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Navigating Ethnicity: Segregation, Placemaking, and Difference

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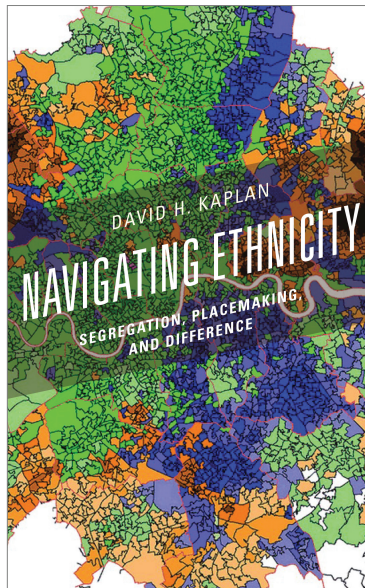
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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Navigating Ethnicity: Segregation, Placemaking, and Difference

David H. Kaplan. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. xiii and 243 pp., maps, tables, bibliography, index. \$79.00 paper (ISBN 978-1-5381-0188-9); \$32.00 cloth (ISBN 978-1-5381-0189-6); \$30.00 electronic (ISBN 978-1-5381-0190-2).

Introduction by Emily Skop^{id},
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This book review forum on David H. Kaplan's *Navigating Ethnicity: Segregation, Placemaking, and Difference* brings together commentaries by Pablo Bose, Jason Hackworth, and myself. These are followed by David H. Kaplan's response and engagement with his critics. As the commentaries reveal, *Navigating Ethnicity* is a thought-provoking and important contribution that tackles the extremely complicated terrain of ethnicity using a global perspective. The author does an exemplary job exploring the “frustrating richness” of ethnicity (p. 18). Worthy of note is that the author promises to do this “across the world” (p. 19), and, indeed, he does bring up dozens of examples of how ethnicity is manifested in multiple and different contexts. This is the most valuable element of the book, as the reader learns how the concept of ethnicity shifts across borders and between and within places. The overall conclusion from reviewers is that the book is excellent in explaining key concepts and providing informative examples of how ethnicity plays a role in everyday geographies.

The commentaries that follow pick up on this theme and all agree that the social constructivist argument used by the author is a theoretical framing that stands up to most critiques. This framing moves away from essentialism, which limits ethnicity to hereditary, biology, and primordial ties, toward an understanding of ethnicity as both situational and dynamic—with individual group members sustaining and asserting their ethnic identities in uneven and differential ways, depending on the social and political environment that surrounds them. As Skop and Li (2017) contended, ethnic groups caught in this system of ascriptive categorization might be the result of a group's attempts to withstand structural disparities or to gain privileges

that might otherwise be denied to them based on some other social identifiers.

Kaplan's book emphasizes the role of agency while navigating the structural dynamics of ethnic identity formation, thus the title, *Navigating Ethnicity*. Social constructionists, like Kaplan, argue that ethnic identities can be self-claimed or externally imposed, depending on circumstances. Throughout the text, Kaplan suggests that individuals typically self-identify as a member of a particular ethnic group to assert their sense of belonging, to maximize the benefits associated with this identity, to retreat from a group to minimize the disadvantages, or to disavow an ethnic identity due to fear of persecution. The end result is examples of ethnic identity formation as an embodied process, that is often subject to segregation, exploitation, and conflict, but that is also the result of celebration, resilience, and place making.


Because of its reliance on the social constructionist framing, there are some concepts in geography, sociology, and ethnic studies that do not appear in *Navigating Ethnicity*, as identified in the reviews that follow. Bose suggests that the dynamic of contested place making, especially as it relates to transnationalism, could be further developed. Hackworth recommends further engagement with how ethnicities interact with hegemonic whiteness. I contend that a more in-depth exploration of intersectionality might prove very useful, as it conveys the critical idea that many systems interact to put people in multidimensional disadvantage or advantage.

