Editor’s Note

The ethnic studies project is a relatively new formation in post secondary institutions. As academic formations go ethnic studies has a life line extending over a little more than a generation on college and university campuses of this nation. During this brief span of time I believe we safely can assert that ethnic studies scholarship, that occurring both inside and outside the classroom, has made major contributions to the bodies of knowledge now existing about the diverse social and cultural experiences of ethnic groups.

A defining characteristic of ethnic studies scholarship is that it has filled significant voids in what we know and understand about how human beings live and experience living. Just as importantly ethnic studies scholarship has challenged and continues to challenge old myths, stereotypes, and outright lies about the life experiences of many human groups. This is especially the case when these excesses have been used to shape what is thought about people of color. Sadly this misinformation even has also affected what many folks of color know about themselves. The corrective and evolving reinterpretable mission of ethnic studies has made important challenges to misinformation and stereotypic racist and sexist representations of people of color. In this regard the products of ethnic studies scholarship have served to rescue the historical, cultural, and social experiences of people of color from the hegemony of lies, distortions, and omissions. And while not all eth-
nic studies scholarly production has been of the positive genre alluded to here—frankly some of it has been egregious—I would argue that much of what has been made public has been within the stream of an important mission of ethnic studies: expanding the depth, scope, and understanding of what we know about the national, transnational, and diasporic experiences of diverse human groups.

The articles in this volume are part of this continuum. They each, drawing from unique disciplinary and interdisciplinary methodologies, make a contribution to what is known and knowable about the experiences of ethnic groups.

The lead article, “Interethnic Antagonism in the Wake of Colonialism: U.S. Territorial Racial and Ethnic Relations at the Margins,” by Michael Perez frames and presents a theoretical model for better understanding the complex racial and ethnic relationships shaping the social experiences of indigenous peoples of Guam. The article by Livia Kathe Wittman, “Languages and Postmodern Ethnic Identities,” challenges us to investigate the ways that our ethnic identities are shaped by the languages, verbal and non verbal, we are taught.

The article by Stephen B. Isabirye and Kooros M. Mahmoudi, “Rwanda, Burundi and Their ‘Ethnic’ Conflicts,” is a critical examination of some of the institutional factors dating to the colonial domination of Rwanda and Burundi predating the 1994 holocaust in this region of Africa. Joseph Conforti’s article, “White Ethnic: A Social Concept,” examines the concept of the white ethnic, its origins, and what it tells us about whom it describes. Importantly, Conforti advances thinking as to why the concept has currency among many social scientists.

David Briscoe’s article “Distinctive Features of the African American Family: Debunking the Myth of the Deficit Model,” revisits an ongoing discourse regarding how African American families respond to the challenges of living in a racist society. He urges social scientists, public policy makers, and others to adopt and utilize a more holistic perspective for understanding how African Americans develop the capacity to cope with the
rigors of living in the United States. In a similar thematic vein, Cynthia Kasee's article, "Patchwork and PR: Seminole-Constructed Public Image," examines the adaptability of Florida Seminoles to many cultural shifts from within and from their interfacing with the entities of this society, not the least of which is government. She argues that contemporarily Seminoles exercise their own agency in constructing their public image.

To be sure these articles are diverse. To be sure they each serve as interesting contributions to the growing base of theory, perspectives, and speculation shaping the body of ethnic studies scholarship.

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