicity depends on similarity and difference rubbing up against each other collectively: 'us' and 'them' " (Jenkins, 2004, p. 65). Seen through a psychosocial lens, ethnic identity is grounded primarily in the theoretical underpinnings of ego identity (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980) and social identity (Tajfel, 1981). Much of the research in this chapter was influenced by these perspectives.

Positive ethnic identity is important for healthy psychological functioning and enhanced self-esteem (Richardson, Bethea, Hayling, & Williamson-Taylor, 2010; St. Louis & Liem, 2005; Umaña-Taylor, 2004, 2011; Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007). From this perspective, researchers suggest "ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct, involving ethnic feelings, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors" (Phinney, 1995, p. 58). Some key identifiable elements of the construct are "self identification as a group member; attitudes and evaluations relative to one's group; attitudes about oneself as a member; extent of ethnic knowledge and commitment; and ethnic behaviors and practices" (p. 58).

Ethnic Identity and College Students

In 1969, Chickering posited that college students must resolve the developmental task of defining their identity by answering the question, "Who am I?" For students who identify with one or more minoritized ethnic groups, addressing this question is more complicated and perhaps more urgent than it is for members of majoritized groups, as they may face some form of stereotyping and discrimination on campus (Cronin, Levin, Branscombe, van Laar, & Tropp, 2012; Ortiz & Santos, 2009). Many White students ignore their cultural heritages and fail to consider issues of ethnicity unrelated to their experiences in a homogeneous dominant culture that does not discriminate against them (McIntosh, 1989). For example, White students often resist social justice learning for reasons that may include a fear of examining their privilege (Jones, 2008). In contrast, many college students raised outside the dominant culture are highly attuned to their culture and ethnicity in both positive and negative ways (Ortiz & Santos, 2009). Yet for all students, the opportunity to explore, question, understand, and deepen ethnic identity in college can contribute to positive overall development.

Ethnic identity development is the subject of a well-established but still limited literature. As in other areas of student development theory, student affairs educators draw on a mix of theories, some specific to college students and others brought into the field for the purpose of informing practice, policy, and research. There are, as we present in this chapter, "broad" theories that

describe the development of ethnic identity of any person, not specific to one group (for example, Phinney). There are also models specific to particular ethnic groups that take into account the history and contemporary experiences of the group. We present several of these models in this chapter, acknowledging that we cannot include models that cover the full ethnic diversity among college student populations. In addition, the development of some ethnic identities (for example, many Indigenous Peoples) is under-researched; in those cases we offer insights into cultural beliefs and worldviews that may assist student affairs educators in understanding experiences and development of students in those groups. As with all of the theories we present in this book, we remind readers that there is substantial in-group variation in experience and development; given the diversity of cultures encompassed within broad categories (for example, Asian, Latino/Chicano, Native American), it is especially important to keep this guidance in mind.

Components of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Ethnic identity and acculturation have different saliency for different groups depending on their "relative isolation" (Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011, p. 173) from other groups. For example, when society is dominated by one group "such as the Han Chinese in China, European Americans in the United States, or Mestizos in Costa Rica" (p. 173), ethnic identity is *less salient* to them. Many European Americans in the United States give ethnicity little to no meaning in their lives (Waters, 2000) and are not likely to feel motivated to explore it unless they are in social contexts that identify them as a minoritized group.

Some scholars have classified ethnic identity as possessing external and internal components (Breton, Isajiw, Kalbach, & Reitz, 1990). In this schema, external ethnic identity refers to recognizable social and cultural behaviors like ethnic language, media, and traditions; friendship with other ethnic group members; and involvement in ethnic group functions and activities. More complex in nature, internal ethnic identity incorporates cognitive, moral, and affective dimensions. The cognitive dimension incorporates individuals' self-images, images of the group, and knowledge of the ethnic group's heritage and values. The moral dimension encompasses an obligation to the ethnic group resulting in commitment to the group's cohesion (Isajiw, 1990). Finally, individuals' feelings of attachment to a particular ethnic group include an affinity for similar ethnic group members and cultural patterns of the group.

Acculturation refers to changes in beliefs, values, and behaviors of ethnic individuals as a result of contact with, and desired or undesired adaptation to,

the dominant culture (Berry, 1993). It is "a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups" (Berry, 2005, p. 699). Although there is a relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity, the internal and external components of ethnic identity vary independently (Sodowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995).

Visible elements like behaviors related to an ethnic group are more affected by acculturation, while invisible elements of ethnic identity such as cultural values can resist change over time (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992; Sodowsky & Carey, 1988). For example, individuals may conform their outward behaviors, such as celebrations of culturally significant events, to the dominant norm over time, but they may retain deeply held beliefs and worldviews during the process of acculturation. Students with strong ethnic ties may experience this phenomenon at predominantly White institutions, modulating their cultural expressions and adopting those of the dominant group while maintaining rich cultural affiliations and expressions in campus communities with same-ethnicity peers (for example, a student organization based on shared culture, nationality, or religion). The degree to which individuals adopt Whiteness (acculturation) and the strength with which individuals retain their culture of origin reveal ethnic identity as a bidirectional system (Sodowsky et al., 1995). This way of examining acculturation allows individual movement over time and across contexts; we describe it in more detail later in this chapter.

The acculturative process begins at the moment of "contact and interaction between two or more autonomous cultural groups" (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987, p. 207). Intercultural contact between parties creates a need to negotiate in order for both parties to reach successful outcomes (Berry, 2005). Berry (1984, 1993) outlined four distinct acculturative strategies college students in minoritized ethnic groups can use to relate to the dominant culture. They can "*assimilate* (identify solely with the dominant culture and sever ties with their own culture), *marginalize* (reject both their own and the host culture), *separate* (identify solely with their group and reject the host culture), [or] *integrate* (become bicultural by maintaining aspects of their own group and selectively acquiring some of the host culture)" (Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, & Lieber, 2007, p. 187). Those pursuing an integration strategy experience less stress and better adaptations than those pursuing marginalization, while those who choose to assimilate or separate experience moderate levels of stress and adaptation (Berry, 2005). It seems clear that students whose group is outside the dominant culture face obstacles that culturally privileged students do not.

