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Introduction

Why Do We Still Talk About Race Today?

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ABSTRACT

The field of ethnic and racial studies has been transformed in important ways over the past four decades. This *Special Issue* brings together nine original research papers presented in draft form at a conference to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. In this introductory paper, we discuss key facets of contemporary debates and review some key arguments explored in the papers that follow. We also take the opportunity offered by this reflective issue to explore some of the issues that concern us editors of the journal and which formed part of the discussion at the conference.

KEYWORDS Race; race relations; racism; ethnic and racial studies; future trends.

Background

The papers in this *Special Issue* were presented at a conference held to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. The launch of the journal in 1978 came at a point

when academic discussions about race and ethnic relations were evolving in a wide range of directions, partly as a result of the impact of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the growing focus on immigration and race in European societies and continuing debates about the Apartheid regime in South Africa. The journal's first few volumes reflected these issues, as well as carrying articles from many of the leading scholars in the field. As the journal evolved and established itself as the leading journal in the field it provided a space for the publication of cutting edge research on race and ethnicity in general, as well as reflecting the changing terms of academic discourses as new generations of scholars began to engage with both conceptual and empirical questions. Indeed, it can be argued that at the time of the foundation of the journal the study of race and ethnicity was at best a marginal sub-field in most of the social sciences. The journal has sought to provide space for publishing the best new research on race, racism and ethnic relations, but also to be inclusive of scholarship on related sub-fields such as migration and refugees and nationalism. We have also maintained an open door to a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, including sociology, social policy, anthropology, political science, international relations, geography, history, social psychology and cultural studies. This reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of scholarship and research in ethnic and racial studies, and as editors we have sought to maintain a focus that crosses disciplinary boundaries in the traditional sense.

The conference was held at the University of Warwick in July 2017¹ and it brought together a group of scholars whose remit was to explore the broad theme of the conference, namely *Why Do We Still Talk About Race? The Future of Ethnic and Racial Studies*. We saw the conference both as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the journal over the forty years of its existence and an opportunity for participants to reflect on issues linked to their own research but also to comment on questions that are likely to help shape the study of race and ethnicity in the future. As editors of the journal we chose this as the overarching theme

for our 40th Anniversary celebration in order to provide an opportunity for both established and early career scholars to discuss how the sub-fields that are covered by the journal are evolving and changing. We wanted, in particular, to explore some of the reasons why we are still talking so much about race even at a time when some commentators are forecasting that we have seen at least the embryonic beginnings of a ‘post-racial’ future.

In this introductory overview, we want to take the opportunity to add some comments to set the context for the *Special Issue* as a whole. We begin with a discussion of the continuing significance of race as a social category. We then move on to discuss some key features of social research on race and ethnicity and the shifting boundaries of what is covered in this body of scholarship and research. This links up with the discussion of the evolution of research on racism and post-race theorising. The final part provides a brief summary of the core concerns of the nine papers included in this *Special Issue*, and outlines some of the linkages between them.

Continuing significance of race as a social category

In framing the conference around the question *Why Do We Still Talk About Race?* we wanted to encourage participants to reflect on the reasons why race matters seems to matter in so many places, and why it provides the basis for social mobilisation and action. Part of the inspiration for the title of the conference comes from a think-piece written by the philosopher Ian Hacking in the early 2000s. In an article entitled ‘Why Race Still Matters’ Hacking outlines the following questions that he felt could be explored more fully:

Why has race mattered in so many times and places? Why does it still matter? Put more precisely, why has there been such a pervasive tendency to apply the category of race and to regard people of different races as essentially different kinds of people?

(Hacking 2005: 102)

While this is by no means a complete list of the questions that need to be addressed at the beginning of the 21st Century, Hacking's list of issues to be addressed provides us at least with a starting point for further reflection about the continuing significance of race as a social category. It also helpfully highlights the need to locate race within specific settings in order to fully understand the ways that processes of racialisation work in practice. This applies as much to the comparative analysis of race and racism as it does to the study of race relations in particular national situations.

