Immigration and the Legacies of the Past: The Impact of Slavery and the Holocaust on Contemporary Immigrants in the United States and Western Europe

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It is a basic truism that the past influences the present, but the key questions concern *which* past and *how* its impact occurs. In this paper we seek to understand how legacies of the past affect the pathways and experiences of contemporary immigrants. Our specific concern is with the present-day impact of two momentous historical ethno-racial traumas: the Holocaust in Western Europe, and slavery and ensuing legal segregation ("Jim Crow") in the United States. At first blush, their legacies seem unrelated to immigration today, and these pasts are rarely central to discussions about it. But in fact memories of and institutional responses to the sins of the Nazi genocide, on the one hand, and of slavery and legal racial segregation, on the other, have played a role in shaping public perceptions and policies that affect contemporary immigrants and their children.

At the outset it is important to be clear about the parameters of our analysis. We are not in any sense comparing the Holocaust with slavery and legal segregation. Nor are we arguing that these historical crimes against minorities have *direct* effects on contemporary immigrants. What we are concerned with is their *indirect* effects on immigrant-group inclusion and incorporation. In particular, we focus on indirect effects that occur through collective memories, as well as institutional policies and structures that have developed, at least in part, to redress, insofar as is possible, injuries inflicted by genocide

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and legalized racial oppression, and to prevent any recurrence of similar events and persecutions. Finally, we do not address whether Europeans perceive any relationship between immigration and the Holocaust, or Americans any between immigration and slavery and Jim Crow, since that is beside the point of our analysis.

A comparison of the legacies of the Holocaust for immigrants in Western Europe and of slavery and legalized segregation for immigrants in the United States reveals some surprising results. Given that the Holocaust has been condemned in no uncertain terms in Western Europe, it might be supposed that its legacy would be an unalloyed benefit for contemporary immigrants and their children, standing as a warning against the evils that can follow from racial, ethnic, or religious exclusion from the mainstream. In contrast, the legacy of institutionalized racial oppression in the United States might be expected to be nothing but problematic for immigrants. Many immigrants are counted among non-Hispanic blacks (8 percent of all U.S. blacks in 2005 were foreignborn) who, despite many positive changes in recent years, are still frequently victims of personal and institutional racism. Moreover, notions of color-coded race and the long-established realities of a black-white divide have shaped the dynamics of ongoing racial prejudice and exclusion experienced by nonwhite immigrants.

The realities are more complex, however. As we will show, government policies developed to redress and overcome the institutionalized disadvantages following several hundred years of slavery and legal segregation in the United States have had some benefits for contemporary nonwhite immigrants. They and their children have profited from, among other things, expanded opportunities as a result of civil rights legislation and its aftermath and a new, more sensitive, etiquette about race in public discourse. By contrast, in continental Western Europe, the institutional response to the destruction of the Jews during World War II has not enhanced prospects for non-European immigrants and their children. For Muslim immigrants, in particular, the reaction to the Holocaust has complicated debates over free speech and the right to criticize Islam, subjects of bitter public controversy. Memories of the Holocaust have also made it more difficult to speak publicly about race as a basis of inequality and separation, and in some instances they have provided justification for avoiding policies that single out immigrant minorities for positive treatment.

The legacies of the Holocaust and of African slavery and legal segregation are admittedly an unusual pairing given their many differences, to say nothing of the contrasts in the situation of immigrants in Europe and the United States. This is precisely our point: by setting the different, indirect effects of the legacy of slavery and legal segregation against those of the Holocaust, the comparison brings into focus factors shaping the immigrant and second-generation experience that might be minimized or overlooked in a study of either case by itself.

The analysis also underscores the importance of considering the unintended consequences of policy decisions in analyzing contemporary immigration: actions taken for one purpose often have quite unexpected spillover effects. Those who framed policies to preserve the memories of the Holocaust or repair damages of slavery and Jim Crow segregation were not concerned with—and no doubt never imagined—the impacts those policies might have on the incorporation of immigrants and their children.

Finally, our analysis adds new dimensions to our understanding of how the legacy of the past helps to shape the immigrant experience and reactions to immigrants in the present. "The legacy of the past" is a general concept with many permutations and connotations, and one aspect of it, which we highlight here, involves how structures and institutional arrangements from earlier historical periods affect contemporary immigrants. For instance, by analyzing the legacy of slavery and segregation in the United States, we bring in a dynamic element: how reactions to historically rooted inequalities, from political struggles to state legislation and policy, can have repercussions for the incorporation of present-day immigrants.