Evidence shows that most immigrants experience conflict within their group or with other groups, producing acculturative stress (Born, 1970). Mena and colleagues (1987) laid a foundation for studies of acculturative stress among college students. They identified the factors ranked most stressful related to students' perceptions of discrimination and their lack of a sense of belonging (Mena et al., 1987). Paradoxically, the stronger students' ethnic identity, the more stress and less self-esteem they reported. Students used a number of strategies, including planning appropriate action and talking with others, to combat acculturative stress. In the nearly 30 years since Mena and colleagues published this study, hundreds of other studies have used this framework for understanding acculturation of minoritized groups—from within the United States and outside it—to U.S. higher education.

Overall, some scholars conceptualize ethnic identity development as a component of the acculturation process, and studying it is a “subfield of acculturation/enculturation research” (Yoon, 2011, p. 145), while others see ethnic identity as a concept that is parallel to, though separate from, racial identity (Chae & Larres, 2010; Cokley, 2015). However, most agree that ethnic identity and acculturation are nonlinear processes requiring contact with unfamiliar and unknown others. Familiarity with both concepts is essential for understanding college student experiences in the United States, where majoritized and minoritized individuals from the United States and around the world come into contact with one another. Student affairs educators have a nearly unparalleled opportunity—and responsibility—to create environments that support healthy ethnic identity development for *all* students. Descriptions of useful concepts, models, and theories follow.

Models of Ethnic Identity Development

Ethnic identity constructs focus on what people learn about their culture from family and community (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2013; Torres, 1999) passed down from one generation to the next (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Umaña-Taylor, 2011). Ethnic identity, which is a multidimensional concept that can change for an individual over time, develops from sharing culture, religion, geography, and language with individuals who are often connected by strong loyalty and kinship (Umaña-Taylor, 2011). Theories of ethnic identity formation examine how students “understand the implications of their ethnicity and make decisions about its role in their lives, regardless of the extent of their ethnic involvement” (Phinney, 1990, p. 64). As part of the process

of committing to an ethnic identity, ethnically minoritized youth must resolve two basic conflicts: (1) stereotyping and prejudice on the part of the majoritized European American population toward the minoritized group and (2) clashing value systems between majoritized and minoritized groups. Resolution of these conflicts typically requires minoritized adolescents to negotiate a bicultural value system (Ozer, 2015; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012; Torres, 1999), which can influence their self-concept and sense of ethnic identity.

Phinney's Model of Ethnic Identity Development

One of the earliest theorists to develop and test a general ethnic identity development model was Jean Phinney (1990, 1993, 1995), a counseling psychologist. Her model has been tested and studied more than any other related to ethnic identity. Phinney (1990) maintained that the issue of ethnic identity is important to the development of a positive self-concept for minoritized adolescents. Based on Erikson's (1964, 1968) theory, Phinney's model is consistent with Marcia's (1966, 1980) much-examined identity model (see Chapter Thirteen). In a foundational article, Phinney (1990) described the development of her theoretical model of ethnic identity. She based it on growing evidence that revealed commonalities across ethnic groups rather than by placing each group (for example, Latino, Asian American, European American) and their dissimilarities under a microscope. Phinney's (1993) three-stage model of ethnic identity formation describes a linear model of ethnic identity achievement.

Stage 1: Unexamined Ethnic Identity (Diffusion – Foreclosure). Individuals in the first stage of ethnic identity development have not explored feelings and attitudes regarding their own ethnicity. Ethnicity may be seen as a nonissue, which leads them to neither explore identity nor commit to one (diffusion), or individuals may acquire attitudes about ethnicity in childhood from significant others, leading them to commit to an identity with no exploration (foreclosure). Adolescents who accept negative attitudes displayed by the majority group toward the minority group are at risk of internalizing these values. However, for the most part, this stage is marked by disinterest in ethnicity.

Stage 2: Ethnic Identity Search/Moratorium. During the second stage of ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1990, 1993), students become increasingly aware of ethnic identity issues as they face situations moving them to

exploration. Adolescents tend to examine the significance of their ethnic background as this new awareness increases. The experience may be harsh, such as an encounter with overt discrimination or harassment, or it may be more indirect, such as gradual recognition (as a result of less dramatic incidents) that their ethnicity is perceived as "less than" by the dominant cultural group. As a result of this awakening, adolescents begin an ethnic identity search, where they seek more information about their ethnic group while attempting to understand the personal significance of ethnic identity. They actively explore but are not yet committed to the identity (moratorium). Characterized by emotional intensity, this stage encompasses anger toward the dominant group and guilt or embarrassment about individuals' own past lack of knowledge of racial and ethnic issues.

Stage 3: Ethnic Identity Achievement. In the final stage of ethnic identity development, students achieve a healthy bicultural identity. They resolve their identity conflicts and come to terms with their ethnicity in the sociocultural and historical context in which they live. As students accept membership in cultures that are minoritized in the United States, they gain a sense of ethnic identification while being open to other cultures. The intense emotions of the previous stage give way to a more confident demeanor.

Phinney and her colleagues continue to shed light on a pivotal developmental issue for college students: the process of ethnic identification. Her substantial research covers a number of issues relevant to college students and their ethnic identity, including, but not limited to, acculturation and self-esteem (Phinney, 1995; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992), ethnicity as an important identity issue in minoritized students' lives (Phinney, 1993), parental support and academic achievement (Ong, Phinney, & Dennis, 2006), positive intergroup attitudes and intercultural thinking (Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007), college choice for ethnically minoritized students (Phinney, Dennis, & Osorio, 2006), a mentoring program for first-year Latino students (Phinney, Torres Campos, Padilla Kallemeyn, & Kim, 2011), national identity of and perceived discrimination against Latino college students in their ethnic identity commitment (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2013), and identity development in multiple cultural contexts (Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011). Phinney's impressive body of research makes a highly significant contribution to the literature on the theory underlying the ethnic identity of college students.

