



Gutmann concludes that identity groups are intrinsically neither good nor bad for democratic politics. When their presence serves to combat negative stereotypes and provides a vehicle for the effective political engagement and influence of disadvantaged people, identity groups can help facilitate the realization of the ideal of democracy. However, identity can also be employed as a weapon to undermine the pursuit and achievement of democratic justice, as when the Ku Klux Klan or Moral Majority promote intolerance and oppression of certain races and those who embrace alternative lifestyles. Not surprisingly, trying to determine 'reasonable' and generally acceptable criteria to distinguish between identity groups that should be encouraged *vs* those that should be discouraged can be an extremely difficult and, indeed, ugly task. Yet, democratic justice requires that such determinations be made. For Gutmann, the presence of identity groups and their active involvement in democratic politics becomes unacceptably problematic only when such groups assign primacy to the advancement of their own particular interests regardless of whether doing so may impede the pursuit and attainment of socio-political justice and peace.

The preceding summary offers only the briefest of overviews of some of Gutmann's central arguments. *Identity in Democracy* constitutes a thoughtful and provocative analysis of the relationship between identity groups and democratic justice in contemporary liberal democracies. In an era when the interaction between identity and democracy seems to be increasing both in frequency and importance, Gutmann's book admirably demonstrates the complicated relationship between the two. Further, though Gutmann is a political theorist by vocation, there is much in this text that will be of interest to scholars and practitioners in a variety of disciplines, including, for example, law and sociology. Not all readers will be persuaded to agree with each of Gutmann's substantive judgments, but no one will be left without food for thought.

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The Politics of Property. Labour, Freedom and Belonging

Laura Brace

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Laura Brace offers a much needed re-examination of the modern notion of property in this informative and clearly written book. Her main point is that



property can only be fully understood through an analysis of class, race and gender relations, which themselves reveal how honour should be affirmed against degradation, righteous labour affirmed against drudgery and belonging affirmed against exclusion all in the name of freedom. These affirmations contribute to the main themes of the book and are explored in various ways through each of the ten chapters.

After giving an outline of the issues to be discussed in Chapter One, Brace begins her investigation in the 17th century with a comparative analysis of Locke and Winstanley. She sets her discussion against the backdrop of the 'improvement' of property and how it should be sustained and made useful and productive. Hence, Winstanley's communal understanding of property is contrasted with Locke's liberal individualistic justification of private property. Locke is criticized in particular for justifying the exclusion of the poor from common land at home, which also resulted in colonialism in America. Native Americans were not improvers of the land, so English colonists were fully justified in taking over their land and excluding them from it. This led to racism as native Americans were seen as 'savages' on a par with the poor in England.

The next chapter moves into the eighteenth century and considers the arguments of Godwin and Bentham on the problem between private property and poverty against the backdrop of the Black Acts of 1723 and 1758 and the Anatomy Act of 1832. For Godwin, the consolidation of the power of the rich and their exclusion of the poor from the land became enshrined in the Black Acts, which meted out the death penalty for anyone caught for thieving or poaching. The Benthamite Anatomy Act furthered these class differences by depicting the poor as not of human society and thus only in death did they become valuable commodities for dissection for anatomists. This incessant tendency of exclusion of the poor on the basis of private property was to continue unabated in the nineteenth century, which Brace examines through the work of Hegel and Marx in Chapter Four.

Brace argues that Hegel and Marx were both concerned to examine the interrelations between property, the self, civil society and poverty. For Hegel, property was crucial because it allowed people to act in the world and determine themselves through the ethical life of reason. For Marx, private property was a form of alienation which degraded humanity. Both thinkers saw the conflicts that could emerge over private property not least in the problem of the exclusion of the poor. Brace suggests that Hegel thinks these conflicts can be overcome through the mediating institutions of the family and civil society, whereas for Marx poverty can only be overcome by the elimination of private property.

