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052160317X - Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights

Edited by Stephen May, Tariq Modood, and Judith Squires

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Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights

This interdisciplinary collection addresses the position of minorities in democratic societies, with a particular focus on minority rights and recognition. For the first time, it brings together leading international authorities on ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights from both social and political theory, with the specific aim of fostering further debate between the disciplines. In their introduction, the editors explore the ways in which politics and sociology can complement each other in unraveling the many contradictory aspects of these complex phenomena. Topics addressed include the constructed nature of ethnicity, its relation to class and to “new racism,” different forms of nationalism, self-determination, and indigenous politics, the politics of recognition versus the politics of redistribution, and the reemergence of cosmopolitanism. This book is essential reading for all those involved in the study of ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights.

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Preface

Like many publications, this one has had a long gestation. The idea for it has emerged, over time, from a number of closely related ventures with which we have been centrally involved.

The first of these was a major conference, Nationalism, Identity and Minority Rights, organised by the three of us, at the University of Bristol in September 1999. The conference had two principal aims. The first was to achieve a critical nexus between the disciplines of sociology and politics with respect to debates on ethnicity, nationalism, and identity politics. The second key aim of the conference was to achieve an international perspective on these issues, drawing from as wide a variety of social and political contexts as possible. In both respects, the conference was regarded as a major success. Key commentators from within sociology and politics, as well as other related disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, and education, contributed to the conference. The internationalism of the conference was represented both by the range of contexts discussed, and by the participants themselves, who came from thirty-seven countries.

At the conference, the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, situated within the Sociology Department at the University of Bristol, and with Tariq Modood as its Director, was also launched. The Centre has subsequently become a key UK contributor to funded research in these areas.

Also closely associated with the centre has been the establishment in 2001 of the international journal, *Ethnicities*, edited by Stephen May and Tariq Modood. The journal's aims reflect those of the conference – to promote a critical dialectic between sociology and politics, and related disciplines, in relation to ethnicity, nationalism and identity politics. A related objective of the journal is to examine the complex interconnections between culture and structure with respect to the mobilisation of ethnicity, other social movements, and the implications of such mobilisations for modern nation-states. In this sense, it aims specifically to bring together the more 'traditional' materialist emphases and concerns

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of race and ethnicity studies, with the wider theoretical debates on the (re)construction of democratic societies.

And it is this last concern that we want to revisit in more detail and in more depth in this edited collection. In order to do this, we have again brought together many of the leading academic commentators in social and political theory to discuss explicitly these issues and their interconnections. In so doing, we hope to show what each discipline can offer the other in terms of continuing to build our understanding, and explication, of the complex phenomena that are ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights, along with their individual and collective impact on modern nation-states.

This is, we believe, crucially important if academic debates on these issues are to continue to move forward. However, there is also of course much more at stake here as well. After all, *how* the politics of ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights are enacted and outworked in the social and political contexts in which many of us live invariably has enormous, and sometimes very damaging, consequences for those whom it directly affects. This makes the effective study of ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights all the more urgent.

In bringing this edited collection to print – and sometimes we did wonder if it would ever actually make it – we are enormously grateful to our contributors, who persisted with us and this project over what ended up being a much longer timeframe that we had ever anticipated. We would also like to thank the anonymous readers commissioned by CUP for their highly apposite and constructive comments on the original proposal and the first draft of the manuscript – the end result is significantly enhanced by these interventions.

To our colleagues and erstwhile colleagues in the Sociology and Politics Department at the University of Bristol, many thanks for providing the stimulating intellectual and collegial environment that allowed this work to develop. And finally to Sarah Caro at CUP, for her outstanding editorial support and advocacy throughout. It was she who encouraged us to persist with this edited collection, when we ourselves were at times not so sure. We hope that you will agree that the end result was worth it.

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