Introduction

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The papers in this volume represent some of the best current scholarship on questions of ethnicity. All of them were first presented at the 1994 annual meeting of the National Association for Ethnic Studies, held in Kansas City, Missouri. With the announced theme *of Ethnicity: Global Perspectives*, the conference attracted scholars from many disciplines and many countries. Presentations were selected to reflect both global perspectives on ethnicity, and examples of emerging ethnic identities around the globe. The interdependence of local and global issues emerged repeatedly and became a foundational theme in many of the sessions.

The papers selected here maintain that sense of interrelatedness between global and local issues. Some begin with local issues and bring insights to bear on global questions. Others begin with global questions and bring insights into local issues. All of them present important new scholarship in ethnic studies and its relation to global issues.

It has been a commonplace for quite some time that we inhabit a shrinking world. Recent developments on the internet have increased the speed at which we move towards a global village. It is now possible to communicate almost instantaneously with anyone who has a computer, a modem, and a telephone line, anywhere in the world. Moreover, with the impending availability of satellite connectivity, soon we will no longer need to wait for the telephone company to string lines to our houses.

In a world such as this, it is increasingly important to understand the power of ethnicity in our lives. Ethnicity brings us together and drives us apart. It creates groups where there might otherwise not have been any. It divides and destroys groups which might have existed for centuries. It forms the basis for political action, and the rationale for linguistic preservation. We label ourselves, and we are labled, in the name of

ethnic identity. Surely, if we are to survive as a species, we will need to have a clearer sense of the fundamental role that ethnicity plays in all of our lives, on a world-wide scale. This volume represents a beginning attempt at that task.

The papers in this volume overlap and intersect in remarkable ways. They focus on ideology (DasGupta, McClendon, Majak), conflict (Majak, Garr, Ratan), and identity (Ratan, Covin, Herzfeld, Alhadeff). They explore situations in India (DasGupta, Ratan), Indonesia (Garr), South America (Herzfeld and Covin), and the United States (Alhadeff and McClendon). They offer insights into postcolonialism (Majak, Ratan, DasGupta, McClendon) and into minority group status development (Garr, Covin, Herzfeld, Alhadeff). Above all, they offer intensive looks at specific situations, and they draw lessons from which all of us can learn.

Kasturi DasGupta's paper, *The Global Resurgence of Ethnicity: An Inquiry into the Sociology of Ideological Discontent*, is one of the more ideologically intensive essays in this volume. DasGupta argues that the current emergence of ethnic hostility is, in every instance, a reflection of discontent with--even disbelief in--a national ideology. As she explains, national ideologies function to reassure people, even in the worst of times, of the fundamental rightness of their goals. As confidence in a national ideology breaks down, the resulting ideological vacuum leads to a resurgence of ethnicity. Frustrations begin to be redirected towards scapegoat minorities, and ethnic suspicion, hatred, and hostility emerge. This process can be seen in the breakdown of both democratic secularism as well as socialism. Taking India as a case in point, DasGupta shows how that nation's forty year experiment with a national ideology of secularism has begun to break down in the face of a lack of perceived progress in social and economic well-being. The resulting emergence of ethnic divisions can be most clearly seen in the recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the secularist India, and the recent trend towards Hinduization. Arguing that it is not the end of ideology but rather the loss of ideology that catapults nations into violent ethnic strife, DasGupta's discussion can be profitably compared with classic and recent discussions on the end of ideology and history, from Karl Marx to Francis Fukuyama. DasGupta clearly shows that resurgent ethnicity has filled the vacuum that has been created by the loss of ideology. This is an important insight for those who would seek to reduce ethnic strife nationally and globally.