The legacy of the past is bound up also with the concept of collective memory, the forms and effects of which are the subject of a large interdisciplinary literature (e.g., Connerton 1989; Halbwachs 1992; Olick and Robbins 1998; Olick and Levy 1997; Walkowitz and Knauer 2004). "Collective memory" refers to shared representations of the past, involving the meanings and forms—including speeches, monuments, scholarship, textbooks, and official ceremonies—through which the past is remembered and influences action in the present. Collective memories of traumatic phenomena such as the Holocaust are maintained in a variety of ways. In Germany, for example, these include the memorialization of key events, such as the regular observance by major public figures of the anniversary of the Night of Broken Glass, the pogrom of 9 and 10 November 1938; the erection of monuments to serve as permanent reminders, such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe constructed near Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in 2003-2005; and instruction in schools about the Holocaust and its significance, which in Germany is mandated by law. It is also important to note the meanings that these traumas acquire within ethno-racial communities in which family memories of victimization are central. Members of these communities frequently take on a role resembling the chorus in classical Greek drama, voicing morally freighted reminders about the past and concerns about actions that should or should not be taken in light of it. For instance, the African-American community has played a powerful role in shaping responses to the legacy of slavery in the United States.

Another set of collective memories that needs to be mentioned concerns immigration itself. In the United States, scholars have explored various aspects of memories—or, in many cases, mythical constructions—of

immigration, such as the emergence and impact of a collective identity as a nation of immigrants (in contrast to a long history of exclusion and restriction), late-twentieth-century celebrations and idealizations of earlier immigration, and the development of a cultural pluralist ethos in the mid-twentieth century in the wake of the incorporation of early-twentieth-century immigrants and their children (e.g., Alba and Nee 2003; Bodnar 1995; Diner 2000; Foner 2000; 2005; Gabaccia 2008; Higham 1984; Lucassen 2005). On the other side of the Atlantic, scholars have written about an ignorance or even denial of memory of an immigrant past—what Gerard Noiriel has called, in writing about late twentieth-century France, a "collective amnesia with regard to the extraordinary role played by immigration" in earlier eras and a tendency to view mass immigration as something altogether new (1999: 42; see also Lucassen 2005; Bade 2003; Tribalat 1991; on ways in which the denial of an immigrant past is changing see, for example, Green 2007). At the same time, considerable attention has been paid in the social science literature to the impact in Western Europe of national ideologies or paradigms of integration that are rooted in traditions that developed in the past. Examples are the longstanding assimilationist model of immigrant incorporation in France, and a multicultural model found in the Netherlands (at least until recently) that reflected an earlier era in which each major religious group was officially recognized by the state and had its own institutional arrangements (Alba and Foner 2009).

In short, this article extends the range of institutions, events, and processes previously studied in analyzing the impact of the past on contemporary immigrants and their children. In the European case of concern here, this impact is closely linked with collective memories of the Holocaust; in the United States, it has much to do with policy responses to the racial inequalities and disadvantages that continued to plague the nation in the wake of the abolition of slavery and Jim Crow. Both the Holocaust and slavery have cast long shadows, and institutional responses to them have had significant and often unexpected implications for both first- and second-generation immigrants on both sides of the Atlantic.

In examining the legacy of the Holocaust for present-day immigrants, we focus on three major Western European countries—Germany, France, and the Netherlands—which have received large numbers of immigrants in the post-World War II period, and where the response to the genocide has been a visible public issue. Our emphasis is on the broad commonalities among these countries regarding the impact of the Holocaust, yet, as we will indicate, they also exhibit important institutional and historical differences. Not surprisingly, guilt about the Holocaust is especially strong in Germany, the country that designed and implemented the Final Solution and was ultimately responsible for the destruction of so many Jews. It is also strong in France, which had a collaborationist regime during the war. This guilt is even evident in the

Netherlands, a country that was occupied and under the direct rule of Germany, and had the highest proportion of Jews who died in the Holocaust in Western Europe. In the United States, our focus is on nonwhite immigrants who have been directly affected by the process of redressing the wrongs of slavery and legal segregation, while our analysis of Europe is mainly concerned with Muslim immigrants, for whom the legacy of the Holocaust is particularly problematic.

THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY AND LEGAL SEGREGATION

The question of how to appropriately respond to the long-term, negative consequences of slavery and legalized segregation has been a major theme in American public and political life for the last sixty years. The United States was founded as a nation based on African slavery, and it took a bloody civil war to lead to its official abolition in 1865 with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. In 1860, slaves made up a remarkable 13 percent of the U.S. population—nearly four million people. Abolition was followed by new kinds of restrictions on freedom, entailing a century of legal segregation in the South and a new era of white supremacy that defined African Americans as second-class citizens.

The civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, which gripped the nation and challenged the southern Jim Crow system, gave rise to landmark legislation that ushered in a new era of race relations. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in education, employment, and public accommodation and created the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission; the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ensured blacks the right to political participation; and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibited racial discrimination in renting or selling housing.