Latino and Latina Ethnic Identity in College Students

In the past twenty years, research on the ethnic identity of Latinos (a term used in this chapter to include Latinas and Latinos) has increased substantially. Naming this ethnic identity is not a simple matter (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). Students call themselves Chicana or Chicano, Latina or Latino or Latin@, Hispanic, Mexican American, *Puertorriqueña* or *Puertorriqueño*, Dominican, and more; researchers use a number of designators, often seeking one term to define this diverse group of students, whose families of origin come from parts of the Caribbean and Latin and Central America, with the majority in the United States coming from Mexico (Torres, 2004). Individuals living in the United States are often identified simply by their ancestral geographical roots—Puerto Rican, Cuban, Chilean, and so on—not always hyphenated with “American” (for example, Schwartz, Donovan, & Guido-DiBrito, 2009). To further complicate discussion of Latino identities, the U.S. government maintains that “Hispanic or Latino” is an ethnicity (not a race), but a substantial portion of Latino adolescents consider it a racial category (Harris & Sim, 2002). In short, Latinos are a heterogeneous group when examining race, ethnicity, region, socioeconomic, and other identity categories, a reality that challenges researchers to describe the process of “Latino identity development” in a meaningful way (Miville, 2010). For the purposes of this chapter, we will discuss cultural aspects of Latino ethnic identity development.

In an early study of Chicano identity that demonstrates the importance of generational heritage in the United States, Keefe and Padilla (1987) surveyed Mexican American students to examine cultural awareness (that is, awareness of Mexican people and culture), ethnic loyalty (attitudes and feelings about Mexican culture), and ethnic social orientation (preference for interacting with those who identify as Mexican and for Mexican food) as aspects of a Chicano identity. Four-generation families in the United States demonstrated a steady decrease in cultural awareness, with the biggest shift occurring between the first and second generations. Keefe and Padilla identified only a slight decrease in ethnic loyalty between the first and second generations. Third- and fourth-generation participants scored higher on ethnic loyalty than cultural awareness, which may have meaning for current students, as some

have lost the language of their ancestors but maintain a sense of pride in their heritage. Although sociocultural contexts have changed in the three decades since the study occurred, the key constructs of cultural awareness, ethnic loyalty, and ethnic social orientation remain fundamental to understanding Latino ethnic identity in U.S. college students (see Torres et al., 2003).

Torres's Bicultural Orientation Model and Influences on Latino Identity

Vasti Torres has conducted a methodologically diverse program of research on the ethnic identity development of Hispanic (her early term; later she changed to Latino) college students. One of her first studies (Torres, 1999) validated the bicultural orientation model (BOM), demonstrating a correlation between acculturation and ethnic identity among Hispanic college students using demographic data and other ethnic scales and measures (for example, Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987; Phinney, 1992; Ramirez, 1983). Four cultural orientation quadrants frame Torres's model and parallel other acculturation models. Torres categorized individuals demonstrating high levels of acculturation and ethnic identity as bicultural; that is, signifying a preference for both Hispanic and Anglo cultures. High-level acculturation and low-level ethnic identity represent an Anglo orientation, signifying a preference for Anglo culture. Low-level acculturation and high-level ethnic identity embody the Hispanic orientation, indicating a preference for the Hispanic culture. Finally, low-level acculturation and ethnic identity point to a marginal orientation, describing the inability to function effectively in either the Anglo or Hispanic cultures.

In a grounded theory study, Torres (2003) explored the influences on Latino students' ethnic identity development during their first two years in college. Two salient categories emerged from this study: *situating identity* and *influences on change*. Conditions for situating identity are the environment where students grew up, family influence and generational status, and self-perception of status in society. Influences on change include cultural dissonance and relationship changes within the environment. Based on this research, Torres (2003) introduced a conceptual model that describes the influences on Latino ethnic identity through the sophomore year in college. In the first year of college, three influences are apparent:

Environment Where the Student Grew Up. Considered a continuum, this dimension ranges from being raised in a diverse environment to being raised in a predominantly White environment. Latino students at the former end of the continuum are secure in their ethnicity and open to those from

other cultures. Students from predominantly White environments prefer the company of those from the dominant culture, though they are not likely to discard the culture of their ancestors.

Family Influence and Generational Status. Two dimensions encompass this category. Initially first-year Latino students likely use the same label their parents assigned to their culture of origin. Torres (2003) found that less acculturated parents of first-generation Latino students expected their children to consider parental desires, which sometimes conflicted with collegiate expectations. Not surprisingly, Latino students who were second-generation and beyond, with more acculturated parents, found less stress in the collegiate environment as the students' two worlds more smoothly intertwined.

Self-perception and Status in Society. This influence centers on Latino students' perceived privilege in their culture of origin. Though a correlation may exist, this privilege is not necessarily related to socioeconomic status. Students who grew up feeling some privilege often believed negative stereotypes about Latinos, but these students did not apply these stereotypes to their own lives. In contrast, Latino students voicing no perceived privilege in their youth were more open to the experiences of others and recognized racism in their everyday lives. There are two possible processes that can signal change in a student's ethnic identity: conflict with the culture or a shift in relationships within the environment. Positive and negative changes are associated with both processes:

Cultural dissonance. Behaviors reflecting cultural dissonance reveal "conflict between one's own sense of culture and what others expect" (Torres, 2003, p. 540). Depending on the student's issue and how it is approached and resolved, different outcomes can occur. For example, exploration of the Spanish language can resolve a cultural conflict for some students, while others may retreat from their culture of origin when in conflict with parental cultural expectations.

Changes in relationships. Shifts in relationships, mainly with peer group members, appear to produce a comparable interaction. If Latino students find congruence between their old and new beliefs within their peer groups, positive relationship outcomes are possible. If conflicts are not resolved, relationships are likely negative.

A number of follow-up studies use Torres's (2003) model as a foundation. In a grounded theory study that also drew on self-authorship theory (see Chapter Sixteen), college students who reconstructed their identity in more complex ways to reduce their vulnerability to stereotypes developed a stronger ethnic identity (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004). Torres and Baxter Magolda

concluded that although self-authorship theory emerged from a homogenous, predominantly White sample, its holistic foundation makes it an appropriate lens for examining Latino ethnic identity change.