John McClendon's paper explores the question of ethnic emergence and nationalist ideology from a somewhat different perspective. In *The Afrocentric Project: The Quest for Particularity and the Negation of Objectivity*, McClendon describes the intellectual and philosophical history of Afrocentricity, explains the contexts in which it developed, and shows how it has been used to affirm the integrity of an emerging Black metaphysics. Using the works of two key Afrocentrists, Molefi Asante

and Marimba Ani, McClendon shows that Afrocentrism is as subjective as any other centrism, even the Eurocentrism against which it defines itself. He then suggests that if one accepts the subjective--particularist--perspectives of Afrocentrism, then one is forced into a false kind of cultural relativism which, in the end, admits of neither centrism or universality. One result of this extreme position is the loss of objectivity as well. From this perspective, all centrisms are doomed to fall apart from within. This is a stunning commentary on the question of contested ideologies, and needs to be considered in all pluralistic nations if there are to be any fruitful discussions of national ideology at all.

A specific case of contested ideologies and ethnic emergence in a single nation is explored in Jonathan Majak's paper, *Pan-Arabism v. Pan-Africanism in the Sudan: The Crisis of Divergent Ethnic Ideologies*. Majak explores the nature and extent of political and cultural conflict between North and South in postcolonial Sudan. He explains the different ethnic heritages of North (Arabic and Islamic) and South (African and Christian) in the Sudan, and how, since independence from Britain, it is the North which has sought to provide the dominant ideology for the nation. He reviews the attempts of the North to impose Pan-Arabist policies--to Islamize and Arabize a largely Christian and African South--and discusses the reasons for the South's resistance. He explains that the current military regime, dominated by Muslim fundamentalists, is trying to turn the Sudan into an Islamic republic, and shows how this has brought about the current civil war in the Sudan. Finally, he discusses the extent to which Muslims in the North, who favor a secular government, have also been alienated by the actions and policies of the religiously fundamentalist military regime. Majak makes clear, in this paper, the extent to which ideological differences can be expressed in terms of ethnicity, and the dangers which portend in situations of contested ideology.

Sudha Ratan's paper, *From Tribal to Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of North-Eastern India*, provides a close-up look at the dynamics of the emergence of ethnic identity and the role and impact that a national ideology can have in the process. Ratan examines the contexts in which tribal groups in the North East Indian hills states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh have been transformed and mobilized into highly politicized ethnic groups. The definitions of tribe and ethnic group are explored, as are the issues of tribal/ethnic group relations with the state. She shows how India's commitment to a secularist ideology provided support for the expression, and therefore the maintenance, of ethnic group identity. Language, in particular, became a rallying symbol around which ethnic groups were mobilized. The case in the hill states shows how the spillover of linguistic and cultural nationalism in India led to the emergence of ethnic identity among the tribal groups of the hill states. The imposition of a national ideology, the attempts to integrate the region into the

nation, led to increased resistance to assimilation on the part of the tribes. Linguistic and cultural preservationist initiatives in secularist India provided the model for the hill tribes to establish their own uniqueness in terms of linguistic and ethnic characteristics. Ratan also explores how ethnicity then provided the basis for political and economic demands on the part of the newly emerged ethnic groups.

What happens once an ethnic identity has emerged? In *Cemetery Squatting and Anti-Chinese Tensions: Insights from Central Java,* Daniel Garr takes a close look at the Chinese as an ethnic group in Java and the ways in which its members confront the ongoing hostilities that they encounter in their lives. Overseas Chinese were made to feel unwelcome and "different" in proto-nationalist Java. Seen by the Javanese as neither Dutch nor Indonesian, they developed an ethnic identity in Java which persists to this day. Garr uses the example of cemetery squatting to explore the intergroup hostilities between the Javanese and the ethnic Chinese in Java. Although the Chinese are not allowed to own land in Java, they have built cemeteries on land granted to them by the Javanese court. When some Javanese workers (street peddlers and government workers) began building homes in one of these cemeteries, the Chinese began building a wall to protect the remaining land from encroachment. Exploring this seemingly straightforward conflict in depth, Garr explains that the popular Javanese stereotypes of the Chinese (entrepreneurial, wealthy) appear to support the squatters' risk-taking behavior, as well as decision to build a wall, rather than "make a fuss". Garr suggests that the act of cemetery squatting is itself an expression of ethnic hostility, in which one group appears to be succeeding in depersonalizing and encroaching upon another and presents linguistic as well as structural evidence to support this conclusion. This article raises important questions regarding the importance of perceived hostility in the development and maintenance of ethnic group identity.