In my work with migrants, refugees, and their children, I find that using an intersectional framework helps me recognize how race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other markers of difference intersect and inform one another when it comes to identity formation. There is no hierarchy of ethnicity over other markers of difference; rather, a person experiences life through the intersection of a variety of identities that result in varying systems of inequality. For example, using “Asian Indian” as the basis for categorization might result in “racial lumping” by the dominant society, which in turn reinforces the “model minority” status and myth of this migrant group (Skop 2016). Yet Asian Indian migrants and their children experience different points of entry into the United States, endure legal classifications that vary considerably, and traverse dramatically differential sociopolitical terrain (Skop 2012). The combined aspects of one’s identity can either intensify (through multiple forms of oppression) or buffer (via other forms of privilege) the full force of inequality that individuals and groups of people experience.

The focus of this text is on ethnicity, but the reality is that ethnicity cannot be as easily separated from other identity markers, and especially the markers of race and class. To be sure, the author does not steer away from these identity markers; on the contrary, he tackles the role of race and class throughout the text, and especially in chapters 4, 5, 7, and 9. Nonetheless, these identity markers are often treated separately, rather than holistically as a system of social differentiation and social stratification, which creates unequal access to valued resources, services, and positions in society. Turning to the intersectionality literature would provide the author with an opportunity to explore the critical concept of privilege (and its connection to whiteness) more deeply. There is a wealth of literature on whiteness and privilege that would provide further complexity to the author’s treatment of ethnicity. It would also help with the awkwardness that

comes with using terms like “ethnics” “co-ethnics” and “nonethnics.” After all, who is a “nonethnic”?

Whether a curious student or a seasoned scholar, every reader will find a great deal to learn from *Navigating Ethnicity: Segregation, Placemaking, and Difference*. The subject of ethnicity is presented in all of its richness, and draws on much of the relevant scholarship. The author has done an impressive job covering the massive literature that has been written on this subject. The contributors to this forum challenge David H. Kaplan to think beyond what is already written on the pages of *Navigating Ethnicity*, and he tackles some of these issues in his thoughtful response. Taken as a whole, however, the reviewers all agree that readers will truly appreciate this expansive text, especially because it is written by one of the most well-respected scholars in the discipline of geography.

Commentary by Pablo Bose , Department of Geography, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT.

David H. Kaplan’s *Navigating Ethnicity* is a fascinating book. It offers a richly detailed, nuanced, and historically grounded engagement with the concept of ethnicity that is refreshing—rather than simply operating with the fixed, rigid, and simplistic assumptions regarding identity that the term often connotes. Such assumptions are especially true in the conceptualization of ethnicity vis-à-vis “race,” at least in the United States. The term has often been operationalized as a marker for the domain of culture rather than that of specious biologization or alternatively as a legacy of the “whitening” process of European working classes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Kaplan’s book suggests a much more complex dynamic in the formation and evolution of ethnicity than the insular notions that are signaled in the idea’s usage in both the popular press and in many corners of the academy as well. I am thus very appreciative of the attention to historical detail and—especially as someone interested in urban formations of the so-called Global South—all the variations and different examples used in the book to explore ethnicity; a wide array of contexts, cultures, cities, and cases.

There is, of course, a voluminous extant literature on ethnicity and identity in the United States, especially in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and history. Within geography there has also been considerable work on the ways that immigration, for example, or race have structured spatial relations and formations. Teixeira,

Kobayashi and Li's (2011) *Immigrant Geographies of North American Cities*, Smith and Furuseth's (2006) *Latinos in the New South*, and Frazier, Tettey-Fio, and Henry's (2011) *Race, Ethnicity and Place in a Changing America* are outstanding collections of essays by geographers working on such questions. There are other notable contributions: Hardwick's (2003) research on displacement and resettlement, Ley's (2004) work on immigrant transnationalism and integration, Li's (2009) conceptualization of the ethnoburb, Skop's (2012) detailing of *Saffron Suburbs*, King's (2004) exploration of the global city formation, Roy's (2016) calls to challenge orientalist notions of the "ethnic" city in all its manifestations, and many others besides.