Qualitative findings from a study conducted to examine Latino college students' ethnic identity and its influence on holistic development (Torres & Hernandez, 2007) also found characteristics similar to those that Baxter Magolda (2001) identified in research on self-authorship among White students. Additional developmental tasks revealed a matrix of holistic development that featured specific Latino cultural choices, including cognitive, intrapersonal (ethnic identity), and interpersonal (cultural orientation) factors. Following the contours of self-authorship theory, Latino students exploring their ethnic identity moved from *external formulas* traced through geography, family, and a belief in negative stereotypes, to a comfort with cultural difference and demonstration of cultural choice and behavior as students moved to a solid internal foundation. At *the crossroads*, a pivotal developmental moment, students cognitively recognized expansion of views, including racism, as well as stereotypes about the group; they then made intentional choices related to their feelings of discrimination. *Becoming an author of one's life* required integrated daily cultural choices—in other words, creating an informed Latino identity, as well as advocating for others of similar ethnic origin, before moving to an integrated sense of self in a diverse environment. Torres and Hernandez concluded that Latino students need meaningful support as they face the developmental tasks associated with confronting racism, lest their growth stagnate or regress. This study was significant in acknowledging the experience of racism and its meaning in students' lives as a major developmental factor.

Even with these models of Latino college student identity development in place, Torres and her colleagues recognized a need to learn more about the experiences of adult Latinas in higher education. Comparing Latinas to White women and men and to Latino men, additional issues Latinas must consider include limited financial resources, an array of academic matters, gender-role stereotyping, and obligations to family and their expectations (Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot, 2000). The limited research on the gendered experiences of Latinas in a college or university environment left a vacuum to fill in understanding how ethnic identity influences their family, work, education, and life experiences.

With this need in mind, Torres and her colleagues focused their research on adult Latinas, an increasing number of students nationally, who reformulate their identity while enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program (Martinez et al., 2012). This study disclosed the role of ethnic identity

connected to major life events for Latinas such as “family, childbearing, and negotiating relationships with family members as culture is transmitted across several generations” (Martinez, Torres, White, Medrano, Robledo, & Hernandez, 2012, p. 190). Another study by Torres and her colleagues (Torres, Martinez, Wallace, Medrano, Robledo, & Hernandez, 2012) used qualitative methods to examine what it means to be Latino. Using Marcia’s identity statuses (2002; see Chapter Thirteen) and Helms’s (1995) racial identity model (see Chapter Five) as a theoretical base, these scholars explored the ethnic identity development process for Latinos and recognized a revisiting of this process in adults, a process they named *looping*. For Latinos in their study, identity was repeatedly reshaped based on the context and events of their lives. This looping process demonstrates the social construction and reconstruction of identity and includes refinements to identity rather than fundamental questioning of it or regression to earlier identity development.

Additional Research on Latino Ethnic Identity

Several studies highlight ethnic identity development among Latino students and connect ethnicity to other variables for understanding and promoting student success in college. One longitudinal study (over eight semesters) demonstrated that “ethnic identity is a group-based coping response that can emerge over time in response to perceptions of discrimination, and that activism can be conceptualized as an additional group-based response that leads to increases in ethnic identification, activism, and well-being during later years” (Cronin et al., 2012, p. 404). Another study revealed that considering ethnic identification and ethnic stereotypes in combination predicted academic achievement identification in a sample of Latino students (Devos & Cruz Torres, 2007). If a student is tied to a group that values academic achievement, identifying with this group promoted academic achievement. In addition, if academic achievement is not a value connected to a certain group, it is less likely a student from that group will value it.

Guardia and Evans (2008) conducted a phenomenological study to examine the ethnic identity development of Latino fraternity members at a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). Applying a fluid racial identity orientations model (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001; see Chapter Five), examined through the lens of Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) bioecological theory of human development, this study revealed six influences: family, the HSI campus, other Greeks and Greek affairs policies, gender, language, and involvement. The study also found that students engaged in Latino fraternity life view the environment of the fraternity as multicultural, providing members with *hermandad*—“a family

atmosphere and Latino unity" (Guardia & Evans, p. 177). For students in this study, many aspects of the HSI, such as interactions with Hispanic faculty, were conducive to enhancing ethnic identity.

Highlighting the importance of culture and ethnic community for Latino college students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), Cerezo and Chang (2013) found that "cultural fit and connection with ethnic minority peers affect[ed] college GPA for Latinos navigating this dominant culture environment" (p. 82). Cerezo and Chang found ethnic pride and support from ethnically similar peers crucial to Latino academic success. They encouraged postsecondary educators to create a cultural element in programs that support academics.

Ethnic Identity of Asian Americans

In the 2010 U.S. Census, 4.8% of the population (14.6 million people) reported that they were Asian American (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). One of the fastest-growing racial and ethnic communities in the United States, Asian Americans represent three expansive yet distinct groups including East Asians from China, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, and Korea; South Asians from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives; and Southeast Asians from Vietnam, Laos, Hmong, and Cambodia (Tewari, Inman, & Sandhu, 2003). Rhoads, Lee, and Yamada (2002) referred to this Asian American panethnicity as "a collective identity organized around broad commonalities rooted in a variety of particular ethnicities traceable to points in Asia (that is, Chinese American, Japanese American, Indian American, Taiwanese American, Vietnamese American, etc.)" (p. 877). But other scholars warn of the danger of such categorization (McCubbin & Dang, 2011), as substantial contrasts in culture, language, customs, and heritage defy uniform categorization of Asian Americans (Kawaguchi, 2003). We encourage readers to keep both viewpoints in mind when focusing on ethnic identity development among people whose race is Asian American.