This has in many ways been the underlying issue that has helped to shape the ways in which social scientists have addressed the question of race since the early stages of scholarly research in this field in the United States (Frazier 1947; Du Bois 1944). The scholarly research and literature on race in the United States through the first half of the twentieth century was generally framed around the specific historical circumstances that helped to shape race relations both during and after the period of slavery. At the beginning of the twentieth century much of the focus of researchers was taken up by issues such as segregation, patterns of exclusion and domination and the meanings given to racial categories (Winant 2007; Collins 2007). At the same time, there was extensive research on the ways in which ideas about race were produced and reproduced.

We have seen a similar trend in scholarly research in other national contexts. In the British context, for example, much has been written since the 1960s about the study of race as a social category, particularly in the period since the 1950s and 1960s (Rex 1970; Banton 1966). Much of this discussion has been focused on the reasons why race has become a category that has been constructed as having social significance in specific social, political and economic environments. In the context of the development of immigration from the colonies of the British Empire much of the focus of this scholarship was on the meanings given to 'colour' and other racialised categories in urban environments, in employment and in

everyday social interactions. Indeed, the first major survey of race relations in Britain, undertaken by the Institute of Race Relations during the 1960s, was precisely framed around a concern to understand the ways in which racial ideas were gaining currency within British society and its political institutions (Rose 1968; Rose et al. 1969). This approach came to define a growing body of research in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s, with researchers responding both to popular concerns about immigration and fears about the potential for racial conflict in deprived urban communities by carrying out research to address these issues (Solomos 2014; Banton 1973; Rex 1973).

During the 1980s and 1990s we saw a further broadening of the range of issues that were being analysed within the field of race and ethnic studies. In Britain, this became evident in the growing bodies of scholarship about various facets of the politics of race and racism in British society. Growing literatures on political mobilisation and social change (Solomos and Back 1994, 1995), forms of social and cultural mobilisation (Keith 2005; Knowles 1999, 2003), and the evolution of urban multicultures (Nayak 2003; Nayak 2006), are but one facet of the new arenas of investigation that attracted the attention of new generations of scholars. In the United States we have also seen the evolution of new research agendas in scholarly debates, and this became evident in the articulation of new theoretical paradigms as well as empirical research (Omi and Winant 2015; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Elias and Feagin 2016; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015). It is also important to note that we have begun to see a growth in scholarship and research on race and racism in other geopolitical environments, and this has been evident in the pages of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* as well as in other journals over the past two decades.

Another broad area of innovation and change can be found in the noticeable expansion of feminist scholarship and research on race and ethnicity, represented by the articulation of a critique of the limits of feminist scholarship in this field and by efforts to provide a voice for

black and minority women (Brah 1993, 1996; Mirza 1992, 1997). This has been complemented by the growth of the scholarship on the intersectionalities of race, class and gender in contemporary societies (Collins 2015; Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins and Bilge 2016). Much of the growing body of research and scholarship in this field can be seen as a challenge to the lacunae to be found in dominant research agendas, which have tended to underplay the role of gender and sexuality in shaping race and ethnic relations.

As a result of the transformations in research agendas that grew apace during the 1990s and 2000s we have seen both a rapid expansion of the field of race and ethnic studies in sociology as a discipline and a noticeable expansion of research in other disciplines as well as in interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary initiatives have enabled scholars of race and ethnicity to draw upon knowledge bases and theoretical traditions both from pre-existing academic disciplines such as sociology, political science, history and anthropology, as well as from interdisciplinary areas such as women's studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, queer theory and similar areas of inquiry. Such developments reflected to some extent the search for a move away from a narrow conceptualisation of the sociology of race and racism. Thus we have seen a growing body of research on the need to bring in questions about intersectionality of the complexity of analysing the historical impact of racism is that it is often intertwined with other social phenomena, and indeed it can only be fully understood if we are able to see how it works in specific social settings (Alexander 2006; Alexander and Knowles 2005). One interesting example of this process can be found in the ways in which modern racial and nationalist ideologies rely on a complex variety of images of race, sexuality and nationhood. Such images often emphasise questions about identity, both in relation to majority and minority communities. Because race and ethnicity are intrinsically forms of collective social identity the subject of identity has been at the heart of both historical and contemporary discussions about these issues (Brubaker 2004; Calhoun 2007).

