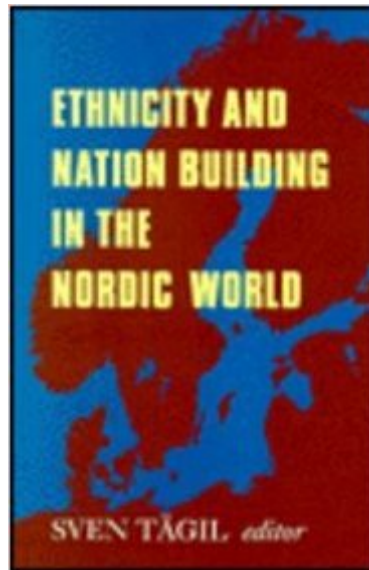




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Ethnicity And Nation Building In The Nordic World



Synopsis

Few people would include Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland; four stable and apparently homogeneous countries lying on the northern periphery of Europe; within the context of the reemergence of ethnic nationalism throughout the world; yet each country contains ethnic minorities. The grave problems throughout the world involving ethnic groups and multicultural societies make studies of ethnicity particularly useful; both for their considerable intrinsic interest and as necessary background for making pragmatic decisions. The place of ethnic minorities in the Nordic countries, with their long traditions of national identity, integral nationalism, and cultural homogeneity, is of interest from at least three comparative viewpoints. First, the historical, institutional, and cultural similarities among these countries make them unique for internal comparison. Second, the Nordic countries provide especially well-documented and researched models for the study of ethnicity in other Old World countries based on integral nationality. And, finally, the countries offer instructive comparisons with nations of more recent origin created by multiethnic immigration such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil.

TǎfÂgil begins the volume with a theoretical discussion of ethnicity in both Nordic and international contexts. Gunnar Karlsson, Hans Jacob Debes, and Axel KjǎfÂr SǎfÂrrenson treat nationalism, as separate from minority issues, in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland. Helge Salvesen, Einar Niemi, Max Engman, and Lorenz Rerup examine the old territorial ethnic minorities: the Lapps, Swedish Finns, Finnish Swedes, Karelians, and Danish Germans. Harald Runblom concludes the volume with a discussion of contemporary immigration and immigrants.

TǎfÂgil points out in his introduction that while interethnic tensions in the Nordic societies seem insignificant compared with that of other societies, the picture of harmony is not quite historically accurate. He notes that the "image of a homogeneous, peaceful Nordic region deserves a new, unified examination, in which the focus should be on the relationships between state and nation, between ethnicity and territory, and between ethnic majorities and minorities. Such is indeed the purpose of this book."

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Sven Tjallingil is a professor of history at the University of Lund, Sweden.

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