What Kaplan offers in *Navigating Ethnicity* is a book that foregrounds the role of place making in understanding these complex and contested dynamics. He does so by treating ethnicity not as a label or marker, but rather as a process and engagement, continually negotiated and reformed. He focuses in particular on segregation and concentration—often understood in simplistic terms as involuntary and relatively voluntary forms of "clustering." Kaplan demonstrates with considerable nuance and dexterity the complexity of these processes in actual urban spaces, taking into account often radically different contexts and histories.

Navigating Ethnicity reminds me of the ways in which ethnic identities and histories shape and reconfigure all such places, over space and time. One can still see the remnants of the old neighborhoods, even in ones that continue to change, even as the older generations pass on and do not join their children and grandchildren as they leave the ethnic enclaves and move to the suburbs (or ethnoburbs). Living in Toronto in what had once been an old Italian and Portuguese neighborhood and later a Korean one, I had the experience of interacting with my neighbors, a lovely older couple who had been in their home for nearly sixty years. They had been full participants in the lives of their community—running a business, raising three children (who had moved with their grandchildren to the suburbs), attending church, helping to fund a local charity, yet speaking no English at all. On the occasions I was invited into their home to drink strong coffee, and communicate with a few gestures, with a TV that blared in the background showing North American programs translated into Italian, I was always struck by what terms like *persistent ethnicity* and *ethnic enclave* meant in the everyday. As this book also reminds us, place making is not a static phenomenon nor an endpoint in a trajectory, but a lived and evolving process. In the rapidly gentri-

fying neighborhood in East Harlem where I spent three summers, I found, too, that common understandings of what "the changing nature of cities" meant on the ground could be radically different from what I expected. There I found a growing and uneasy set of tensions between older Puerto Rican and Dominican residents and newer Mexican ones—expressed in graffiti, the styles of barber shops and restaurants, and in the community gardens festooned with Puerto Rican flags.

This book thus resonated with me in so many ways: the attempt to engage critically with the concept of ethnicity, the focus on urban histories, the challenges and opportunities presented by the consolidation and concentration of particular communities, and the attempt to situate place making within a broader literature of transnationalism and diasporic belonging and identity. I offer the following as lines of thought or possibility to expand on some of what Kaplan has written. There are four ideas in particular that I would like to focus on.

The first has to do with what he refers to as "contested place-making." Kaplan touches on various aspects of this concept, although briefly. In particular he refers to the ways in which the ability to name a particular place—as a Chinatown or a Little Italy—raise questions about authenticity, voice, and representation, depending on who lives in that particular neighborhood and what the purpose of the branding (or rebranding) of this space might be. He also highlights the resentments and tensions that simmer either below the surface or quite openly when a community finds itself in the midst of a transition, especially when the same enclaves become home to successive waves of immigrant populations. I think this is a section Kaplan could develop and expand significantly; the work on ethnoburbs (which he references) or on the arrival of immigrants into new and nontraditional destinations could be especially instructive here. Part of my own work most recently has looked at the placement of refugees in smaller towns in the United States as agents of change—as a way of addressing or reversing the impacts of deindustrialization, aging populations, declining tax revenues, rural youth outmigration, unused and degraded housing stock, the opioid crisis, or any number of other issues afflicting a whole range of places and contexts. Yet what does the influx of such migrants—or of Latino labor migrants or other increasingly black and brown bodies—mean in terms of the local response to them and in the struggle over the definitions of home and belonging? One might argue that the current moment of extreme xenophobia in the United States has as much to do with the experience of Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and similar lo-

cal anti-immigrant ordinances scaled up as it does with Donald Trump and Stephen Miller and their immigrant threat narratives scaled down.

Additionally, if we think about the justification for bringing groups like refugees—so-called good immigrants—in as agents of change and urban renewal, what position do they occupy vis-à-vis the dynamics of gentrification that are also taking place in some of these same communities? Are they playing a role akin to the students and artists who come in to make a neighborhood “better” before they, too, are pushed out as rents rise and a “better class” of resident is sought by landlords? So, I think the dynamic of contested place making is something that this book might expand further on.