These sweeping legal changes affected immigration at about the same time: they played a role in turning the United States into a nation of immigrants once again through passage of the 1965 Immigration Act which ended discriminatory national origins quotas and severe bars on Asian immigration. As many studies have shown, a dynamic interplay of factors led to the 1965 law, including international pressures and national policy alliances, but concerns about the racial and ethnic biases of immigration law in the context of the civil rights era's drive to achieve formal racial equality were undeniably at work (Alba and Nee 2003: 174; Skrentny 2002: 62; see also Reimers 1985; Tichenor 2002; Zolberg 2006). In the wake of Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory in 1964 and the subsequent success of civil rights legislation, white southerners who had resisted changing the national origins policy found themselves on the defensive, and the general liberal political climate favored the repeal of the law that consigned Asians to miniscule immigration quotas (Reimers 1985: 66). Supporters of immigration reform saw it as an extension of civil rights sentiments beyond the nation's borders. As one Congressman put it, "Just as we sought to

eliminate discrimination in our land through the Civil Rights act, today we seek by phasing out the national origins quota system to eliminate discrimination in immigration to this nation composed of the descendants of immigrants" (quoted in Reimers 1985: 82). Admittedly, the 1965 legislation actually made it harder for Latin Americans to immigrate to the United States by introducing for the first time numerical limits for the Western hemisphere. But the new law opened the door to an expansion of immigration from Asia, the West Indies, and Africa and was an important factor in the huge growth in legal immigration and its diversity that began in the late 1960s (Alba and Nee 2003; Zolberg 1999).

That the civil rights movement was partly responsible for recent large-scale immigration in the first place certainly has been positive for immigrants, many of whom (in particular, Asians) would not have been allowed to move to the United States without the passage of the 1965 Act. Before 1960, the vast majority of immigrants in the United States were from Europe and Canada often over 90 percent when examined on a decade-by-decade basis. By 2007, Europeans represented only 12.5 percent of immigrants, while about a quarter were from Asia and 55 percent from Latin America and the Caribbean. Altogether in that year, the number of foreign-born in the United States had reached 38 million (12.6 percent of the nation's population), up from 9.7 million in 1960 (5.4 percent).

Once in the United States, immigrants and their children have benefited in other and more important ways. Paradoxically, this is because most immigrants and their children in the United States are people of color (Asians, Latinos, and blacks)—and are not, in census terminology, non-Hispanic whites. ¹ To be sure, as a large literature attests, Latino, black, and Asian immigrants and their children continue to confront prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives owing to their race and ethnicity (e.g., Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Mexicans, by far the largest group in the immigration stream, are a racialized group according to some scholars because they are seen as innately inferior and suffer discriminatory barriers owing to their national origin and association with undocumented status (more than half of the estimated twelve million undocumented immigrants in the United States are Mexican) (Chavez 2008; Massey 2007). People of visible African ancestry face especially acute difficulties as the quintessentially racialized Americans, with a history of special disadvantage—slavery, Jim Crow, ghettoization, and

¹ Of the foreign born in the United States in 2007, almost four-fifths were from Latin America or Asia. In terms of race reported to the Census Bureau, 45.7 percent of the foreign born reported their race as white alone, 7.8 percent as black or African American alone, 23.4 percent as Asian alone, 21.1 percent as some other race; and 1.3 percent reported having two or more races (Terrazas and Batalova 2008). Hispanics make up a significant proportion of the foreign-born who report their race as white alone; about half of Hispanic immigrants in the United States report their race as white.

most recently, massive incarceration (Foner and Fredrickson 2004). Blacks have been, and still are, more residentially segregated than are Latinos and Asians, and less likely to marry outside their group than are other ethnic and racial minorities (Logan, Farley, and Stults 2004; Qian and Lichter 2007). Black (as well as Hispanic) immigrant and second-generation students tend to end up in predominantly minority schools in areas of concentrated poverty, where teachers are less experienced, the curricula are more limited, turnover is higher, and the schools themselves are more dangerous (Orfield and Lee 2006).

Yet it is also the case that first- and second-generation immigrants of color, particularly blacks and Latinos, have profited from "the institutions, political strategies, and notions of rights developed in the aftermath of the civil rights movement precisely because they have been nonwhite" (Kasinitz et al. 2008: 303). Of great significance are affirmative action programs. These programs were originally justified as a response to the caste-like status of African Americans, and later were extended to other groups, especially Latinos; they were designed to promote greater representation of African Americans by requiring employers and educators to take race into account, giving advantages to membership in a specific racial group.² At the beginning of the twenty-first century, affirmative action, as Ira Katznelson has put it (2005: 149), had reached "something of an impasse ... its principles ... insufficiently articulated, its legality ... still in question, and its reach ... far more limited than ... [initially] hoped." Affirmative action programs have been under attack in the courts, and ballot initiatives have banned the use of race in government-funded projects and public university admissions in several states. Still, at least so far, most of the nation's public (and private) universities are still legally allowed to consider race in administrative procedures to achieve diversity in their student bodies (see Massey et al. 2002). Indeed, the diversity rationale for affirmative action —to ensure minority representation in educational institutions and the workplace—has become more common in recent years than that of redress for past injustice (Kasinitz et al. 2008: 232). Moreover, affirmative action includes some policies and procedures that are likely to pass the strictest legal scrutiny, such as actions taken to encourage job or university applications from minority-group members (Alba 2009).

Though America's native black population continues to suffer severe inequalities and disadvantages, affirmative action has made a major difference. To again quote Katznelson, it "has done more to advance fair treatment across racial lines than any other recent public policy" (2005: 148). It has sustained and expanded a growing African American middle class "that is better connected to the central institutions of American life than ever before.... If

² For an analysis of cultural and historical circumstances that gave rise to affirmative action in the 1960s, see Skrentny 1996.

affirmative action did not exist, the United States would be a vastly more segregated country. Without such efforts, most white Americans would have far less contact with their fellow black citizens" (ibid.).