It is important, however, not just to look backwards at the emergence and evolution of race as a sub-field of sociology, but also to look forward to the range of questions and issues that we have to address at the beginning of the 21st Century. This is particularly important at a time when we have now reached a stage where the study of race and ethnic relations has become integral to sociology as a discipline. Yet it is also clear that if we aspire to develop our understanding of the social conditions that shape the role of race as a social phenomenon there is a need for more critical discussion about the changing boundaries of scholarship in this field. In the current environment, there are a range of challenging and innovative research agendas about race and racism that need to be addressed by sociologists. Charles Gallagher has noted the following in relation to American sociology:

A glance at any recent sociological annual meeting program reveals a wide range of scholarship where truly novel questions about race are being raised. Emerging areas of inquiry include research on intersections of race, class and gender, racial hybridity, identity formation, colorblind narratives of racism, growing racial inequality, pan-ethnic movements, race and religious intolerance and colorism (Gallagher 2007: 553)

This is in some ways a reasonable description of the current state of play in the social scientific study of race more generally, and in the coming period it is perhaps through addressing questions such as these that we can hope to deliver on the promise to connect the study of race to sociological theory and research more generally. In the next section of the paper we want to explore some facets of how these connections may be taken up in the development of future research agendas.

Changing research agendas

In the previous sections of this paper we have highlighted some of the shifts that we have seen in the study of race and ethnicity over the past few decades. In doing so we have argued

that the boundaries of research agendas have evolved and become somewhat broader and unsettled, certainly when we look back over the previous forty volumes of the journal.

This is certainly evident in the detailed analysis of the first forty volumes of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* by Chris Husbands. By exploring the range of papers included in these volumes Husbands analysis provides an insight into the substantive questions addressed by authors, the geographical focus of research and the theoretical paradigms used. In doing so he also argues that the issues covered by the journal have moved somewhat away from the ones that were evident when the journal was founded, although he also highlights some of the continuities in the range of issues that are covered by the journal. Indeed, it could be argued that much of what is published now in the journal has moved in directions that are somewhat different from the boundaries of the field in 1978.

This becomes clear if we look more closely at some of the issues that have become part of recent scholarly research and debate. Take, for example, the intersections between race and religious identities among migrant and ethnic minority communities. While questions about religious and cultural diversity had begun to form a part of research agendas from the 1990s onwards it is only at the beginning of the 21st Century that they have come to constitute an area of great significance for the field of race and ethnic studies. Religion seems in this context to have become more visible both as a social and research issue, and also increasingly intertwined with race and ethnicity. As a result, the connections between race, ethnicity and religion have become an important arena for social and policy related research in the past decade or so. More importantly it has become evident in the aftermath of events such as 9/11 and 7/7 that contemporary research about race and ethnicity needs to look more rigorously at the role that religion plays in shaping racialised social relations in contemporary societies. The claims by some groups within minority communities to religious and cultural rights that are seen as outside of the common values of the 'West' have become part of the current

climate of public debate and are likely to shape both popular and policy agendas in the coming period.

Another example is the question of the political inclusion or exclusion of minorities within the context of liberal democratic institutions. There is a growing awareness of the gap between formal citizenship and the de facto restriction of the economic and social rights of minorities as a result of discrimination, economic restructuring and the decline of the welfare state. This gap constitutes both evidence of a continuing failure of policy and an ongoing challenge not solely to policy-makers, but also to scholars of these issues, to rethink and reformulate responses to inequality and discrimination. In Britain, the emphasis of recent policy developments, particularly in the aftermath of the riots of 2001 and 2011, the bombings in London on 7/7 and other confrontations has been on the duties of newcomers to conform, to develop a sense of shared identity (McGhee 2010; Bloch, Neal, and Solomos 2013b). In this environment racism and discrimination have tended to be discussed less and there has been relatively less activity in tackling questions about institutionalised racism in both the public and the private sectors (Schuster and Solomos 2004; Lentin and Titley 2011).