Second, although I appreciate the attention paid to diaspora in the book—including defining and including historical examples of some of the diverse manifestations of the term in particular cases—the discussion is primarily on the acculturation experiences of the diaspora abroad. Yet there is a rich literature on the various engagements that diaspora communities have had and continue to have with their former or putative homelands. This includes specific and notable examples of attempts to both ideologically and materially transform such places, often according to ideas of home and identity that have as much to do with experiences of globalization and hybridity as with any particular memory of home. When I return to Kolkata, India, today, it is a city being remade not with a particular attention to Bengali heritage or a supranational Hindu or Indian identity, nor even the desires of Bengalis overseas, but rather in homage to a set of disembodied notions of the global (Bose 2015). Here, in a tertiary city—no longer a political, economic, or even cultural capital of India—it is the simulacra of a global identity that remakes the wetlands into shopping malls and luxury homes, that builds a replica Big Ben in the middle of a new highway that connects the airport and the gentrifying southern neighborhoods, that deploys a non-Bengali Bollywood star and part-owner of the local cricket team as chief advertiser for tourism to the state. Thus, I think that Kaplan might productively explore further how diasporas function with relation to old homelands as much as new in relation to place making.

In a similar vein, I think Kaplan could explore transnationalism and globalization with regard to some of the other reconfigurations that continue to happen elsewhere. He offers some fascinating examples in this book—that of Japanese-origin Brazilians in Brazil and especially in Japan is particularly compelling (and indeed references a bit of what I mean in terms of the return of the diaspora).

I think that here, too, in the chapter “Transnationalism and Hybridity,” he might have expanded his view. I am thinking of an example such as contemporary Goa and what ethnic identity and identities look like there. From a Portuguese enclave to a long-standing destination for Western tourists, Goa continues to transform at a break-neck pace, not least due to massive investments in roads, bridges, and other infrastructure by the central and state governments seeking to draw in more tourism and visitors. Perhaps most interesting to me has been the arrival of Russians—as tourists and as residents—often replacing the Israeli and British visitors of old. It’s not the fact that the identities of the tourists has changed so much as what it has meant in terms of the impact it has made on local place-making practices: advertisements and road signs written in Cyrillic, menus that offer “Russian salads and drinks,” and hawkers that call to passersby in Russian. Local marginalized communities have even strategized to improve their own condition by teaching their children Russian and occupy a particular niche in the service sector directed at Russian tourists. Such examples again point to the ways in which transnational processes are not only about the ways in which traditional destination cities in the West are being transformed, but that others elsewhere are as well.

Finally, I want to take up one last question that Kaplan poses in *Navigating Ethnicity*, again in the section on transnationalism that I think is a really important one. He asks “Would a Syrian refugee, having escaped his bombed out city to finally gain entry into Germany truly be able to participate in any transnational activity?” (p. 187). He suggests that even if this were to be the case, such activities would be sporadic and limited. I think he is absolutely right to push back against the kind of often trivial and celebratory invocations of globalization and transnationalism that we see in heralding the ability of migrants even in the most dire of situations to make meaning of their lives. Yet if I think of some of the emerging work on the ways in which different groups have laid claim to voice, agency, representation, and the ability to define and re-define place—even in the most constrained of cases—it has made me reevaluate such scenarios. Take, for example, Misselwitz and Steigemann’s (2018) work on Syrian refugees in Berlin and in Zaatari in Jordan: These groups have transformed shipping containers and the interior of resettlement detention areas to re-create spaces of significance, neighborhoods and social networks, and ways of creating home and place in ways that demand we pay serious attention to their claims of identity and humanity. Similarly, Swyngedouw (2016), in her research on the ways that Flemish organizations in Brussels have reached

out to Syrian migrants to incorporate them into their ethnic formation as a bulwark against the French majority, suggested quite novel interventions into the very idea of immigrant integration. As many scholars argue, we need to pay as much attention to the liminal spaces—the migrant journeys from Central America northward or from the Middle East and North Africa across land and sea to Europe, the shared and contested spaces between Roma and migrants in Marseille, and the transforming periurban regions around metropolises in Asia—as the traditional immigrant city if we want to understand the relationship between ethnicity, diversity and place making.