This said, we come back to the question of affirmation action's impact on immigrant minorities. Unquestionably, affirmative action and other diversity programs have provided mobility opportunities for immigrant minorities and their children, even if this was not their original intent. According to one estimate, four out of five immigrants become automatically eligible for affirmative action the moment they arrive in the United States (Hugh Davis Graham cited in Schuck 2009: 165). An extensive study of second-generation young adults in the New York metropolitan area, which included comparison groups of native blacks and Puerto Ricans, even contends that affirmative action and other diversity programs have ended up working better for immigrants and their children than for the native minorities for whom they were designed (Kasinitz et al. 2008: 303). Affirmative action, the study argues, has worked exceptionally well as a second-generation integration policy. The American-born children may not be aware of how much African Americans' struggles against racism have affected their lives, but they are well positioned to take advantage of the results of those struggles. The argument is that the children of nonwhite immigrants are "perhaps best suited to a program designed to locate and help qualified but disadvantaged youth": on one hand, they suffer from racial discrimination, substandard schools, and lack of knowledge of America's educational system, but on the other, they are ambitious and come from families who invest a great deal in their success (ibid.: 303, 331–32).

A recent study of freshmen at thirty-five selective U.S. colleges and universities found that immigrants and their children are substantially overrepresented among black students (Massey et al. 2007). In much the same way, programs designed for Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans have been used by the children of an "ever-broadening category of recent 'Latino' immigrants." Educational institutions have gone along with this, it has been maintained, because it is less difficult to admit the children of dark-skinned but middle-class, often college-educated immigrants than to truly confront the heritage of America's racial past (Kasinitz et al. 2008: 332).

An additional positive side effect of the civil rights movement for immigrants and their children has been the growth of schools, clubs, and curricula (for example, various ethnic studies programs) to meet the needs of African Americans as well as Latinos and Asians. These have helped the children of black, Latino, and Asian immigrants by both increasing their chances for mobility and promoting a sense of ethnic and racial pride.

Legal changes of the civil rights era also created opportunities in the workplace for some immigrants and their children by leading to new institutional arrangements and the monitoring and enforcement mechanisms that have increased the cost of discrimination. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has given the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission the right to intervene in a private bias lawsuit when it deems that a case has general public importance. Admittedly, enforcement of Title VII has been inconsistent under different federal administrations, but "corporations and nonprofit firms have become more attentive in observing its guidelines, with increasing numbers of firms offering diversity and multicultural training workshops for managers and employees and instituting company rules against racial and gender discrimination" (Waldinger 2007: 133).

Obviously, racial discrimination has not disappeared in places of employment, but the desire to demonstrate diversity has no doubt helped many children of immigrants move up the occupational ladder. In general, it has become widely accepted in the United States that blacks, Latinos, and Asians should be represented (and improve their representation) in universities, corporate and government offices, and political bodies. In the political sphere, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a hallmark civil-rights era law that banned discriminatory voting practices widely used in southern states, has helped immigrant minorities achieve political representation in a number of places by allowing the creation of voting districts where racial minorities have had a better opportunity to elect their own representatives (Alba and Foner 2009). Not only has the civil rights movement of the 1960s achieved "canonical status as a model for combining vigorous protest with political mobilization and electoral success," but also on occasion immigrants have been able to ally with black leaders to promote their own civil rights (Mollenkopf and Hochschild 2010: 28-29).

Another important by-product of civil rights struggles and legislation is the decline in the power of racist ideologies and a new etiquette governing what is acceptable to say about race in public discourse. Racism has become more covert and subterranean (Waldinger 2007: 133). Racial and ethnic slurs are now condemned when uttered by public officials and candidates and by those in private institutions with a visible responsibility to the public (Foner 2000: 165–66).

Quite apart from the history of African American struggles for racial equality and the process of redressing the sins of the past, it is worth noting that the very presence of a huge African American population in the United States—U.S.-born blacks are about 11 percent of the nation and make up a considerably higher fraction in many cities with large immigrant concentrations—has given immigrants and their children advantages that their counterparts lack in Europe. This is especially the case for black immigrants (Foner 2005; Model 1997).

Admittedly, the foreign-born black population in the United States is fairly small, being around 7 percent of the total immigrant population in 2005 (Kent 2007). But in several cities, most notably New York and Miami, the proportion is much larger. In New York, about four out of ten of the city's two million non-Hispanic blacks are first- or second-generation Caribbean and

African immigrants. Black immigrants there have, at times, united with African Americans in a "black bloc" to elect black officials. While the American-born children of black immigrants often feel excluded from "white America," they generally come to feel part of the larger black community (see, e.g., Bashi and Clarke 2001; Vickerman 2001). The best-known example is Barack Obama, the son of a Kenyan father, who, as an adult, defined himself as a black American. Nationwide, there is now a sizable African American middle class; incorporation into the African American middle-class "minority culture of mobility" provides resources for upward mobility for black first-and second-generation immigrants, including black professional and fraternal associations and organizations of black students in racially integrated high schools and universities (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999).