As the papers included in this *Special Issue* highlight, albeit in rather contrasting ways one of the most important transformations that we have seen in contemporary discussions about race and racism is the increasing focusing of attention on the interrelationships between race, culture and biology. This is evident both in wider discourses in civil society as well as in academic scholarship. This in itself is not new, since scholars such as Ann Stoler, among others, have pointed to the way in which discourses about race have often worked through a racialised grammar that tied physical attributes to specific hidden dispositions, outer form to inner essence, physiognomy to character (Stoler 1995: 205). As other ideologies do, racism operates historically by constituting, within discourses, subjectivities for those who are interpellated through the language of race. It operates, as Stuart Hall notes, by constructing

impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted, or racialised, categories and their typical binary system of representation - black/white, colonizer/colonized, one of us/one of them - constantly marks the attempt to fix and naturalise a difference between belongingness and otherness (Hall 2017). Yet, as the papers included in this issue by Ann Morning, Peter Wade and Wendy Roth highlight, it is also important to note that in contemporary racialised discourses we are also seeing a questioning and a redrawing of these very same binaries through the articulation of new forms of racialised identities.

A principal means of accomplishing this disposition is to perceive the self as carried in the genes rather than transmitted via culture; as distilled through what appears to us as most natural and immediate: the body. This is where race discourses become highly productive by seeking to offer a regime of truth about the body in which, as Colette Guillaumin observes, the 'natural mark' (colour, facial appearance) is transformed into a means of inscribing the system of domination on the body of the individual, assigning to that individual his/her place as a dominated person (Guillaumin 1995). Corporeal properties, and most fetishistically, skin colour, come to furnish an epidermal schema not only for anchoring difference but for distinguishing the pure from the impure, the included from the excluded. The counterposition of this, Guillaumin notes, is that the bodies of the dominant group appeared unmarked, invisible, as composed of subjects with unlimited possibilities, or universal figures that had the capacity to occupy any habitat.

Racist symbols are not only embedded in knowledge/power discourses about black bodies but represented attitudes of mind, a moral universe. The unfolding of British colonialism and imperialism was not simply the unfolding of economic and political forms of exploitation; it was the production and reproduction of an episteme which structured the ideological production of the category British as it related to itself and to the constitution and comprehension of its Other. Colonialist discourse designates the tropes and strategies by

means of which the material and discursive agenda of colonialism was instituted and maintained as a way of knowing the other. It represented the production of historically specific forms of racism, the production and circulation of a credo of racialised meanings about the 'other'. The whole repertoire of sensibilities that were glossed as personal character came to mark the boundary between the coloniser and the colonised. Mosse (1985) has outlined some of the aesthetic features of this moral universe as it relates to 'whiteness' and 'Europeanness'. Such an aesthetic represented the race as it wanted to see itself: as the beautiful, strong, moral, normal, universal telos of history. What culture signifies in such a discourse is not the community that it is, nor the one that it aspires to, but a certain fantasy of identification through articulation.

There is by now a rich body of historical work which has analysed the ways in which ideas about race have taken shape in specific societal and political environments. But much of the contemporary social science literature on race and racism remains somewhat national in focus (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003; Faist 2010). This has resulted in a lack of historical reflexivity about the historical background to the emergence of modern racism and a failure to come to terms with the transformations of racial ideologies and practices over time and space. Yet what is also clear is that without a clear understanding of the historical context it is unlikely that we shall be able to come fully to terms with the question of how racial ideas have emerged out of and become an integral part of specific societies.

Part of the complexity of analysing the historical impact of racism is that it is often intertwined with other social phenomena, and indeed it can only be fully understood if we are able to see how it works in specific social settings. One interesting example of this process can be found in the ways in which modern racial and nationalist ideologies rely on a complex variety of images of race, sexuality and nationhood. Such images often emphasise questions about identity, both in relation to majority and minority communities. Because race and

ethnicity are intrinsically forms of collective social identity the subject of identity has been at the heart of both historical and contemporary discussions about these issues (Brubaker 2004; Calhoun 2007).

This has become an important theme in contemporary European discussions about migrant communities, Muslim communities, refugee communities and other groups that are seen as somehow not fully part of a 'European' identity (Bellamy, Castiglione, and Shaw 2006; Goldberg 2006). The preoccupation with identity can be taken as one outcome of concerns about where minorities in societies such as our own actually belong. At a basic level after all identity is about belonging, about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others. Identity gives one a sense of personal location, and provides a stable core of one's individuality; but it is also about one's social relationships, one's complex involvement with others, and in the modern world these have become even more complex and confusing. Each of us lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle within us for allegiance: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-bodied or disabled (Wetherell 2009a, 2009b). The list is potentially infinite, and so therefore are our possible belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, identify with, depends on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others. The fictive and tacit nature of these identities is something that is often taken for granted, but the power of their appeal as a social and political force is evident in contemporary mobilisations in different parts of the globe.

