analyses of economic globalization but the lessons learned from postcolonial studies” (p. 252).

*Sociology and Empire* should be seen as an important intervention in a longstanding trend whereby sociologists have charted a new course for the future by rewriting the history of the past. As Gurminder Bhambra pointed out in her reflection on “The Possibilities of, and for, Global Sociology,” our only hope of being able to “understand and address the necessarily postcolonial (and decolonial) present of ‘global sociology’” lies in “reconstruct[ing] backwards” our “historical understandings of modernity and the emergence of sociology” (Bhambra 2013:296–297). For at least two decades sociologists have been contemplating about their declining prestige in the academic marketplace. The questions that sociologists have been pondering relating to their “value” in the marketplace have now hit the social sciences and the humanities as a whole. At the same time, the world has grown ever more complex and interdependent and politicians and lay people alike ponder everything from terrorism to “post-racialism.” A century ago sociology emerged in the context of the “political difficulties” and contradictions created by the co-existence of imperialism and liberalism (Connell 1997:1530). Sociology’s theories and models of the world “offered a resolution” (ibid.). Today we find ourselves in a similar position. Sociology stands poised, once again, to provide a level of analysis desperately needed by policymakers and the educated public. As Steinmetz points out in his preface, “today we are confronting two crises that are often experienced as separate but are actually interwoven: ‘the crisis of the universities’ and the ‘crisis of empire’” (p. xiii). With the benefit of hindsight, such as provided by Parts I and III of *Sociology and Empire*, we can avoid making the mistakes we did in the past. The questions, problems, and theories for understanding the world today, such as provided in Part II, open up the exciting possibility that we can chart a different course for the future.

**References**


**The Re-Appearance of Race and Ethnicity**

DINA G. OKAMOTO

Indiana University
dokamoto@indiana.edu

This book provides a compelling and comprehensive account of the boundary making approach as it relates to race and ethnicity. It asks and answers key sociological questions: Under what conditions do ethnic groups and communities emerge? When will individuals strongly identify with ethnic or racial categories? How and why are racial

and ethnic boundaries sharper in certain contexts, associated with higher degrees of social closure and inequality, than in others? In doing so, Andreas Wimmer takes us on a tour de force with examples from around the world, and establishes a typology of ethnic boundary making. It elaborates upon how individual and collective actors relate to and enforce existing group boundaries by enacting strategies to shift boundaries or reinterpret their meanings, and employing practices such as discrimination, coercion, or political mobilization. The book also articulates a theory of ethnic boundary making, identifying the factors and mechanisms underlying the stability, salience, and reach of group boundaries, and tests key hypotheses with the innovative use of interview, network, and survey data.

The theoretical approach is a major achievement. Put simply, the ethnic boundary making approach asserts that ethnic groups do not simply appear as natural entities, each associated with unique cultural values and tight-knit communities bound by shared identity. Ethnic groups are made, and cultural differences and salient identities develop, under certain social conditions such as exclusion. At the same time, this does not mean that ethnic boundaries are fluid and in constant motion. Some group boundaries are relatively stable, and not all individuals can shift ethnic boundaries due to their positions in the larger hierarchy and access to resources.

The theory itself claims that institutions, resources, and political networks shape boundary strategies. Briefly, actors can respond to institutional incentives and choose to emphasize ethnic rather than other types of social divisions. The distribution of political, economic, and symbolic resources also play a role in this process, as they shape which boundary-making strategy will be pursued (i.e., boundary shifting, normative inversion), and the extent to which said strategy will be accepted by or consequential for others. In addition, established political networks determine the location of group boundaries—where group boundaries will be drawn. Importantly, the theory accounts for consensus and change, and also addresses how macro-level structures influence micro interactions, and how these interactions feedback into the larger structure, which helps us to understand how and why group boundaries form. Ultimately, the ethnic boundary making approach claims that ethnic group formation is a process of social closure, where individual and collective actors work to increase their economic opportunities and political power, and institutionalize inequality (see Chapter Seven for a useful analysis that demonstrates how cultural differences emerge from a process of social closure rather than ethnicity).