In an early iteration of the ethnic identity processes of Asian Americans, Sodowsky, Kwan, and Pannu (1995) described it as "a social psychological phenomenon" that "provides relevant explanations to group interactions in pluralist societies, in which salience, ethnicity, and out-group status have an impact on an individual's identity process" (p. 134). In portraying Asian ethnic identity, some scholars offer a bi-axial systems model of acculturation; one axis examines questions of a shared ethnic existence, values, and attachment;

the other axis questions one's ethnic identity within White society (Sodowsky et al., 1995). The 2x2 design of this model resembles others described in this chapter and answers questions related to these two concepts (i.e., ethnic identity and dominant [White] identity). It includes the following four combinations of answers to questions about strong Asian ethnic identity and strong relationships to the dominant (White) culture: bicultural identity (yes, yes), strong ethnic identity (yes, no), strong U.S. White identity (no, yes), and identity of cultural marginalization (no, no). These four ethnic identity orientations depict a nonlinear pattern over time and across situations. They are fluid and allow movement in an unpredictable fashion instead of a stage journey in the predictable way of more linear models.

The diversity of Asian ethnic identities makes broad generalizations about identity development unwise. Evidence suggests that linear ethnic identity models applied to some other groups are not as applicable to Asian Americans (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Ethnic identity for Asian Americans, including students, is not only an internal process but one heavily influenced by others in external processes (Kim, 2012; Kodama, McEwen, Liang, & Lee, 2001; Yeh & Huang). For example, some cultural influences, such as Confucianism in East Asia, may have particular significance in ethnic identity development of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean individuals (see Chae & Larres, 2010). The importance of family in many Asian cultures exerts another developmental press on ethnic identification (Kodama et al., 2001; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006).

Umaña-Taylor (2001; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004) used an ecological model of ethnic identity formation based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (see Chapter Two). Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, and Shin (2006) later used this model to understand adolescents' ethnic identity and the role of families in Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Asian Indian (that is, South Asian), and Salvadoran Americans' identity development (Salvadorans are Latino, included in this study to extend Umaña-Taylor and colleagues' research beyond Mexican Americans). Using existing and new instruments to measure family ethnic socialization (FES; Umaña-Taylor, 2001) and ethnic identity achievement (Phinney, 1992), they found that the ecological approach explained ethnic identity achievement, and family influences were critically important to these youth. Influences also varied based on length of time family had been in the United States, demonstrating the intergenerational effects of immigration patterns on youth from these ethnic groups. Extending this study to other Asian ethnic groups might yield similar results or demonstrate that even within a pan-ethnic view of Asian Americans, differences exist by cultural group.

Asian American college students from different ethnic groups may share common cultural influences on ethnic identity or they may not, depending on their individual family and cultural history as well as regional and campus-based differences among groups. Student affairs educators should be aware of these potential differences and sensitive to how they play out across and within student communities. As with students from different Latino ethnic groups, long histories of cultural differences exist among ethnicities within these larger categories.

Ethnic Identity of Indigenous Peoples

Native American scholars do not appear to agree on a single term to name their group of origin; most identify either as Native American (see Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003; Lundberg, 2007) or American Indian (see Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997; Cajete, 2005). The Native American Journalists Association (2014) considers both acceptable, as we do in this chapter. Some Native scholars used the term *indigenous scholars* to identify themselves within the academy (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004). In this section, we refer to indigenous people living in the United States as either Native American or American Indian (describing the peoples of what became the Continental United States), Native Hawaiian (native peoples of Hawaii), or Native Alaskan (native peoples of Alaska). Indigenous Peoples of the United States link their heritage to the land and to other native peoples around the globe. There is limited literature available to guide college student educators regarding the ethnic identities and identity development of native and indigenous peoples, though recent research has produced important work.

Identifying the ethnic identity of American Indians, Native Hawaiians, or Native Alaskans as one population is neither viable nor desirable, because it masks the unique histories of these indigenous groups. The broad diversity among tribes also precludes generalization of ethnic characteristics to the entire population, as each group and/or tribe has its own customs, traditions, language, history, myths, religion, culture, and symbols. Yet as Horse (2001) pointed out, there is a sense of Native American cultural pride: "In the context of ethnicity—as opposed to race—Indian people are intensely proud of their respective cultures" (p. 105). Although there are similarities among Native peoples' beliefs and values, customs and traditions are tribe-specific and frame "Indianness" for each group, making a universal description unlikely due to "the missing homogenous worldview" among Native peoples (Choney, Berryhill-Paapke, & Robbins, 1995, p. 75). In addition to being

counted as a racial category in the United States Census and comprising hundreds of tribal ethnic identities, Native Americans and American Indians represent distinct political entities as sovereign nations entering into treaties with national and state governments. On the 2010 U.S. Census, 5.2 million people identified as American Indian and Alaskan Native either alone or in combination with another race; of this number, 2.9 million identified as being American Indian and Alaska Native alone (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). As of 2003, they are part of 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States, 229 of which are located in Alaska (National Congress of American Indians, n.d.) and numerous nations (for example, Apache, Sioux, Cherokee, Navajo, and Tewa) whose people speak over 252 languages (Herring, 1990). Native Hawaiians embrace similar diversity though, as of 2008, they "do not have tribal status" and "are not recognized as a sovereign entity" (McCubbin & Dang, 2011, p. 270), thus extending their history of oppression and colonization.

Native American/American Indian Identity

For many Native Americans, identity centers on who they are in relation to others—their family and tribe. Standing in opposition to Western individualistic epistemologies, this focus on community enhances Indigenous Peoples' identity. Cajete (2005) explored the "origins, nature, and methods of coming to know" (p. 69) in American Indian culture. At the heart of nearly every Native way of knowing, he found symbolic constructs reflecting epic metaphors that "present the Nature-centered orientation of indigenous epistemologies in the Americas" (p. 73). These myths, which appear in the vast majority of Native American languages, include Tree of Life, Earth Mother, Sun Father, and Sacred Directions. This worldview and way of being centers around Indigenous ways of knowing. Understanding the differences between individualism, embraced by dominant Western culture, and communalism, a way of life embraced by Native American, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian cultures, sheds light on cultural differences in worldviews and identity. In a study that confirms communalism as central to indigenous identities and cultures, Waterman and Lindley (2013) found that Native American women most valued community, family, tradition, and cultural integrity.