The salience of language as a dimension of ethnic identity is the focus of Anita Herzfeld's *Language and Identity: The Black Minority of Costa Rica.* Here language attitudes provide insight into the dynamics of nationalism, ethnicity, and group identity. Discussing the political and social complexities encountered in situations of linguistic diversity, Herzfeld shows how differential power relations among indigenous and immigrant populations affect linguistic attitudes, and therefore linguistic outcomes. In such situations, the survival or extinction of a language will depend in large part on the contexts in which that language is evaluated. Limonese Creole provides a case study. An English creole brought to Spanish-speaking Costa Rica by Jamaican immigrants, it was once seen by its speakers as a proud badge of identity. Linguistic diversity can represent a threat to the broader political order of a nation. In a search for perceived national unity, Costa Rica has embarked on a program of national literacy in Spanish. Limonese Creole, which is not for-

mally written, has, as a result, come to be seen as a marker of lack of education or social mobility. Now redefined as "bad English" it has come to represent a liability in the eyes of its speakers and is used less and less in daily life. Herzfeld raises the question of whether language death will result in the loss of ethnic group identity as well.

David Covin explores the maintenance of ethnic identity and group consciousness through the popular media in his article, *Political Consciousness as a Component of Black Consciousness in Brazil: Its Presence in the Popular Media*. Analyzing articles in six Brazilian mass circulation magazines through a nine-year time span, Covin seeks to discover the extent to which these media identify and represent African Americans in Brazil as a distinct ethnic group. Many of the articles appear to describe or refer to African Brazilians primarily in cultural, political, or racial terms. Covin finds that there has been a shift over time in the way that magazines in Brazil portray African Brazilians, from primarily focusing on cultural contributions, to concentrating attention on political awareness. This seems particularly significant, given that the magazines analyzed have primarily a European Brazilian reading audience. It suggests that political awareness--and activism--is growing among African Brazilians. It also suggest that such levels of political awareness among African Brazilians may be gaining a level of acceptability in the larger Brazilian public discourse. An important question raised by this article is the extent to which the media has a role in promoting and maintaining ethnic group identity, and the degree to which it can shape the large public acceptance of political activism by ethnic groups which formerly were seen primarily in cultural terms.

The concluding article in this volume, Cara Judea Alhadeff's *The Spectacle of the Invisible: Sephardic Jewish Identity in Multicultural Education*, takes on one of the most challenging questions of all--the construction of identity in a group which appears to be defined out of existence. In this study of Sephardic (Spanish) Jews in North America, Alhadeff explains how it is that they are simultaneously defined and excluded by whites, by people of color, and by American (primarily German and Eastern European) Jews. She also explains how it is that American Jews, who come from countries where they themselves were defined as "not white," are encouraged to assimilate into American society as "white," but all too often finds themselves unable to attain complete acceptance by other American "whites." This is an exceptionally rich analysis of the complexities of racism, anti-Semitism, whiteness, assimilation, multiculturalism, and ethnicity in America, with truly global implications. It is particularly appropriate as an end piece to this special issue on global perspectives on ethnicity. In its exploration of "hybrid identities" it takes on questions of power, hierarchy, imposed marginality, and institutional labeling. Pointing out that "ethnic ambiguity threatens the purity of the power-structure," Alhadeff raises some of the very issues that ethnic

studies scholars must address in the coming decades. It is essential that we clarify our understandings of the ways in which we define ourselves and others. It is essential that we explore the nature of interethnic identity formation, and the opportunities that exist therein. As ethnic studies scholars, we have the responsibility to take the lead in explaining the dangers inherent in creating and imposing narrow definitions of race, ethnicity, and culture--from the local to the global.