The ethnic boundary making approach also turns our attention toward a deeper understanding of the processes, structures, and outcomes that we assume to be racial or ethnic in nature. For example, Wimmer draws upon interview and network data of residents from three neighborhoods in Switzerland to understand how and why social and symbolic boundaries develop (Chapter Five). Interestingly, the logic of boundary making that emerges is not based on ethnicity, race, or citizenship—as we might have presumed—but on an established-newcomer divide. Swiss, Italian, and Turkish residents view new immigrants as not fitting within established notions of order and decency, and therefore consider them to be distinct. Wimmer provides additional evidence to challenge our assumptions about the nature of race and its determination of group boundaries in his analysis of the networks of Facebook picture friends of American college students (Chapter Six). He demonstrates how the racial homogeneity of network ties is due to ethnicity, physical proximity, and a host of other tie-formation mechanisms, in addition to race. Such an analysis reminds us that there may be other factors underlying what we presume to be a racial process.

In general, the ethnic boundary making approach questions the essential nature of race and ethnicity, and emphasizes the importance of understanding these concepts in terms of social and symbolic boundaries, and struggles over categorization and classification within the context of power hierarchies. Yet, within the subfield of race and ethnicity, there has been a healthy resistance to such a framework. Perhaps it is because, as race and ethnicity scholars, such an
approach has the potential to undermine what we do: to study ethnic and racial groups as such. Traditional research in the area of race and ethnicity takes these categories for granted as embedded within the structure of the larger society and everyday life, focusing on the experiences and consequences of race. Instead of undermining this work, it may simply be that some race and ethnicity scholars are asking different questions and examining different parts of the racial and ethnic process than those who are interested in ethnic boundary making (i.e., the emergence of ethnic groups and cultural differences).

For some scholars, embracing an approach that focuses on boundaries rather than race per se shifts the focus away from racial inequality, oppression, and domination. Adopting an ethnic boundary making framework distracts us from understanding race as a fundamental structure in society and its consequences for life chances, minimizing the social facts of race and racism in American society. Because the study of race in the United States is often equated with the experiences of African Americans and their devastating history of subordination and oppression, to say that the social and symbolic boundaries surrounding their experiences may be due to processes other than racism or discrimination is viewed as problematic. Additionally, one may ask what we gain from the ethnic boundary making approach if individuals experience the world as “ethnic” or “racial.” It could be argued that it does not matter which mechanisms or factors shape racial disparities because inequality is still a social fact and racial discrimination and closure are still operating. Does it matter that established groups in Switzerland are drawing boundaries based on perceived distance from the norms of order if material differences, and negative sentiments and threats, are directed at non-citizens? Does it matter which mechanisms influence network composition of college students’ ties when blacks in the United States still experience racial discrimination, and for them, racial closure is a key factor in producing friendship ties? This is an issue that scholars will continue to debate (see Bobo 2004).

While the former view is not without its merits, I would argue that the project of ethnic boundary making may be much closer to Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s racial formation project than we might realize. In their seminal book, *Racial Formation in the United States*, Omi and Winant (1994:48) assert that race should not be reduced to ethnicity, social class, or another social indicator, but understood as operating as its “own autonomous field of social conflict, political organization and cultural/ideological meaning.” On the other hand, they describe the pitfalls of thinking about race “as an essence” and aptly demonstrate how race is historically and politically constructed. They emphasize the importance of unpacking “racial projects” and understanding the ways in which race is enacted, produced, and institutionalized. More recently, Omi and Winant (2009:123) warn that recent theorizing about structural racism can be a slippery slope because it can lead to essentializing racial difference. To combat such a turn, they urge scholars to distinguish between race—struggles over the meanings of race and racial formation—and racism in their work. More recent studies of the social construction of race also take on a similar project by challenging claims about the essential nature of race and the notion of an individual’s race as given (Morning 2009, Saperstein and Penner 2012, Saperstein et al. 2013).