The special position of African Americans—and their long history of subordination—has been an essential element in how ethnic or racial groups of immigrant origin have defined themselves and their position in American society. A key point is that African Americans are seen to be on the bottom of the racial hierarchy, thereby enabling immigrants to avoid this position. Even though black and other immigrants in many cases align and cooperate with African Americans, they often seek to set themselves apart as a way to avoid the stigma associated with African Americans and to claim superior status, and others frequently recognize such claims as legitimate (e.g., Foner 2005; Itzigsohn 2009; Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999).

THE LEGACY OF THE HOLOCAUST

If the United States has had to grapple with the legacy of slavery and segregation, across the ocean the postwar period has been one in which continental Europe has been coming to terms with the genocide of approximately six million Jews during the Second World War (and of hundreds of thousands of Roma, as well). Conceived as a deliberate plan to exterminate European Jewry by the German Nazi regime, "the final solution of the Jewish question" was carried out in territories directly or indirectly controlled by the Nazis, often in collaboration with many citizens of the occupied nations.

On the one hand, collective memories of the Holocaust and the devastation of World War II have had some major positive implications for immigration. They added momentum to the drive to invent the European Union (EU), in the hope that embedding countries in a transnational matrix would make it difficult, if not impossible for another European-wide war to occur. The European Union, in turn, by promoting economic transactions of all sorts across Europe has also facilitated immigration from one EU member to another. Immigrants holding citizenship in an EU country carry far more rights with them than do other immigrants. The borderless continent that exists for EU citizens (enhanced by the Schengen agreement, which has removed internal border controls within most of the European space) has probably prevented new

marginalized European-origin minorities from emerging as a consequence of immigration, as might otherwise have happened for groups such as southern Italians in Germany. Surveys in Germany regularly show that native Germans perceive relatively low social distance with regard to Italians, who are seen as quite different in this respect from the Turks (Alba, Schmidt, and Wasmer 2003). The contrast with the situation of Mexicans in the United States, who also come from a neighboring country that is incorporated into a regional economic market with the host, is striking, for Mexicans occupy a visible minority status linked to significant disadvantages even when they are born in the United States (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2003; Telles and Ortiz 2008).

On the other hand, memories of the Holocaust have created crosscurrents and contradictions that have sometimes been problematic for non-European immigrants and their children. This is especially the case for Muslim immigrants coming from North Africa, Turkey, and South Asia, who form the most visible ethno-religious minorities in most European countries today, and who began to arrive in huge numbers in the 1950s and 1960s as guest workers and colonial migrants.

In Germany, France, and the Netherlands, the European countries that are the focus of this article, memories of the Holocaust have been powerful given the magnitude of Nazi crimes there and the collaboration, or acquiescence, of significant proportions of the population in them. At the time of the German occupation, 140,000 Jews resided in the Netherlands; 110,000 were deported under German rule, and fewer than five thousand returned. In France, part of which was governed by the semiautonomous and collaborationist Vichy regime after surrender to the Germans, a much higher proportion of Jews survived the war; about 75 percent of an estimated three hundred thousand Jews living in France prior to the German invasion survived, although less than 3 percent of the seventy-six thousand (mostly foreign-born) Jews deported during the years 1940–1944 did. In Germany itself, in 1945, only 21,450 of over half-a-million Jews remained (Judt 2005: 804; Zuccotti 1999).

For many years, Western Europeans preferred not to think about the wartime suffering of the Jews, but this began to change in the 1960s and, by the 1980s the story of the destruction of the Jews was the subject of books, television programs, and movies. Since the 1990s, memorials, museums, official apologies, and national commemoration sites have become commonplace (Judt 2008). Probably the best known is Daniel Libeskind's Holocaust Museum in Berlin, a city where, as anthropologist Ruth Mandel observes, Jewishness has acquired a new visibility: "Jewish-related books line bookshop windows ... Jewish artists have celebrated exhibitions; Jewish-identified cafes are chic and popular venues in newly gentrified, once-Jewish neighborhoods of eastern Berlin" (2008: 110). In Amsterdam, the Anne Frank House is the most popular tourist attraction, with one million visitors in 2007.

By now, the history of the Final Solution is a regular feature of school curricula in the three countries. The Holocaust is a compulsory subject in schools in all sixteen *Länder* (states) in Germany and part of the history curriculum in France. In 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy even proposed that each child graduating from primary school be entrusted with the memory of one of the eleven thousand French children murdered in the Holocaust, but the idea was quickly dropped in the face of opposition from almost every quarter. This included Jewish leaders who worried about the risk of inflaming ill feelings toward their community by singling out Jewish suffering this way, particularly in light of debates in France about the need to honor the victims of slavery and colonialism as well as the Holocaust (Perelman 2008).³ Although the Netherlands has no nationally mandated Holocaust curriculum, students are expected to learn about the persecution of the Jews during the war, and about a thousand primary and secondary schools have adopted a monument dedicated to the war and/or the persecution of Dutch Jews.⁴

Public reflections on and representations of the Holocaust have had some positive consequences for contemporary immigrants in Western Europe, whose numbers have reached extraordinarily high levels in the wake of the huge post-war migration—over 8 percent of the populations of France, Germany, and the Netherlands.⁵ This attention to the past has legitimized the fight against racist discourse and practices, and it has provided a moral yard-stick and serves to remind citizens of past crimes and complicity. In Germany, not surprisingly, the Shoah and the Nazi experience are strongly present in the collective memory and, it has been argued, have resulted in a "strong national sensitivity and sense of responsibility concerning issues of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism" (Koopmans et al. 2005: 214).