Choney, Berryhill-Paapke, and Robbins (1995) presented a model that has held up for more than 20 years as an anti-deficit approach to understanding Native American acculturation, ethnic identity, and health outcomes. This fluid, nonlinear model consists of five concentric circles to depict Native

American acculturation. The five circles of the model represent levels of acculturation: traditional, transitional, bicultural, assimilated, and marginal. Levels of acculturation may vary within each circle. In contrast to many other Western-based models, however, "no value judgments are placed on any level of acculturation, nor is any dimension of personality emphasized more than another" (Choney et al., 1995, p. 85). Each distinctive level describes coping mechanisms developed based on environmental and social contexts.

Choney et al. (1995) also divided the model into four quadrants based on the four essential elements of the Native American medicine wheel and representing four psychological areas of human development: cognitive, behavioral, affective/spiritual, and social/environment. Outside the concentric circles but inside the four quadrants lies mainstream culture, representing the enveloping influence of the dominant culture in the lives of American Indians. The underlying and unique assumptions of this model include: Native American strengths, which are apparent at each level of acculturation, serve as coping skills in the stress of daily life; values at each level have no positive or negative valence, while movement between and among levels does not precede positive mental health; and stress during acculturation does not necessarily occur, although it can (Choney et al., 1995).

Higher education's dominant culture and discriminatory practices are at odds with the underlying cultural beliefs of American Indian students and may interfere with students' learning, development, and persistence toward achieving their educational goals. The reasons institutions are unsuccessful at recruiting and retaining Native students include potential issues related to development, such as blatantly racist treatment (Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997; Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003) and structures and philosophies of higher education embedded with cultural bias (Garrett & Pichette, 2000; Mihesuah, 2004; Pewardy & Frey, 2004; Tierney, 1992; Waterman, 2012). One study, which compared 67 American Indian college students' ethnic identity and beliefs about education with a sample of 96 European American undergraduate students, found clear differences between these two groups of students (Okagaki, Helling, & Bingham, 2009). The Native American students placed much more importance on their ethnic identity and connection to their ethnic group than did their dominant culture peers. Additionally, the students in this study credited their mothers' emphasis on cultural practices as a critical influence on their ethnic identity. In another study, Waterman (2012) found that contrary to theories that suggest that engagement *in the college setting* is critical to student success (for example, Astin's (1984) involvement theory; Tinto's (1993) departure theory), Native American students who went home frequently were as successful as Native American students who remained on campus.

Native Alaskan Identity

Native Alaskan identity, similar to Native American identity, often has a genetic connection to a tribe (Dixon & Portman, 2010). Obtaining legal tribal status is important to preserve the historic heritage and unique traditions of each Native Alaskan tribe. Although some tribal members receive membership through the U.S. government, others self-identify as Native Alaskan or Native American. Elders of the tribe teach children about their cultural identity, and tribal identity develops over a lifetime. Perhaps due to substantial differences in language, culture, beliefs, and oral traditions among Native Alaskan tribes, there is no identity development model for this group (Dixon & Portman, 2010). However, a shared set of values portrays traditional Native culture across tribes and geography (Herring, 1994; Sue & Sue, 2008). Some of these shared characteristics are valuing cooperation, viewing the community as an extended family, respecting elders, communicating primarily through the nonverbal, and living in the present and harmoniously with nature (Dixon & Portman, 2010).

Native Hawaiian Identity

Native Hawaiian identity is influenced by historical, sociopolitical and cultural contexts of colonization by missionaries and capitalists, and widespread slavery and oppression of indigenous peoples (McCubbin & Dang, 2011). These influences continue in the twenty-first century, in which some institutions or programs (for example, some schools) that accommodate only Hawaiians who live on the islands and comply with colonial standards continue to receive funding and favorable legislative policy decisions. The greatest challenge for the Native Hawaiian in developing an identity "is to strive for a balance between cultural heritage, ancestral knowledge, and his or her current adaptation with imperial and colonial laws and practices under the hegemonic doctrine of race" (McCubbin & Dang, 2011, p. 276). Under these oppressive conditions for Native Hawaiian peoples, applying Marcia's (1966) and Phinney's (1990) frameworks of identity development suggests that foreclosure may result, inhibiting growth and development. Instruments designed to measure Native Hawaiians' cultural identity and affiliation (e.g., Bautista, 2003; Rezentes, 1993) have as their base acculturation, culture, and enculturation perspectives (McCubbin & Dang, 2011) but do not focus specifically on identity.

Kupo (2010) added to the sparse literature on Native Hawaiian identity by exploring Native Hawaiian college women's identities through the lenses

of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2006), intersectionality, and identity performance. Through storytelling and narrative, eight Native Hawaiian college women disclosed that of all their identities, their strongest was their Hawaiian cultural identity. Other scholars also have reached similar conclusions (Kana'iaupuni & Malone, 2006).

Ethnic Identity of African and Afro-Caribbean Americans

Black Americans who can trace their ancestral origins to the African continent draw from an abundance of custom, language, history, tradition, religion, and other cultural legacies. However, for generations, colonialism and enslavement stripped Black communities of their cultural heritages. The long-term effects of these conditions still prevent most individuals with African ancestry from identifying many of the particulars of their ethnic heritage. For the purposes of this chapter, we use the term African American to refer to those people in the United States whose ancestors hail from Africa, and Black, a global term unattached to national identity, to refer to identities more closely tied to race than to ethnicity. For example, college students may identify racially as Black and ethnically as Haitian, or as African American with Zulu heritage. Black immigrants to the United States from the Caribbean may identify as Black and Afro-Caribbean, but not African American.

Just as for Latino and Asian ethnicities, there is no universal ethnic identity model for all Black or African American people, a reflection of the variety of worldviews and perspectives traced to origins in each African tribe or kinship. In this context the concept of identity "is always a question of producing in the future an account of the past, it is always about narrative, the stories which cultures tell themselves about who they are and where they came from" (Hall, 1995, p. 5). Linked to stories that were altered over time, "identity shifts with the way we think and hear them and experience them" (p. 8).

