



The Politics of Identity: Liberal Political Theory and the Dilemmas of Difference

By Michael Kenny

Polity Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Politics of Identity: Liberal Political Theory and the Dilemmas of Difference, Michael Kenny, This book provides a comprehensive and critical assessment of the ways in which Anglo-American political theorists have responded to the emergence of a politics of identity in democratic society. It examines the merits and weaknesses of the ideas associated with the major schools and thinkers in contemporary philosophical liberalism. It also provides a critical exploration of the arguments of their pluralist rivals, including advocates of multiculturalism, a difference and recognition. Kenny illustrates how debates over such concepts as identity, difference, recognition and culture are intertwined with political theorists' characterizations of democracy, citizenship and civil society. In an analysis that juxtaposes normative political theory with the study of social movements and change, the author challenges two widely held ideas about the relationship between liberal democracy and culturally based groups. He questions the assertion that there is no place for identity based political argument in the public life of a democracy. And he challenges the pluralist conviction that the re-emergence of collective identities signals the demise of liberal culture and political thought. Written in a clear and accessible style, The...



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Identity politics was the term used to describe, at times, bitter disputes between different feminist groups: The rage, the sensitivity, and the overwhelming, omnipresent nature of "the enemy" drove parts of the women's movement into ideological rigidities, and the movement splintered as it grew. Groups formed around particular issues, constituencies and political styles, many sure that they had found the key to women's liberation. After 1970, women's liberation groups in all parts of the country suffered painful splits variously defined as politico-feminist, gay/straight, anti-imperialist/radical feminist. (Evans 1979: 225). For some groups the politics of identity is about making a direct challenge to the dominance of other interest groups within feminism. The strictest realist theory of politics would entail adhering to that which is the most practical and practicable, while the most idealist theory would believe there is a highest form of perfection and justice to which all ends must strive toward. In a continuum with idealism and realism at opposite ends, their positions would be as follows: Plato the most idealist, Aristotle the most moderate and Cicero the most realist. By idealism, I mean a type of philosophy that focuses on the perfection, the higher or natural law, and the truth of political theory best articulated by Plato in *The Republic*: "was only going to ask whether, when we find out what justice is, shall we require the just man to answer the description precisely, and be an exact counterpart of what justice is? [No.] Thus identity politics rests on unifying claims about the meaning of politically laden experiences to diverse individuals. Concern about this aspect of identity politics has crystallized around the transparency of experience to the oppressed, and the univocality of its interpretation. Experience is never, critics argue, simply epistemically available prior to interpretation (Scott 1992); rather it requires a theoretical framework "implicit or explicit" to give it meaning.

Are you sure you want to remove **POLITICS OF IDENTITY: LIBERAL POLITICAL THEORY AND THE DILEMMAS OF DIFFERENCE** from your list? Politics of identity: liberal political theory and the dilemmas of difference. by MICHAEL KENNY. Published by POLITY PRESS in CAMBRIDGE . A liberalism that rejects identity politics is a liberalism for the powerful, one that relegates the interests of marginalized groups to second-class status. Manique Beckman wears a sash that reads "The Future is Feminine" as she walks to the Women's March in Washington on January 21, 2017. Ann Hermes/The Christian Science Monitor via Getty Images. But identity politics is not only important as a matter of liberal principle. In 1990, Young published a classic book titled Justice and the Politics of Difference. At the time, political philosophy was dominated by internal debates among liberals who focused heavily on the question of wealth distribution. Young, both a philosopher and a left activist, found this narrow discourse unsatisfying. The laden phrase "identity politics" has come to signify a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier, pre-identarian forms of the politics of recognition is its demand for recognition on the basis of the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied: it is qua women, qua blacks, qua lesbians that groups demand recognition. Identity politics is a political style and ideology that focuses on the issues relevant to various groups defined by a wide variety of shared personal characteristics, including, but not limited to, race, religion, sex, gender, ethnicity, ideology, nationality, sexual orientation, gender expression, culture, shared history, medical conditions, and other of the many ways in which people differ from each other, and into which they may be classified or classify themselves.