Yet attempts to come to terms with the Holocaust have not led to programs or policies in Western Europe that provide educational, economic, or political opportunities for the overwhelming number of non-European immigrants or their children. Reparations policies in the three countries have allocated funds to many Jewish victims and their heirs, but reparations payments have obviously not been made to any non-Jewish immigrants, and a significant proportion of reparations, notably most of the billions of dollars paid to Jews by Germany, has gone to Jewish Holocaust survivors who resettled in Israel or

³ Some officials also voiced concern that young Muslims in France, many of whom identify with the Palestinian cause, would be unwilling to honor the memory of Jewish victims (Perleman 2008). In general, hostility to Israel among many Muslims in Europe complicates their reactions to policies of making reparations for, and highlighting the evils of, the Holocaust in official and educational settings.

⁴ For a critical view of Dutch Holocaust education, see Boersema and Schimmel (2001).

⁵ In 2005, the foreign-born in Germany were estimated to comprise 12.3 percent of the population (10.1 million) and in the Netherlands 10.1 percent (1.6 million) (Münz 2006); in France, in 2006, according to the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), 8.1 percent of the population was foreign-born (5.1 million).

Jewish Population in France, Germany, and Netherlands, 1953 and 2000.				
	1933	2006	Percent of Total Population 2006	
France	225,000	491,500	.81	
Germany	565,000	118,000	.14	
Netherlands	160,000	30,000	.18	

Table 1.

Jewish Population in France, Germany, and Netherlands, 1933 and 2006

Source: DellaPergola 2006; Jewish Virtual Library 2006.

the United States. In any case, Jews are a tiny population in Western Europe. The figures are exceptionally small in the Netherlands, where only about thirty thousand Jews lived in 2006. Numbers are larger in France and Germany, which have had considerable recent Jewish immigration from North Africa and the former Soviet Union, respectively, but even so, in all three countries Jews represent less than 1 percent of the populations (see Table 1), and a miniscule proportion of immigrants.

In Germany, the disparity between policies towards Jews and people of Turkish origin stands out, especially given the relative size of the two groups and the difficulties Turkish immigrants and their children have had in establishing themselves in German society (Bender and Seifert 2003). (Germany has about 118,000 Jews compared to some 2.8 million people of Turkish origin, the largest ethnic and predominantly Muslim minority.) Because of the guilt German governments have assumed for the crimes of the Third Reich and their desire to make reparations to Jews, the official response to Turkish Muslims and former Soviet Jews, in Jonathan Laurence's words, is "striking in its incongruity" (2001: 25). Recent Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union have been highly privileged in immigration rights, integration programs, and state support of religious activity (ibid. 2001). Moreover, the linkages between church and state in Germany have favored Jews over Muslims, most of whom are of Turkish background. Jews, as well as the longdominant Catholics and Protestants—but not Islam, the third largest faith have been entitled to federally collected "church taxes" paid by members of their community, and the right to run state-subsidized religious social services and hospitals (Klausen 2005; Laurence 2001). The budget of the Jewish community has even been underwritten by the Berlin Senate because of the small

⁶ Laurence argues that this differential treatment is also justified by official claims of migrant Jews' cultural ties to Germany, and the presumption that former Soviet Jews will quickly adapt to and assimilate German ways (2001: 23, 27).

Table 2. Estimates of the Muslim Population in France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

	Number (in millions)	Percent of Total Population
France	3.5–5	6–8.5%
Germany	3–3.2	3.6-3.9%
Netherlands	1	5.8%

Source: Eumap 2007.

number of Jewish taxpayers (Laurence 2001: 26). As Ruth Mandel notes in her discussion of Berlin, "While the Jews [in Berlin] are highly visible in their miniscule numbers and generous public support, Turks are often invisible, their quarter-million-strong population ignored and underfunded" (2008: 140).

In Germany and France, in particular, the Jews who perished in the Holocaust have achieved what one might call "favored victim status." This is not surprising given the historical record. But guilt and concerns about Jewish suffering in the past occur in a context in which Muslims—now the largest religious minority in Western Europe in the wake of postwar immigration—have great troubles of their own, including high poverty and unemployment rates and educational problems. In Germany and France, as well as the Netherlands, the numbers of Muslims run into the millions, ranging from 4–8 percent of the total national populations (see Table 2). In France, a large proportion is of Algerian or Moroccan origin, with sizable numbers of Tunisians, Turks, and Africans; about four-fifths of Germany's Muslims have origins in Turkey; three-quarters of the Netherlands' Muslims are of Turkish and Moroccan origin.