Commentary by Jason Hackworth, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

David H. Kaplan's *Navigating Ethnicity* is a comprehensive, granular geography of ethnicity filled with many rich examples. It will work well in the classroom both as a background reader and as a conversation starter. It is nicely organized. It lays out the main concepts early on then raises some critical issues later on in the book that will provoke some engaging classroom conversations.

Rather than provide a comprehensive point-by-point review, I share three conceptual issues that the book provoked me to think about. First, the book is theoretically eclectic but does tend to frequently return to the idea that ethnicity is expressed through the landscape in a more or less organic way. This perspective emphasizes autonomy, choice, and expression. It is a position that is in the DNA of geography as a field, and there is a great deal to be said for this perspective. Above all, it affords agency to group actions in important ways. The challenge, of course, with this perspective is that much of what we assign as a choice or expression of a particular group is really only a reaction to suppression by a more dominant group or a partial choice (and Kaplan, in fairness, does delve into this issue later in the book).

Years ago I wrote an article about ethnic commercial strips in Toronto (Hackworth and Rekers 2005). We studied Little Italy, Greektown, and Corso Italia and found that the surrounding neighborhoods were no longer predominantly or even significantly Italian or Greek. We found that each designation referred to a series of restaurants along a main thoroughfare. Some of the restaurants had been there for ages, but many were chain restaurants of recent origin seeking to capitalize on the number of suburban visitors to the strip each weekend evening. The

Italian-ness and Greek-ness of the neighborhoods were carefully maintained by business improvement organizations, but not an organic expression of a surrounding group, or even a very convincing echo of a group that once occupied the neighborhood. This identity was maintained in part because it added a real estate and business panache to the neighborhood. Italian and Greek were lucrative restaurant business models, and a magnet for yuppies who wanted to buy a house there. It was an identity, but one that was largely manufactured and external.

Contrast this with other groups in Toronto. The city has substantial populations of Somalis, Jamaicans, and Sri Lankans, among other groups. Those groups have retail strips and neighborhoods that fit the classic cultural geography method of landscape expression. Jamaican neighborhoods are adorned with Jamaican flags, restaurants that serve local residents, and grocery stores with Jamaican foods. Very different, however, is how these particular neighborhoods are seen and valued by nonethnics. There is no Little Jamaica that suburbanites flock to. Toronto is multiethnic, definitely, but the interesting question and dimension to me is how ethnicities interact with hegemonic whiteness. Ethnicity, in my view, is less a horizontal, organic expression of group identities, than a hierarchical set of expressions that are judged in very different ways. Some identities are assigned value in a very literal way—houses in Little Italy are valued at over \$2 million. Others are pathologized as dangerous, unsavory—places to avoid at night.

The second, related thought that Kaplan's book provokes in me is how ethnicity interacts with whiteness. Some groups (like Italians) are initially shunned as not-quite-white but eventually became so, and others like African Americans and Aboriginal people are seemingly never allowed to become deracialized. I am reminded of a fascinating passage from Shabazz's (2015) recent book *Spatializing Blackness*. In it, he tells the story of Max Nootbaar, a police officer of German ancestry who was appointed in 1914 to shut down Chicago's red-light district. Prominent among his duties was to criminalize interracial socializing. He was brutally effective and public in his efforts. Perhaps more interesting than the policing of such activity was the larger cultural function it served to advance. Germans, of course, were viewed with great suspicion in 1914. Some longtime white residents did not consider Germans to be white. Yet, by performing this act of loyalty to whiteness, Nootbaar was able to help convert his ethnicity. Some ethnicities are converted to whiteness through such performances. Others remain pathologized—the antithesis to whiteness. In short, there is an undeniable fluidity to

ethnicity that is fascinating to consider. It is also true, however, that ethnicity—or at least important elements of it—is produced and framed by the dominant ethnoracial hegemon in a given society.