What recent research has highlighted, however, is that identity is not simply imposed. It is also chosen, and actively used, albeit within particular social contexts and constraints. Against dominant representations of others there is resistance. Within structures of dominance, there is agency. Analysing resistance and agency re-politicises relations between collectivities and draws attention to the central constituting factor of power in social relations.

But it is possible to overemphasise resistance; to validate others through validating the lives of the colonised and exploited (Hall 1991, 1993). Valorising resistance may also have the unintended effect of belittling the enormous costs exacted in situations of unequal power, exclusion and discrimination. While political legitimacy, gaining access or a hearing, may depend on being able to call up a constituency and authorise representations through appeals to authenticity, it provides the basis for policing the boundaries of authenticity wherein some insiders may find themselves excluded because they are not authentic enough. For example, stressing race and ethnic differences can obscure the experiences and interests based on class or gender divisions. We therefore need to ask: Who is constructing the categories and defining the boundaries? Who is resisting these constructions and definitions? What are the consequences being written into or out of particular categories? What happens when subordinate groups seek to mobilise along boundaries drawn for the purposes of domination? What happens to individuals whose multiple identities may be fragmented and segmented by category politics?

One of the problems with much of the contemporary discussion of racialised identity politics is that the dilemmas and questions outlined above are not adequately addressed. This is largely because much discussion is underpinned by the presumption that one's identity necessarily defines one's politics and that there can be no politics until the subject has excavated or laid claim to her/his identity. Inherent in such positions is the failure to understand the way in which identity grows out of and is transformed by action and struggle. This is one of the dangers of the preoccupation of exactly who is covered by specific racial and ethnic categories in contemporary European societies. By way of example, the usage of the notion of black to cover a variety of diverse communities, which was still widely used by scholars in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s, has been rejected by scholars in favour of other categories such as Asian, Muslim or African Caribbean (Modood and Ahmad 2007;

Modood 2005). Yet others have sought to argue for a notion of black grounded in racial particularity. But the danger of these approaches is that one is presented with no more than a strategy of simple inversion wherein the old bad black essentialist subject is replaced by a new good ethnic or cultural essentialist subject whose identity necessarily guarantees a correct politics (Cheong et al. 2007).

The increasingly complex sets of migrations, belongings, mixings, ethnic identifications, settlements, and what some scholars term ‘super-diversity’ highlight for some scholars both the redundancy of race and its persistent force. Gilroy (2000), for example suggests that the concept of race has become increasingly absurd in contemporary societies. Yet, as he acknowledges the social dynamics of race and ethnicity continue to persistently deliver exclusionary identifications, processes and outcomes. In his examination of the linkages between constructions of race, the racialization of social relations, antiracism and the end of race Goldberg (2008: 1) worries as what gets ‘buried’ and more, what ‘buried alive’? He goes on to ask, ‘what residues of racist arrangement and subordination in social, economic, cultural, psychological, legal and political – linger unaddressed and repressed?’ In this context it seems that it is important to connect the debates about the need to jettison the language and category of race (Miles and Brown 2003), with the debates about planetary humanism and transnational belongings (Valluvan 2016), with the debates about recognizing the extent to which race is still an ‘ordering mechanism’ (Goldberg 2008: 2) in political and policy worlds and in the materiality of everyday lives.

The importance of researching the articulation and evolution of new ways of talking about race and racism in the contemporary global environment is a theme that runs through the substantive papers that are included in this *Special Issue* and it is to be expected that future issues of the journal will provide further evidence of new constructions of race and racism. It is to these papers that we now turn.

Some key themes

Turning now to the nine papers that we include in this *Special Issue* we want to briefly outline the key themes that they seek to cover. While each paper can be read as making its own specific contribution to the overarching themes of the conference there are a number of recurring themes that run across them, and it is therefore useful to reflect on them in order to reflect on the ways they contribute both to on-going debates as well as provide suggestions about how we may proceed in developing research agendas that are relevant for the twenty-first century.