While the sufferings of the Jews in the Second World War are publicly condemned and remembered in the media, memorials, and textbooks, the problems facing contemporary immigrant minorities do not receive the same kind of treatment, nor do they evoke the widespread guilt that established residents feel toward Jews. Complicating the situations of Muslims in particular are the evident tensions between them and Jews, rooted in the conflicts of the Middle East.

Anti-Semitic incidents and hate crimes have not disappeared in Western Europe and in fact they are all too common, frequently perpetrated by youth of Muslim or Arab background as well as by established residents on the

⁷ Government support for religious schools that teach the national curriculum has created a different kind of inequality in France, where the government provides funds for many more Jewish than Muslim schools. In fact, the first publicly subsidized Muslim school was not founded until 2003.

extreme right.⁸ In France, an anti-Semitic subculture has gained ground among young people of Muslim background in the banlieues, outskirt districts of Paris where many immigrants live. It mixes feelings of injustice and resentment of the French Jewish community with traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes and feelings of solidarity with Palestinians (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 235-41). Yet Jews in Western Europe "face no threats or prejudices remotely comparable to those of the past—or comparable to contemporary prejudices against other minorities" (Judt 2008). By contrast, anti-Muslim sentiment—sometimes called "Islamophobia"—is pervasive in Western Europe. In addition to negative stereotypes of Islam and Islamic practices, and institutionalized discrimination, Muslim minorities have had great difficulty practicing Islam in visible ways. Tony Judt (2008) puts it well when he imagines the following exercise: "Would you feel safe, accepted, welcome today ... [as a] Moroccan in Holland? A beur [slang term for a French-born child of North African immigrants] in France? A black in Switzerland? An "alien" in Denmark?... Or would you not feel safer, more integrated, more accepted as a Jew? I think we all know the answer. In many of these countries-Holland, France ... not to mention Germany—the local Jewish minority is prominently represented in business, the media, and the arts. In none of them are Jews stigmatized, threatened, or excluded."

Redressing the wrongs of the Holocaust has also added to the complexities and contradictions involved in debates over freedom of speech that have been triggered by the substantial Muslim presence. It is a crime in Germany and France (as well as in Austria, Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Switzerland) to deny that the Holocaust took place, and French and German law (as well as Austrian and Danish legislation) prohibits the use of Nazi symbols. At the same time, in Germany and France, the right to criticize Islam and its associated symbols and practices is widely seen, and proclaimed by influential figures, to be a basic principle of a free and secular European society.

The reaction to the Danish cartoon controversy is one example. In September 2005, after a Danish newspaper published twelve Mohammed caricatures lampooning the prophet—which set off protests in Denmark and the Muslim world—several leading daily German and French papers made a point of publishing a number (in a few cases, all) of the cartoons, and some justified publication as protecting the fundamental right of free speech and freedom of the press (Sitbon 2006; see also Klausen 2009). Although the French government avoided taking a stand, then-Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy unconditionally

⁸ Studies in France show that many of the perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts are youth of Arab or Muslim background. In the *banlieues* of Paris, between 2004 and 2005, over five hundred anti-Semitic incidents (mostly insults and threats) were reported (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 232, 237–41). Also see Peace (2009).

defended the right to publish the drawings, saying "freedom of expression is not a basis for negotiation" (Gudmundsson 2006; Sitbon 2006).9

In the Netherlands, which does not officially ban Holocaust denial or Nazi symbols, the notion that criticism of all kinds, whether of Jews or Muslims, should be tolerated—that "everything must be said no matter how offensive" (Buruma 2006: 221)—has colored reactions to incidents involving Muslim minorities. At the same time, what journalist Ian Buruma calls the Dutch habit of "filtering the present through guilty memories of what happened in the *judenhoek*" has sometimes confused and complicated freedom-of-speech issues, on occasion bringing "all discussion to a halt by tarring opponents with the brush of mass murder" (ibid.: 240).

Ghosts of the Nazi past have figured in recent debates in the Netherlands involving the controversial anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders. The Netherlands does ban Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and Wilders, among other things, has publicly called for a ban on the Koran on the grounds that it, like Mein Kampf, incites hatred and killing, thereby suggesting that those who believe in the Koran are like Nazis. In January 2009, a Dutch court decided to prosecute Wilders for insulting and spreading hatred against Muslims. Yet many Dutch, of various political stripes, have defended his right to free speech and even his positions; his party made strong gains in the June 2010 national election. How the legal case against him will play out is, at the time of writing, unclear (see Buruma 2009).

Finally, the experience of the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust delegitimized the use of race as a category for public discourse on the European continent (Koopmans et al. 2005: 144). To be sure, many immigrants and their children in mainland Europe, notably those of Muslim background, are stigmatized on the basis of religion and culture rather than, as in the United States, color-coded race (Foner 2005). Yet the discomfort with the concept of race in Europe, owing in good part to its association with Nazi racial laws about the superior "Aryan race" and inferior Jewish "race," has had implications for Muslim and other immigrants. One result is that it has justified critiques of, and a common reluctance to institute, affirmative action (or "positive discrimination") approaches that target specific "racial" or "ethnic" groups. This dynamic has been especially pronounced in France, with its already strong assimilationist principles and general unwillingness to officially recognize ethnic groups and group-specific approaches. ¹⁰ The comments of an influential

⁹ Political scientist Jytte Klausen argues that while free speech is an important value in liberal societies, and Islamic religious prohibitions cannot be applied against secular European newspapers, the Danish paper was at fault for printing cartoons that were insulting (2006).