The next three chapters consider the issue of property in the ideologies of liberalism, socialism and conservatism. In the liberalism chapter Brace



discerns a territorial and self-determining notion of the self in liberal thought, which she relates to the notions of freedom and belonging. The territorial self is preoccupied with fear, risk and security in the recognition of an individual's bounded space, with an emphasis on competition. The self-determining self is more confident and asserts itself by having a number of potentialities that lead to cooperation and trust in others. The rest of the chapter analyses these two moments of the self in relation to the notion of property and through a number of thinkers such as Mill, Ryan, Nozick and Rawls.

In the chapter on socialism, utopian socialism is contrasted with scientific socialism and there is a useful discussion of the changing nature of exploitative relationships in the global era. Brace reiterates, returning to the main theme of the book, that these relationships cannot be solely understood through the perspective of class, but must embrace the perspectives of race and gender as well. The gender point is evinced, for example, in the huge movement from standard forms of surplus extraction in rich countries to countries on the periphery that are typified by jobs that have low wages, short-term contracts, and are largely dominated by women.

The issue of belonging is firmly rooted in conservative attitudes to property which they want to use to link people's lives in a family, community and nation state. Brace argues that conservatives, therefore, see property as an organizing concept, which draws together notions of history, security and independence that forge into a political identity. Again, it is on the issue of gender that problems arise because conservatives accept the patriarchal structure of the family, and as such are complicit in the subordination of women to fixed gender roles.

The final three chapters deal with the issues of slavery, gender and colonialism/postcolonialism. Brace explores the diverse ways in which slavery and property inform each other and suggests that slavery itself cannot simply be understood as exclusion or labour or as a lack of belonging or a lack of freedom. Instead, Brace offers a more fluid notion of slavery in which these moments and their opposites interact and she offers concrete historical examples to support her case.

In the penultimate chapter on gender, Brace focuses on the issue of self-ownership and its extension to women in the contexts of marriage and work. She argues that viewed in this way property becomes a place of struggle, which historically has involved women being seen as refuges and dependants and men being seen as protectors and improvers. Again, Brace thinks this gives a more fluid understanding of women and their relation to property, which must also be interlinked to issues of race and class.

The final chapter offers two enlightening case studies of the colonial and postcolonial examples of Ireland and Zimbabwe within which the themes of



property, belonging and exclusion are explored in relation to notions of civilization and progress.

Overall, then, Brace offers a very interesting account of the complex nature of the notion of property.

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Indigenous Sovereignty and the Democratic Project

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Indigenous people at the national and international level strongly resist classification as ‘minorities’, emphasizing their uniqueness both culturally and via the issue of ‘consent’. While voluntary immigrant minorities have *chosen* to become citizens of European diaspora nations such as those in the former British Empire, many indigenous people have never willingly ceded their lands or political autonomy. Yet, the distinct moral claims of indigenous peoples are frequently trivialized by liberal ‘recognition’ theorists (see Taylor, 1995; Kymlicka, 1991, 1995, 2000; Kukathas, 1992) when they combine discussion of indigenous peoples with discussion of minorities. Recognition theorists like Taylor and Kymlicka skip over the ‘first step in questioning the sovereignty of the authoritative traditions and institutions they serve to legitimate’ (Tully, 1995, 53, Samson, 1999). By presuming the legitimacy of the liberal settler state’s jurisdiction over indigenous nations, such an approach presupposes exactly what is in question (see Tully, 2000, 55).

In contrast to such approaches, the focus of this important work of political philosophy is a defence of indigenous sovereignty that inherently *challenges* the sovereignty of the settler state. The author argues that ‘backward’ and ‘tribal’ societies have ‘far too much in common with a European model of nationhood for one to be denied the state-building capacity and sovereign dignity imputed to the other. Indigenous communities have proved to be just as adaptive, just as ‘legal’ and ‘political’, just as territorial (and often as ruthless) as any European monarchy’ (p. 79). In essence, the central argument of the book is this: when non-indigenous people of settler states, who stand in relation to indigenous people as an oppressive cultural and political ‘other’, fail to recognize indigenous sovereignty, they are acting contrary to their own ideals.