The first paper is by Chris Husbands and it is organised around an overview of the substantive content of the 262 issues of the journal. It provides an important insight into the evolving editorial composition of the journal, the changing content over the first forty volumes and the evolution of both subject and country coverage of the journal. Husbands analysis is the first systematic overview of the content of the journal and it should prove to be of value to scholars and researchers who want to gain an overall feel for how the journal has evolved and changed in that period since 1978.

The second paper is by Claire Alexander and it takes as its starting point the evolution of debates about race and ethnic identities in the context of the UK. Alexander argues that over the past three decades we have seen, in the British context at least, a growing fragmentation of the notion of political blackness, both in and out of the academy, leading to a situation where the study of race may be seen as becoming less central in both academic and public discourses. This development has taken place at the same time that we have seen an increasing focus by researchers on issues of cultural and ethnic identity, and more recently on migration. For Alexander, whatever the merits of what she terms the ‘cultural turn’ in scholarship about race and ethnic relations, it remains important to analyse the role of racism

in shaping the social and political position of racialised minorities in British society and to explore the possibilities for mobilisation across racial and ethnic boundaries. Given the focus on Alexander's account on the British context it is difficult to generalise from it, but is worth noting that related debates seem to be taking place in the U.S. about the shifting boundaries of (Valdez and Golash-Boza 2017; Ray et al. 2017).

The following two papers, by Ann Morning and Peter Wade, explore the impact of new scientific technologies on the construction of racial identities. Morning's paper argues that over the past two decades we have seen technological developments in genetics and in cosmetics that complicate and claims of race-group membership are being complicated by, as well as by new respect for subjective self-identification. As a result, Morning argues that there are more paths than ever to claiming and demonstrating racial belonging, including genetic, cosmetic, emotive and constructed. Peter Wade's paper engages with at least some of the issues to be found in Morning's paper by analysing the complex ways in which human population genomics aims to trace human migration histories and refine forensic identification techniques. While Wade acknowledges that concerns have been raised that can act as a way to reinscribe racial differences, he also argues that it is also important to explore the ways that geneticists are embedded in national contexts and speak to current debates about racialised and cultural identities.

Wendy Roth's paper connects with the previous two papers and begins from the observation, shared by Morning and Wade, that in contemporary societies individuals are claiming greater scope for choice in their racial identities. By contrast to this development, however, Roth argues forcefully that conceptions about observed race have not evolved to the same extent. Roth argues that it is important, therefore, for researchers to study how racial appraisals are constructed and re-constructed. Her paper seeks to lay the basis for this by exploring the

different analytical levels and methodological approaches used to understand how observed race, norms of racial classification, and societal norms of the racial order are constructed in contemporary societies.

The importance of the comparative analysis of the role of race and ethnicity has been a recurrent refrain in much of the literature in this field, particularly in recent scholarly research agendas. This trend in the literature is evident in Nancy Foner's paper, which is focused on a comparative analysis of Afro-Caribbean and African migrants and their children on both sides of the Atlantic. Foner's account highlights how the social, political, and demographic contexts of and historical developments in different societies influence the nature and impact of racial boundaries and barriers. Drawing on a comparison of Britain, France, the Netherlands and the United States Foner's analysis raises important questions about the differences as well as the similarities between the experiences of black minority communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

The following two papers, by Miri Song and Marco Martiniello explore the changing dynamics of race and ethnicity in Britain and Belgium. Song's paper argues that it is important, at a time of changing public discourses about immigration and difference not to lose sight of the importance of retaining a focus on race. Song points out that although it is important to explore the social and political impact of xenophobia and ethnocentrism we cannot reduce the study of race to these phenomena. It is important for researchers, she argues, to understand the central place that long-standing beliefs about race and racial difference play in the construction of contemporary forms of racism in different social and cultural arenas. Song argues that there is a danger in some contemporary scholarship that we lose sight of the importance of racism and shift attention instead to more sanitised concepts

such as ethnicity. In opposition to this trend Song argues that we must continue talking about race and explore its continuing significance in contemporary societies.

Marco Martiniello's paper takes the analysis further by drawing on instances of what he sees as the uneven emergence of a global post-racial generation whose understanding of race are shaped through artistic collaboration. For Martiniello race and racism remain important in shaping social relations and racialised identities. Indeed, he argues that in many places, racist exclusion and racist behaviours remain central to the everyday experiences of racialised minorities. But he also warns against the dangers of ignoring the emergence of forms of contact across racialised boundaries. Martiniello argues that among urban youth in Belgium we can see examples of collaborations in artistic and cultural practices that transcend ethnic, racial, gender, class and religious boundaries. He suggests that researchers need to combine a continuing interest in the role of racism with a more nuanced approach that includes more detailed analysis of examples of everyday practices that transcend race.

