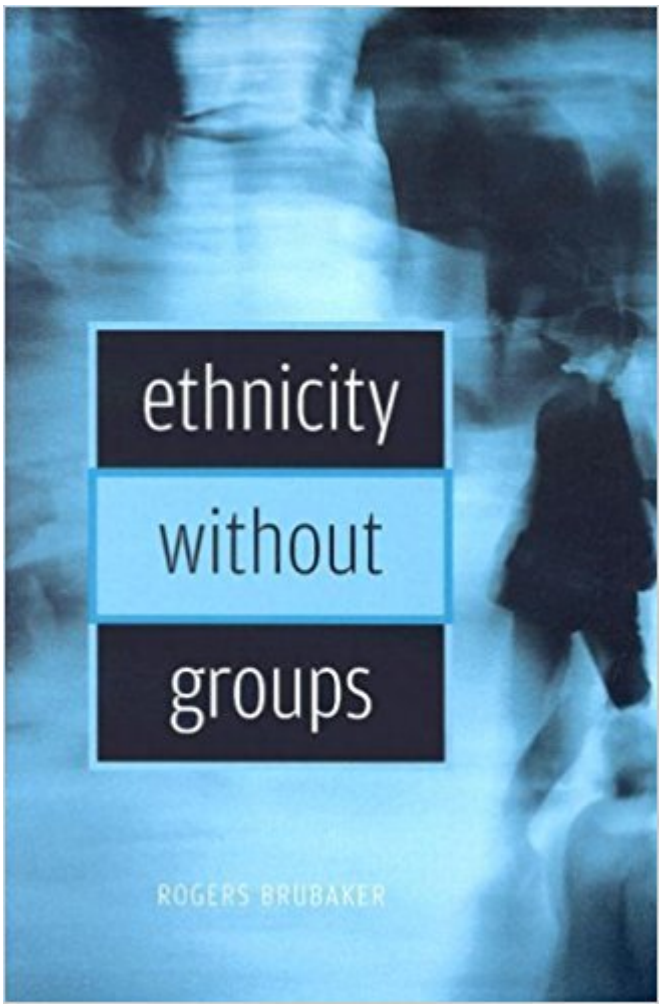
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Ethnicity Without Groups



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Synopsis

Despite a quarter-century of constructivist theorizing in the social sciences and humanities, ethnic groups continue to be conceived as entities and cast as actors. Journalists, policymakers, and researchers routinely frame accounts of ethnic, racial, and national conflict as the struggles of internally homogeneous, externally bounded ethnic groups, races, and nations. In doing so, they unwittingly adopt the language of participants in such struggles, and contribute to the reification of ethnic groups.In this timely and provocative volume, Rogers Brubaker--well known for his work on immigration, citizenship, and nationalism--challenges this pervasive and commonsense "groupism." But he does not simply revert to standard constructivist tropes about the fluidity and multiplicity of identity. Once a bracing challenge to conventional wisdom, constructivism has grown complacent, even cliched. That ethnicity is constructed is commonplace; this volume provides new insights into how it is constructed. By shifting the analytical focus from identity to identifications, from groups as entities to group-making projects, from shared culture to categorization, from substance to process, Brubaker shows that ethnicity, race, and nation are not things in the world but perspectives on the world: ways of seeing, interpreting, and representing the social world.

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Customer Reviews

The book contains much that is interesting and novel: an illuminating exploration of how research in cognitive psychology can inform our understanding of ethno-national identity; an essay on the return

of a soft version of assimilation as a desideratum for immigrants in the West; a trenchant critique of the use of the ethnic/civic distinction in nationalist studies; a rich analysis of how the 1848 revolutions were commemorated in 1998 in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia; and a sensible review of the literature on nationalist and ethnic violence. The analysis is lucid and well written throughout and makes for a worthwhile collectionÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Brubaker is to be commended for producing a stimulating mix of history, politics, and sociology. (Bill Kissane Ethics and International Affairs)The chapters of Rogers BrubakerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s excellent new book are a stimulating collection of essays and articles, several of them co-authored, which were published between 1999 and 2004. The book takes its title from Chapter One, Ã¢â ¬ËœEthnicity without Groups,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ an elegant critique of the reification of ethnic groupsÃ¢â ¬Â¦ A fine book by a distinguished author. (Steve Fenton Ethnic and Racial Studies)[I]ts main messages concern how to think and talk about ethnicity: shake off the conceptual and analytical confusions that have made the subject a trap for unwary enthusiasts. Wisely, scrupulously, and concretely, Rogers Brubaker provides guidance for avoiding the trap. (Charles Tilly Sociological Forum)Ethnicity without Groups is decidedly the most incisive and compelling treatment known to me of a complex of issues that engage sociologists, historians, political scientists, literary theorists, and cross-disciplinary specialists in ethnic studies. Where are we right now, in our understanding of Ã¢â ¬Ëœethnicity,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Ã¢â ¬Ëœidentity,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Ã¢â ¬Ëœnationalism,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ and Ã¢â ¬ËœassimilationÃ¢â ¬â„¢? The answers to these basic questions contained in the chapters now before us speak vividly to contemporary discourse, and will command immediate attention. (David Hollinger, University of California, Berkeley, author of Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism)Ethnicity without Groups is a formidable manuscript that is certain to become a key reference for the ethnicity, nationalism, and it is to be hoped race literatures. It is marvelously unconventional and originally argued as well as energetically written. (Christian Joppke, International University Bremen, author of Selecting by Origin: Ethnic Migration in the Liberal State)

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This is an excellent book that achieves exactly what it sets out to do. Brubaker’s book questions the

ways in which most people view society and conflicts. It has been particularly useful for my own work on Syria as this book provides a framework through which you can question the idea and meaning of a sectarian war. Perhaps most useful are his challenges to move 'beyond identity' and 'beyond groupism'; the challenge here is to reexamine the idea that homogeneous entities such as 'Alawis, Sunnis, Jihadis, and Kurds exist in Syria. This is an important framework to use, whether in the field of political science or sociology, and should be recommended reading for anyone interested in so-called identity.

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