In part, Kaplan wrestles with this by invoking the different “modes of incorporation” in different countries. It is noted, for example, that Korean people are marginalized and mistreated by Japan, and Muslim immigrants are seen with suspicion by France. By contrast, Canada is a more accommodating place. These are important concessions and qualifications, but by the same token I feel that the construction of whiteness is not simply, or maybe even primarily, a relationship between a particular group and the nation-state. There is a fluidity to whiteness: accepting some forms of difference, rejecting and pathologizing others. Sometimes this aligns neatly with the nation-state, whereas at other times it is expressed independently of it (or partially so). Still other times directly opposite positions are taken by the same nation-state within the span of a few years. I live in a country, for example, that is currently lauded for its embrace of difference and warmth toward refugees. There are important reasons to consider that a valid standpoint. Canada, however, is also a country that was hand-picking Christians out of refugee camps in Syria, and deporting kids that came to Canada under identical circumstances as U.S. “dreamers” only four years ago. Canada is a country that prides itself on not having the black–white tensions that exist in the United States. It is also a country that closed its last blacks-only school in 1983; a country that had Jim Crow levels of segregation in southwestern Ontario (including whites-only lunch counters) into the 1950s; a country with restrictive covenants until 1951; and a country that explicitly discriminated against nonwhite immigrant groups until 1967. The public or national ethos on ethnicity is often mythological, and actively produced. Whiteness, intolerance, tolerance, and justice, are perhaps better thought of as social movements than national features—ebbing and flowing, sometimes using statecraft, sometimes working parallel or even counter to it.

Finally, I appreciate the work that Kaplan does at weaving together political economy and ethnicity in this book. Chapter 4, for example, explicitly focuses on “constraining choices”—essentially forced spatial segregation. I found this set of passages very useful and thought provoking. This book is being published alongside a parallel debate about the relevance of issues of white flight in the current ethnoracial context. Some tend to think about these issues as historical items or at least forces that were more acute before in the period of de jure segregation.

Some (certainly not Kaplan) have begun to flirt with the notion that we can begin to think of African American spaces as purely self-chosen enclaves. As chapter 4 (and other recent work) argues, this would be a mistake, not least because although overt exclusion has been nominally outlawed, there is more than adequate research to suggest that the residential decisions of white people are still deeply affected by the proximity of nonwhite people, particularly African American people.

Kye (2018), a sociologist at Indiana University, just published a paper that is getting a lot of attention in large part because it directly refutes the assimilationist, self-choice, and racial proxy narratives that suggest that animus has eroded and the arc is going to bend organically toward progress. He found that the presence of black newcomers to a neighborhood provokes flight more than any other factor, even after controlling for a range of circumstances. Counter to racial proxy theory, which argues that blackness is merely a signal for class, he finds that this relationship is even stronger in middle-class neighborhoods. Put simply, the in-migration of black people provokes white flight in more assertively in middle-class environments than poorer ones. Of course, he is not alone. Hwang and Sampson (2014) found that the presence of black people was the most persistent and effective repellant for (white) gentrification in Chicago. Integrating inner suburban areas like Ferguson, Missouri (a suburb of St. Louis), are illustrating patterns that are very similar to integrating inner-city neighborhoods in the 1950s.

Qualitatively, researchers have found the persistence of animus among similarly distressed people. Desmond (2016), for example, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Evicted*, noted the fear and disappointment of his white (very poor) respondents when he informed them that they were moving to Milwaukee’s black North Side. In one memorable passage when he revealed to one of his white subjects (Larraine)—who incidentally was living in an incredibly impoverished, crime-ridden, all-white trailer park in South Milwaukee—that he was moving to the city’s almost-all-black North Side, she and others became immediately concerned for his safety. Elsewhere in the book, Desmond detailed the lengths to which even the most economically and socially marginalized white people would go to avoid living on Milwaukee’s North Side themselves. To his in-group white subjects, nothing was considered lower than living with poor black people, so all desperately avoided this fate if they could. In short, whether it be the legacy effects of sustained legal discrimination, or the overpolicing of black neighborhoods that cripples the economic lives of black families with felony

records, or the tacit tolerance of ongoing employment and housing discrimination by the state, the ostensibly horizontal arrangement of black and white people is a disguise for a very vertical hierarchy of access and privilege. White flight and attendant processes are very much alive and well.