The final two papers are framed around two areas that have been of some importance in recent debates about race and ethnicity, at least in the European context. Nasar Meer's paper investigates the evolving relationship between scholarship on race and the more specific literature on post-colonialism. He argues that although the focus of attention on post-colonialism has produced some important insights it is also important to discuss the ways in which there are often important differences between the different streams of scholarship. He points to the tendency, for example, for post-colonial scholars to portray race scholarship from a narrow analytical frame that does not acknowledge both the history of research paradigms in the field and the changing contours of research agendas. Meer argues that it is important to pay attention to the distinctions between these two fields of scholarship, and to acknowledge the rather different conceptual and empirical contexts that they are addressing.

In the concluding paper Stephen Small focuses on the changing experiences of the evolving and growing number of black communities in contemporary European societies. Small argues that although much scholarly attention has been focused on those black communities in societies with a colonial legacy, such as the United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal, it is also important to acknowledge the presence of black communities within the wider European environment. He highlights the evolving situation in Spain, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Republic of Ireland, which have growing black minority communities. He argues that we know relatively little about the position of these communities and their experiences of racism. Small's account suggests that the role of black communities in Europe needs to form part of any rounded analysis of contemporary accounts of the evolving situation across all parts of Europe.

Conclusion

The first forty volumes of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* have been shaped by important transformations in both the wider social environment and in the academic cultures that have developed in sociology and other disciplines. They provide an overview of how various trends and conceptual approaches have evolved and changed over this period. As we look forward to the next few decades we are confident that the journal will be able to play an important role in both reflecting and shaping future research and scholarly agendas. The need for high quality research on race and ethnicity has become all the more evident in the context of the turmoil around race and ethnicity that we have witnessed not only in Europe, the United States but also in many other parts of the globe.

As a journal that has been committed to publishing the highest quality research in this evolving field of scholarship, and to serve the growing number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary communities that are engaging with questions about the complex forms of

racism, racial ideologies, racial inequalities, the relationships between race, gender and class, the role of state and political institutions and the social organisation of race and ethnicity. But there will no doubt be issues that come to the fore that will be a surprise to us and to other scholars working in the field. We shall, therefore, seek to engage fully with all scholars working in the field and to broaden the boundaries of the sub-fields that we cover. The space we have provided for engaged debate and analysis through the *Ethnic and Racial Studies Review* reflects this on-going commitment to engage with debates and public issues.

Given the importance of questions about race and ethnicity within the wider social, cultural and political environment it will also be important that the journal does not retreat into the narrow context of academic scholarship and ignore the relationship between research and policy agendas. As is evident in recent debates about immigration and multiculturalism that have been developing in various parts of the globe there are important public policy issues that lie at the heart of the study of race and ethnicity. Indeed, as is evident in the pages of this issue scholarly debates are often inextricably linked with policy debates and with everyday discourse about race. We shall aim to engage as fully as we can with on-going debates in both the political sphere and in civil society about the role of race and ethnicity in shaping the social fabric of contemporary societies. As a number of scholars have noted much of the empirical work in the field of race and ethnicity is of some significance in relation to public policies on such issues as education, housing and policing (Banton 2008; Bloch, Neal, and Solomos 2013a). An important challenge at the beginning of the twenty-first century is to explore more fully the question of what kind of policies we need in order to address both entrenched social inequalities shaped by race and the popular articulation of racist ideologies. An important area of discussion can be found in the critical analysis of the impact of anti-racist policies and programmes, and this has been a theme that we have explored in some detail in the pages of the journal (Paradies 2016). At the same time it is also important to

explore the impact of broader social and economic policies on racial inequalities (Wilson 2016, 2017).

As we look to the future we aim to keep *Ethnic and Racial Studies* as a journal that provides our readers with the best research papers in this changing and expanding field of research. We have moved a long way since our foundation in 1978 and we look forward to the challenges ahead of us at a time when questions about race and ethnicity remain at the heart of many contemporary social and political questions.

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