

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malešević and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Ernest Gellner was a unique scholar whose work covered areas as diverse as social anthropology, analytical philosophy, the sociology of the Islamic world, nationalism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism, East European transformations and kinship structures. Despite this diversity, there is an exceptional degree of unity and coherence in Gellner's work with his distinctly modernist, rationalist and liberal world-view evident in everything he wrote. His central problematic remains constant: understanding how the modern world came into being and to what extent it is unique relative to all other social forms. Ten years after his death, this book brings together leading social theorists to evaluate the significance of Gellner's legacy and to re-examine his central concerns. It corrects many misunderstandings and critically engages with Gellner's legacy to provide a cutting-edge contribution to understanding our contemporary post-9/11, global, late modern, social condition.

SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway. His recent publications include *Identity as Ideology: Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2006), *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (2004), *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State* (2002) and *Making Sense of Collectivity* (co-edited with Mark Haugaard, 2002).

MARK HAUGAARD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway and was Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute, Florence. His recent publications include *Hegemony and Power* (2006), *Power: A Reader* (2002) and *Making Sense of Collectivity* (co-edited with Siniša Malešević, 2002).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malešević and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by

Siniša Malešević and Mark Haugaard



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521882910

© Cambridge University Press 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-88291-0 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-70941-5 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For our children Alex, Luka and Vanessa

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malešević and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
Introduction: an intellectual rebel with a cause MARK HAUGAARD AND SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ	1
Part I Civil society, coercion and liberty	29
1 Ernest Gellner on liberty and modernity ALAN MACFARLANE	31
2 Predation and production in European imperialism MICHAEL MANN	50
3 Power, modernity and liberal democracy MARK HAUGAARD	75
4 Gellner versus Marxism: a major concern or a fleeting affair? PETER SKALNÍK	103
Part II Ideology, nationalism and modernity	123
5 Nationalism: restructuring Gellner's theory NICOS MOUZELIS	125
6 Between the book and the new sword: Gellner, violence and ideology SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ	140
7 Ernest Gellner and the multicultural mess THOMAS HYLLAND ERIKSEN	168

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii Contents

Part III Islam, postmodernism and Gellner's metaphysic	187
8 Islam, modernity and science MICHAEL LESSNOFF	189
9 Truth, reason and the spectre of contingency KEVIN RYAN	227
10 Gellner's metaphysic JOHN A. HALL	253
<i>Index</i>	271

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on contributors

THOMAS HYLLAND ERIKSEN is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo and holds a Special Chair in Anthropology at the Free University of Amsterdam. He has published numerous books in Norwegian and English, including *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (1993/2002), *Small Places – Large Issues* (1995/2001), *A History of Anthropology* (2001, with F. S. Nielsen) and *Engaging Anthropology* (2006).

JOHN A. HALL is the James McGill Professor at the Department of Sociology, McGill University, Montreal. He is the author, co-author or editor of twenty-two books, including *Powers and Liberties* (1985), *Liberalism* (1989), *Coercion and Consent* (1994), *International Orders* (1996), *Is America Breaking Apart?* (2001), *The State of the Nation* (Cambridge, 1998) and *The Anatomy of Power* (Cambridge, 2006). He is currently completing an intellectual biography of Ernest Gellner.

MARK HAUGAARD lectures in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and was Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute. His publications include *The Constitution of Power* (1997), *Power in Contemporary Politics* (2000), (co-ed.) *Making Sense of Collectivity* (2002), (ed.) *Power: A Reader* (2002) and (co-ed.) *Hegemony and Power* (2006).

MICHAEL LESSNOFF recently retired as Reader in Politics and is currently Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Politics, University of Glasgow, Scotland. He studied at the University of Glasgow and Balliol College, Oxford. Among his publications are *The Structure of Social Science* (1974), *Social Contract* (1986), *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Protestant Ethic: An Enquiry into the Weber Thesis* (1994), *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century* (1999) and *Ernest Gellner and Modernity* (2002).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malešević and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x Notes on contributors

ALAN MACFARLANE is Professor of Anthropological Science at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of King's College. He is the author of over a dozen books, including *The Origins of English Individualism* (1978), *The Riddle of the Modern World* (2000) and *Letters to Lily: On How the World Works* (2004). His next book, *Japan through the Looking Glass*, will be published in 2007.

SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ lectures at the Department of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway. Previously he was a research fellow in the Institute for International Relations (Zagreb) and the Centre for the Study of Nationalism (Prague). He has also held visiting research fellowships in the Institute for Human Sciences (Vienna) and the London School of Economics. His books include *Identity as Ideology: Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2006), *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (2004) and *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State* (2002).

MICHAEL MANN is a Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of many prominent publications including a prize-winning series *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. I: *A History of Power from the Beginning to 1760 AD*, and vol. II: *The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760–1914* (Cambridge, 1986, 1993). Recent highly successful books include *Incoherent Empire* (2003), *Fascists* (Cambridge, 2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy* (Cambridge, 2005), winner of the 2006 Barrington Moore award of the American Sociological Association. He is currently working on the third volume of *The Sources of Social Power: The Globalization of Capitalism, Empires and the Nation-State*.

NICOS MOUZELIS is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. He is author of many influential books including *Modern Greece: Facets of Underdevelopment* (1979), *Politics in the Semi-Periphery* (1986), *Back to Sociological Theory* (1992), *Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong?* (1995) and *Bridges: Between Modern and Late Modern/Postmodern Theorising* (forthcoming).

KEVIN RYAN lectures at the Department of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway, and is the author of *Social Exclusion and the Politics of Order* (2007). He is interested in social exclusion and marginality, and is currently researching contemporary innovations in the governance of social difference.

PETER (PETR) SKALNÍK is a social anthropologist specialising in politics and Africa. He taught at Charles University, Comenius University of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malešević and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on contributors

xi

Bratislava, University of Leiden and University of Cape Town, and at present teaches social anthropology at universities in Pardubice, Czech Republic and Wrocław, Poland. He first met Ernest Gellner in 1976 in the wake of his escape to the West following his steady opposition to communist dictatorship. Since 1997, together with Jiří Musil, he has convened in Prague a monthly Gellner Seminar, a respected platform for discussion among Czech and foreign social scientists. Skalník's publications include *Outwitting the State* (1989), *Political Culture* (2004) and *The Early Writings of Bronisław Malinowski* (Cambridge, 2nd edn, 2005).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88291-0 - Ernest Gellner and Contemporary Social Thought

Edited by Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

This work emerged out of a conference held at the National University of Ireland, Galway in May 2005, to commemorate eighty years since the birth of Gellner, in 1925, and ten years since his death, in 1995. In order to bring this conference together we received support from many quarters. In particular we would like to thank the following for their help and support: the Social Science Research Centre (NUI, Galway); the Department of Political Science and Sociology (NUI, Galway); the Arts Faculty (NUI, Galway); the Sociological Association of Ireland; and the Czech Embassy in Dublin. Without the assistance of these bodies, this conference, and consequent book, would not have been possible. Many individuals also gave us their assistance, especially Josef Havlas, the Czech Ambassador, for opening the conference, Fiona Bateman with organisation, Maria-Alexandra Gonzalez, who committed the proceedings to digital video, Gerard Delanty for reading and commenting upon the manuscript, and Kevin and Patricia for proofreading.