I would like to say in closing that I very much enjoyed reading this book. I think it will work very well in the classroom and provoke readers of various levels to think critically about the geography and sociology of ethnicity. I recommend it highly.

Response by David H. Kaplan^{id}, Department of Geography, Kent State University, Kent, OH.

I start by thanking Emily Skop for offering to organize the Author Meets Critics session in April 2018 at the annual AAG meetings in New Orleans on which this forum is based. I appreciate all of the kind remarks about my book and (own) all of the critiques. I think I should preface my comments with how I have come to consider ethnicity. My interest has long been in cultural difference and the potency it carries within the world. I arrived at this through a study of nationalism, though, which is really cultural difference activated at the scale of the state. Nationalist movements, national separatism, irredentism, and other political actions are driven by many things, but the desire to maintain a distinct cultural community is chief among them. Oddly enough, scholars of nationalism rarely intersect in the literature with scholars of urban ethnicity, the subject of *Navigating Ethnicity*. To me this seems like the other side of the coin that can be examined in much the way nationalism is. Ethnicity is also contingent on many factors that determine its salience and its direction.

A book is made up of so many moving parts that there will always be some pieces that could have been fit together more elegantly and some items that were omitted when they should have been included. I consider this book in particular, although a labor of love, an immensely difficult thing to write. There were a few reasons for this.

First, although I argue that cultural difference is a universal phenomenon with an extraordinary degree of power, it means many things to many people and is treated differently depending on the society. Getting a handle on the terminology—nation, race, tribe, ethnic, and so on—is critical, but the nuances of these terms also vary. Putting them all under the “ethnicity” umbrella is essential

but perilous. At the scale of a country, there can be clear distinctions as well: In the United States, African American is not the same as Greek American, and every society contains typologies of ethnicity that often go under different names. There is a great deal of work needed on the importance of “naming”—how groups are defined vis-à-vis one another. A term like *tribe* can seem to minimize a group, at least to Western ears, and even has connotations of timelessness and savagery. Yet this is also a term used by members of different cultural communities in describing themselves. Should we adopt self-descriptions or try to apply a more universal standard? This also applies to a term like *race*. Like many social scientists, I do not like that term. Race is clearly constructed from purported physical features (e.g., skin color and facial features) that are emphasized in certain contexts but not in others. The ideology behind the term avers such differences to be genetic, often immutable, and opens the door to the inference of other attributes like personality and intelligence. As problematic as *race* is as a term is, though, it continues to be used as a descriptive category—including by those who consider themselves as part of a “racial” minority—and is used in a manner distinct from ethnicity.

In addition, there is the extent to which cultural communities can be created and their equivalence with truly ethnic communities. Many societies contain castes that seem to arise out of no cultural distinction but that gain nearly all of the attributes of a marginalized ethnicity: residence, dress, endogamy, and so on. In my view, these castes become equivalent to an ethnic group. Other communities are more ambiguous, though. We may speak of a Deaf community, for example, that participates in the making of cultural attributes like a distinct language, and maintains key institutions that allow it to flourish. The Deaf community is crucially different from a conventional ethnic community, however. It results from a personal characteristic—inability to hear—rather than from a group characteristic. So how far should we stretch the boundaries of what ethnicity means?

Second, I was set on providing a truly international treatment of the phenomenon of ethnicity, taking in examples from across the world. For me, this is a necessary corrective to many accounts of ethnicity and race. Such accounts suffer from a kind of myopia, looked at through the lens of a single society. This is valuable when only a single society is under examination. Discussions of racism in the United States, for instance, need to grapple with the legacy of this country. Applying these lessons to other contexts, however, requires an appreciation of just how different the situation is such that the idea of racism,

although still there, takes other forms and is expressed in other ways. Here is one example: In many societies other groups were brought in as intermediaries between the ruling and oppressed groups. This creates a more complex dynamic as intercultural relationships now go three ways, with the intermediary group often bearing the brunt of the oppressed group's anger over structural inequities and discrimination.