From the enslavement period until recently, African Americans in the United States knew their identities were uprooted and replaced with "an unrelenting institutionalized disenfranchisement and discrimination as the standard reality" (Richardson, Bethea, Hayling, & Williams-Taylor, 2010, p. 228). Basically, racial identity trumped any notion of ethnic identity because White oppressors denied this exceptionally broad range of people, descended from Africa, any acknowledgment of their individual ethnic identities. Thus some scholars propose that the larger social context (that is, racism) dictates the "content, shape, and form of Black identity" (Richardson et al., p. 229).

The ethnic identity of African American and Afro-Caribbean college students is often framed in terms of racial identity (Torres et al., 2003), which obfuscates understanding the phenomenon. Much of this research uses the labels “racial identity” and “ethnic identity” interchangeably, which makes understanding these concepts difficult and context specific. More scholars have written about Black racial identity (Cross, 2012; Jackson, 2012) than about African American ethnic identity (Cokley, 2007). Yet there are some studies about ethnic identities of Black and African American students that can inform practice. For example, Phelps and colleagues examined the relationship of ethnic identity to racial identity and self-esteem (Phelps, Taylor, & Gerard, 2001) and the relationship between encouragement and ethnicity (Phelps, Tranakos-Howe, Dagley, & Lyn, 2001). An earlier study (Day-Vines, Barker, & Exum 1998) examined the impact of diasporic travel on ethnic identity development.

European American Identity/White Ethnic Identity

As with other broad identity groups we discuss in this chapter, European American identity is complicated by racial categorization, history, and immigration, among other factors. Over centuries through the decennial census and immigration policies, the United States government has shifted its definition of White (see Painter, 2010), and there are multiple ways that scholars identify who is a member of this larger social group (McDermott & Samson, 2005). Although there are racial identity development models that include White individuals (see Chapter Five), there is little literature to explain ethnic identities of people in this racial group.

Throughout U.S. history, individuals from more privileged White ethnic groups—typically those of Protestant, Anglo-Saxon heritage—held positions of power and influence, which enabled them to define and monitor the acceptability of members of less-privileged groups (for example, Catholic immigrants fleeing famine in Ireland or trying to rise out of poverty in Italy and Portugal). Over time, for many people from these European American groups, the transition from their country of origin to the United States allowed for varying degrees of assimilation and acculturation. As the children (first generation), grandchildren (second generation) and great grandchildren (third generation) of these immigrants coalesced into a dominant cultural racial group (D’Andrea & Daniels, 2001), many of their customs and much of their once prized heritage lost out to a new “American” identity (McDermott & Samson, 2005;

McGill & Pearce, 2005). In effect and over generations, some White groups have shifted from identification as an ethnic group to attainment of a place in the privileged dominant racial group in the United States. This movement demonstrates the fluidity of ethnicity and race as socially constructed phenomena. For purposes of this discussion, we use European Americans to describe these migrating people unless a scholar's use of a different term is warranted in a specific context.

European immigrants were 61% of the 64 million immigrants who came to the United States between 1820 and 1998. Throughout much of U.S. history, recent and not-so-recent, immigrants were categorized by hierarchies generally favoring those from northern and western Europe over those from southern and eastern European countries (Banks, 2008). Recent European American immigrants represent 53 nationalities ranging from the most represented (German American) to least represented (Cypriot American) (McMahon, Paisley, & Skudrzyk, 2014). Most of the European refugees in the twenty-first century come from Russia and other former Soviet Union countries (for instance, Ukraine and Moldova) and the former countries of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro).

Some values embedded in the worldviews and perspectives of European American ethnic identity perpetuate their groups' belief that White people are not racist (McMahon, Paisley, & Skudrzyk, 2014). In fact many Whites claim color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), which indicates a lack of awareness of how race is socially constructed in social, political (McDermott, 2015), economic, educational, and religious life. On the 2011 American Community Survey (an annual federal survey) participants were asked to answer an open-ended question: "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?" Thirty-eight percent of non-Hispanic White respondents answered "White," "American," or "United States," or left the box empty; the other 62 percent responded with a European ethnicity (McDermott, 2015, p. 8). McDermott (2015) suggested that rather than a connection to an identity emphasizing national origin, White people in the United States increasingly affiliate with an unmarked (White) racial identity instead. This study demonstrates a conflation of identities indicated by White, "American," and European ethnic heritage.

Several hallmark cultural values in the European American tradition offer an explanation of the context in which this sense of singular American identity developed (McMahon, Paisley, & Skudrzyk, 2014) from an array of diverse cultures. The first of these values is the metaphor of a "melting pot," the process of combining all European American ethnic attitudes and beliefs in

the United States and creating "a new, virtuous (i.e., White American) culture" (p. 389). A number of scholars, activists, and educators have critiqued the melting pot concept as ethnocentric (and, in particular, centered on White, Western, and European American values) and offered alternative metaphors such as the *salad bowl* or *gumbo* (Jacoby, 2004; Lee, 2012), a mix of ethnic flavors in which each remains distinctive but together create a whole larger than the sum of its parts. Nevertheless, the concept of melting pot holds sway in the story of twentieth-century U.S. immigration. Another American value cherished as a manifestation of a singular cultural identity is the American Dream. Reinforcing the idea of the United States as a utopian mecca, it highlights U.S. political and social structures, embraces the nation's founding principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, explains the success of the American people, and justifies why others do not succeed (Johnson, 2006). Finally, the creation of an American heritage is the third value feeding the idea of a singular American identity. The U.S. school system is designed to teach history to U.S. students in line with its American heritage, and it perpetuates and propagates the myth of the American Dream and values associated with the dominant culture. The ability of people of European ethnic groups to assimilate into and conform to these three values (melting pot, American Dream, singular American identity) explains, in part, why increasingly fewer White individuals feel the need to develop a strong ethnic identity. Instead, "American" identity acts as a combined national and ethnic identity.

Measuring Ethnic Identity

Over 25 years ago, a number of scholars engaged in efforts to measure ethnic identity and ethnic identity development. Measures of these multidimensional, global phenomena typically focus on the intensity of an individual's attachment to their culture of origin and attachment to the dominant culture of the society in which they are now living. Scholars and professionals attempt to measure and track ethnic identity formation and the process of ethnic identity unfolding "in interaction with the cultural context" (Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011, p. 174).