Changes may be afoot, however. Laurence and Vaisse (2006: 182–89) argue that there is some

indication that the idea of affirmative action is gaining ground with the French public. Moreover, the national government has started quietly giving preferential treatment to members of racial and ethnic minorities, especially in the areas of educational opportunity and public administration.

French administrator in the late 1990s, in response to a question about a 1978 law outlawing computerized storage of data on racial origins without individual consent, are a telling example of how memories of the Holocaust figure in the common aversion to race/ethnic consciousness and race/ethnic-based policies:

What would we have to have? Legislation which says that one is recognized as being an immigrant, in order to have special rights, if one has parents of foreign origin or has at least two grandparents of foreign origin. This would be an acceptable definition. Do you know what that is? That is the ordinance of 18 November 1940 which defines the Jew according to the Vichy regime, which says that one is a Jew if one has one Jewish parent or two Jewish grandparents. It is impossible to imagine a French law which uses that formulation. It would have a frightening effect. It is absolutely evil (quoted in Bleich 2003: 82).

In Germany, there is often a queasiness about certain ethnoracial matters, a reluctance, as Americans might say, to "tell it like it is," which can have negative effects for relations with present-day minority groups. One of the authors was told, for example, not to use the phrase "racial hierarchy" in a talk to a public audience in Berlin because the term might evoke associations with fascism. Many Germans still have trouble using the word "Jew," according to Ruth Mandel, owing to the "legacy of the Nazi abuse of the term," and they instead resort to alternatives like "Jewish heritage," "Jewish background," or conflate Israeli with Jew. Mandel describes a conversation with a woman who referred to her as an Israelite. When Mandel suggested that the woman use the word Jew instead, she was unwilling, saying it is a "very bad word.... We do not use it any longer, because of the terrible things that happened here in the 1940s" (2008: 127).

CONCLUSION

History has a hand in shaping the experiences of contemporary immigrants and their children, yet this article has shown that the ways it does so are complex, often unexpected, and many times indirect. It is not just a question of memories of the past, which have received considerable attention in historical studies. Of even greater significance, our analysis suggests, are the institutional responses that have developed as part of the processes of remembering and redressing the circumstances, and injustices, of earlier eras.

The comparison of the legacies of slavery and legal segregation in the United States and the Holocaust in Western Europe has revealed differences on the two sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, the attempts since the 1960s to ameliorate the enduring damages of slavery and segregation have resulted in expanded social, economic, and political opportunities for nonwhite immigrants and their children, who have been seen as sharing racial minority

¹¹ The use of words other than "Jew" is not new in Germany, and prior to the Nazi era German Jews sometimes referred to themselves as being of "the Mosaic persuasion" (e.g., Bacon 1980).

status with African Americans and have therefore been included in various programs designed to ensure diversity and reduce discrimination. In Germany, France, and the Netherlands, policies developed out of desires to come to terms with the Holocaust have not provided opportunities for the large Muslim minority populations there. Assisting Muslim immigrants and their children was not the aim of these policies, nor has it been a by-product of them. Even the sensitivity to racial matters and the informal taboo on the use of the term race that have been reactions to Nazi crimes have ended up in some ways working to Muslim minorities' disadvantage.

Admittedly, this comparison only gets us so far. In discussing the United States we have made clear that racial inequalities rooted in slavery and segregation continue to plague that nation and create barriers for immigrants of color. In Western Europe, our focus on the legacy of the Holocaust has ignored important developments that have benefited contemporary immigrant minorities and that have more to do with responses to the influx of post-war immigrants than with memories of the atrocities of World War II. One is the laws that Western European countries and the EU have adopted that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity (and in some countries, nationality and religion as well) and provide victims with means of legal redress (Migration Integration Policy Index 2007).

This said, we come back, in the end, to the value of appreciating the role of the legacy of the past in understanding current-day immigrants. We began the article by noting that analyzing the impact of past ethno-racial traumas broadens the range of institutions, events, and processes that scholars can consider in exploring how the legacy of the past affects contemporary immigrants and their children. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to better understand how the past lives on in, and exerts an influence on, the present. Many other events and circumstances in earlier periods—related, for example, to education, occupational structures, links between the state and religion, and the evolution of welfare regimes—have shaped institutional arrangements and social, political, and economic structures on both sides of the Atlantic in ways that have provided particular opportunities, as well as barriers, for immigrants and the second generation today. Just how these developments have unfolded and operated in all their complexity, and how they differ in American and European societies, are important topics that call for additional research.

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¹² See, for example, Foner and Alba 2008 on how the institutionalization of religion in earlier eras has affected contemporary immigrants and their children.

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