If we are serious about de-essentializing race and racial difference and inequality, we need to be willing to examine how ethnic and racial projects may be driven by non-ethnic and non-racial forces, and how culture develops under certain conditions. In the process, we may find further evidence for the ways in which certain bodies, behaviors, and ideologies are racialized. This is precisely what key research in race and ethnicity has done. For example, in their study of achievement in North Carolina public schools, Karolyn Tyson and her colleagues (2005) found that in contrast to past research, the majority of black students were achievement oriented and the burden of “acting white” was not a key explanatory factor for their lower achievement levels. In fact, high-achieving black and white students were stigmatized in similar ways as “nerds” and “geeks.” Most importantly, Tyson and her colleagues discovered that school
structures (schools with large black/white gaps in income and placement in advanced courses) rather than culture helped to explain when this stigma became racialized (also see Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1999, Carter 2005, Lewis 2003, Warikoo and Carter 2009). So if we understand, for example, whether and to what extent racial disparities in education, wealth, and access to housing originate from racial discrimination as well as other processes and factors (some of which may be impacted by race or ethnicity), we could have a deeper understanding of the social phenomena at hand and develop better policy solutions.

The call to interrogate race and ethnicity more systematically can also benefit our theorizing, which shapes our research. The ethnic boundary making project is one that advocates seeing how, when, and where race and ethnicity operate to produce inequalities. By not doing so, scholars may fall into the trap of making assumptions about how race and ethnicity work and subsequently assert faulty arguments and take on empirical projects with flawed designs. In a similar vein, Moon-Kie Jung (2011:389) argues that scholars working in the assimilation tradition have “built-in assumptions” about race, which often result in the omission or misspecification of the role of race in shaping the assimilation process. Part of this “racial unconscious” is reflected, for example, in uncritically using cultural values to explain the upward mobility of immigrant groups, or “oppositional culture” to understand the stalled progress of racial minorities. As Jung argues, studying the politics of national belonging rather than assimilation would lead us to examine unequal relations of power and struggles over resources rather than groups and their cultural differences, which is consistent with an ethnic boundary making approach.

What are the implications of using an ethnic boundary making framework for current research? Would the study of race and ethnicity disappear? This is the concern—what we now understand as racialized, and what individuals and groups may experience as racialized, will be simply understood as an aggregation of other types of processes at work, taking away from the power of race to shape individuals’ lives, their choices, as well as their life chances. It is clear that race and racism exist around the world, but this social fact needs to be studied, as it still begs the question of how race became entrenched, what social conditions and mechanisms led to its emergence and reproduction, and why it has more devastating effects in certain contexts and time periods than others. We need to take the time to unpack race and ethnicity if we want a better understanding of the processes and outcomes related to immigrant incorporation, national belonging, intergroup relations, and inequality.

References


Tyson, Karolyn, William Darity Jr., and Domini Castellino. 2005. ‘It’s Not a Black Thing’: Understanding the Burden of Acting
“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and Property.” That is what the Declaration of Independence would have said, if Thomas Jefferson had gotten his way. It was Jefferson’s colleagues on the committee drafting the Declaration who made him replace his proposed right to property with the more vague “pursuit of happiness.” Jefferson’s fellow Virginian James Madison shared his view that ownership of property should be acknowledged as a right, and wanted this right to be guaranteed by the Constitution.


An Old Idea Whose Time Has Come Again?

RAYMOND RUSSELL
University of California, Riverside
raymond.russell@ucr.edu

This book makes the case for wider use of employee ownership and profit sharing, both as a goal of national policy, and as ways to motivate employees of individual firms. It would be difficult to find three authors who are better qualified for this task. For more than three decades, sociologist Joseph Blasi has been the nation’s leading authority on employee stock ownership. For most of this time, the economist Douglas Kruse has been Blasi’s colleague and co-author in a series of increasingly larger studies of employee shareholding in the United States. In 2012, Kruse was appointed to serve as a member of the President’s Council of Economic Advisors. Economist Richard Freeman is a well-known authority on labor unions and compensation.

In the introduction and Chapter One, the authors cover the period from the Revolutionary War to the Homestead Act. The authors found more quotable lines from the Founders than they could integrate into the essay, so Chapter One ends with an appendix containing ten pages of additional quotes from John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. This is more than any reader can digest at one sitting, but I share the authors’...