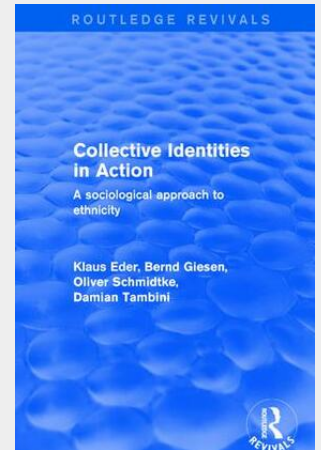


COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN ACTION

This title was first published in 2003. Thirty years of sociological and political science enquiry failed to predict the wave of ethnic conflict that swept through Europe in the 1990s, and the continuing ethnic tensions in the developing world. Since then, researchers have been unable to construct coherent explanations of why groups that had previously shared political and economic systems could suddenly find themselves caught in spirals of separatism and group violence. This book analyzes the last decades of political science and sociological enquiry into ethnicity and nationalist politics and lays down a new theoretical basis for understanding the field. The authors accept the challenge of methodological individualism in social science, but criticize existing rational choice paradigms, arguing that we will only understand ethnic conflict through an enquiry into the links between micro and macro phenomena, and in particular by focusing on the conditions under which actors construct and negotiate social identities, including nations and ethnicities. Informed by a comparative overview of all recent ethnic conflicts the book is built on an unparalleled grasp of the main theoretical accounts of nationalism and ethnicity, and a definitive critique of the essentialism and constructivism that have dogged understanding of ethnic conflict.



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