My attempts to present ethnicity as a worldwide phenomenon present their own series of challenges, as the contexts of other ethnic groups necessarily shape the definition and situations of a particular group. It also leads to many unfortunate omissions. Try as I might, there were some parts of the world that receive short shrift. Whereas my own research experience leads to proportionally more examples from in North America and Western Europe, a more holistic treatment of ethnicity would expand to look at more examples in South America, Africa, and Asia. I have a few, but not as many as would be helpful for this.

Third, I wrote this book to understand ethnicity as part of a process—the causal aspects that shape each ethnic experience and the consequences of ethnic identification, interaction, and geography. This is distinct from most comprehensive accounts out there. Many volumes will look at the experience of separate ethnic groups in turn, or perhaps look at a single group in separate contexts. I have seen books that examine ethnicity in almost a functional way, showing how it affects and is affected by something else, like the church, the economy, politics, and so on. My approach was to drill down into exactly what processes shape the spatial experience of different ethnic groups in context, and what processes would be able to influence their consequences. Although not determinative, space and place do matter. I take pains to consider both more positive and negative aspects and consequences. Cultural difference can be a source of celebration or the most heinous form of exploitation. The latter have often overshadowed the former, but all outcomes should be taken into account.

An engagement with process makes it difficult to untangle all of the separate factors that fashion a particular ethnic experience. Not only are ethnic group experiences distinct from one another, but the experience within separate contexts also varies a great deal. Add to this those internal variations within countries; how different members of the community are impacted; and differences by age, gender, and physical ability. In combination, these factors create a fractalized prism of what is significant and what is not.

This also follows into a discussion of intersectionality, brought up by Skop in her comments. Although this term has become quite popular within the last decade or so, I try to convey something similar by considering ethnicity as a contingent phenomenon, where the contingency is determined by the context, the presence of other groups, and also the mix of other characteristics such as class, gender, immigration status, and other variables. Put plainly, I believe that ethnicity cannot be considered in isolation because there are so many cross-cutting factors that determine the experiences of ethnic group members. Pulling these out a little more clearly would be valuable. In particular, I would like to attend more in the future to issues of age and gender. These strands play a large role and incorporating them in developing a richer understanding would be valuable.

Fourth, in writing this book, I felt a need to trace as many processes as possible, but there were some that could be developed further, as pointed out by these most generous reviewers. Recent events in the news regarding refugees illustrate how the movements of people fleeing one place to seek something less dangerous highlight new spaces and spatial conflicts. Bose discusses the friction of encounters in smaller communities as refugees are brought in. Within the United States, we can also consider how borders themselves change, forcing even greater forms of militarization, separating children from their parents, and promoting a new brutality. Aggressive activities by immigration officials have brought the border deep within, as local communities are ripped apart by the search and uprooting of long-settled illegal immigrants. These “deportation task forces” shine a light on how an immigrant's place within a community can be suddenly upended as national policy changes.

Although a central premise of my book runs counter to Marxian notions that ethnicity is far less important than class and that it needs to be studied on its own, the two are clearly intertwined in so many ways, as Hackworth points out. I try to explore how this applies in a number of different instances. Ethnicity is not simply horizontal; there are vertical dimensions as it is linked to social stratification. I mention the socioeconomic bifurcation of ethnic groups as something that accrues even greater importance within a new political realm, as access to resources is limited by nativist governments, which could only exacerbate this bifurcation.


Most of this book was written before Brexit, the 2016 U.S. election, and the resurgence of ethnonationalism in Europe. These movements all have strong views on ethnicity, and have fused these within a political movement.

The chapter looking at modes of incorporation took pains to show how these national ideals can and do shift. Many countries are caught between an expansionist, tolerant sense of themselves and a nativist, cramped view. This second attitude chases away immigrants and defines the nation in the narrowest possible terms, drawing a tight and exclusive boundary. Which view is in the ascendancy says a lot about ethnic relations, but we cannot forget that both views exist in the same space. I ended *Navigating Ethnicity* on an optimistic note, saying a tolerant future still seems a more probable outcome in most societies in the world. Recent events have tempered but not demolished this optimism.


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