In alignment with her scholarship on ethnic identity development, Phinney introduced the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992). She designed it to assess a sense of belonging, identity achievement, and ethnic practices. Researchers originally revealed the MEIM as a single factor structure, but eventually Phinney and Ong (2007) recognized

a multiple factor structure and revised the instrument. The newly revised instrument became the MEIM-R and highlights two factors, exploration and commitment, across six items (Yoon, 2011). Preliminary findings support the MEIM-R as a reliable measure of ethnic identity.

Extensive use of the MEIM and MEIM-R has led to a number of findings linking ethnic identity to college student experiences and outcomes (Miville, 2010). These experiences and outcomes include acculturation to Anglo culture (Cuéllar, Nyberg, Maldonado, & Roberts, 1997), career decision self-efficacy (Gushue & Witson, 2006), ethnocentrism (Negy, Shreve, Jensen, & Uddin, 2003), negative perceptions of the university environment (Castillo, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Archuletta, Phoummarath, & Van Landingham, 2006), proactive coping (Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008), and ethnic identity of Native American students at Diné College, the first Tribal College (McNeil, Kee, & Zvolensky, 1999). Although minority stress theory is relatively new in the literature on college students, there are some studies that combine it with studies of ethnic identity that use the MEIM-R (for example, understanding minority stress, depression, and Latino/a ethnic identity; Arbona & Jimenez, 2014).

Scholars have used the Native American Acculturation Scale (NAAS) (Garrett & Pichette, 2000) to understand college student identities and development. One study employing the instrument (that is, Reynolds, Sodano, Ecklund, & Guyker, 2012) examined Native American undergraduate students representing a wide range of tribal cultures from universities across the United States. Study data revealed three correlated dimensions of Native American acculturation consisting of Core Self, Cultural Self-Expression, and Cultural and Community Engagement (Reynolds et al., 2012). A second sample supported the validity of the NAAS's correlated three-factor model. Giving more multidimensional meaning than that offered by the previous single factor model, the three factors sculpt a richer model for understanding Native American students.

Critique and Future Directions

As postsecondary education increases in ethnic diversity, understanding the ethnic identities of college students remains an area ripe with research possibilities. Educators need to know more about how ethnicity and its development enhance identity in all ethnic groups during the college years (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Increased research on ethnic identity development may lead to improved educational practice that will enhance student development and

create healthy, diverse campus environments that encourage it. We offer several specific suggestions.

First, the substantial cultural differences among Latino, African American, Afro-Caribbean, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskan, and European American ethnic groups leaves ample room for research opportunities to explore how best to serve the needs of students from these groups. Relatively few studies exist to guide practice in relation to understanding how students from different ethnic groups within one racial category (for example, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Thai students) may experience higher education and/or their ethnic identities differently. Similarly, the diversity among Latino students (for example, Mexican, Guatemalan, and Chilean) highlights a need to examine groups in a disaggregated fashion.

Visibility of growing populations of some ethnic groups on campus calls attention to the need for better understanding of these students, their cultures, and their experiences. For example, facing increased discrimination since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the diverse and expanding Arab American college population in the United States needs more examination (Shammas, 2009). Arab Americans and Middle Eastern Americans are individuals who can trace their ancestors geographically to areas of the Saudi Arabian peninsula that historically identify as Islamic, although not all members of this ethnic group are Muslim (Nassar-McMillan, 2003; Nassar-McMillan, Gonzalez, & Mohammad, 2014; Salameh, 2011).

There are other ethnic groups about which little is known in relation to campus experiences, identities, and ethnic identity in particular. In addition to Arab Americans, there are other students of Middle Eastern descent. Recent African immigrants—from Nigeria, Egypt, Cape Verdes, and Somalia, for example—represent another group of ethnicities whose experiences in higher education are not well known. Students of Central Asian (for example, Afghanistan) and Eastern Asian (for example, Iran and Iraq) heritage are also among this group of understudied ethnic identities.

Because of the particular conflation of White racial identity with “American” nationality and European ethnic heritage, research into White ethnic identities and identity development could provide insight into the role of White students in perpetuating cycles of privilege and oppression on campus. Understanding how European national and ethnic groups arrived in the United States and assimilated—typically by shedding the culture of their country of origin and accepting the White, Protestant culture of their new home—may help White students see that acceptance by the dominant culture in U.S. society meant, and for the most part still means, giving up traditions and customs practiced for generations and constructing a racial hierarchy that

is difficult to dismantle. Research on the worldviews and culture of European American students helps them better understand how their everyday lived experience is qualitatively different from that of those in the academy who are ethnically and racially minoritized in the United States.

Longitudinal studies of ethnic identity formation and change are long overdue. Researchers need to examine the functional form of "trajectories of ethnic identity ... over the adolescent and early adult years" (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p. 279). To do so, researchers need more sophisticated methodological tools and resources to conduct multiyear studies in order to explain in greater detail the process of ethnic identity during late adolescence and into adulthood. More varied methodological tools based in numerous paradigms and theoretical perspectives (see Chapter Two) generally would be helpful in better grasping the meaning and impact of this pervasive, varied social phenomenon.

International students come to the United States with national and ethnic identities. Knowing how these identities develop while attending a U.S. institution could be very useful in providing services to international students, to enriching their experience in the United States, and to promoting intercultural education. In Chapter Twelve we discuss national identities as an important element of college student development, and research on ethnic identity in international students would be a complement.

Finally, the intersections of ethnic identity with other social identities such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion (McCall, 2005) represents a cutting-edge area for investigation (Phinney, 2010). Rather than study components of student identities in isolation, ethnic identity examined from the intersections of other social identities gives a broader snapshot of growth (Jones & Abes, 2013). Knowledge about how identities intersect, shape the individual, and are shaped by the individual can be useful in designing programs, policies, and curriculum that support holistic development. To whatever extent they acknowledge and identify with their ethnic heritage, all students have one. Higher education is a context in which they can explore, extend, and commit to this aspect of identity.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the characteristics of ethnic identity and what makes it different from but related to racial identity.
2. What happens when someone from a minoritized ethnic group encounters the dominant culture in a society?