



Ethnicities and Global Multiculture: Pants for an Octopus

Jan Nederveen Pieterse Mellichamp Professor of Global Studies and Sociology

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Arguing that ethnicity and multiculturalism are essential for understanding globalization, Jan Nederveen Pieterse offers one of the first sustained treatments of the reach of these key forces beyond a limited national context. He shows that multiethnicity preceded the nation-state by millennia; but argues that states, feeling the threat to their national identities, seek to control or suppress it. Contemporary multiculturalism, another attempt to regulate multiethnicity, is a work in progress in which dramas of global inequality are played out. This groundbreaking book adopts a kaleidoscopic and comparative-historical perspective that intertwines strands of social science and western and non-western research as a strategy to overcome the disciplinary and regional fragmentation of most discussions. Moving beyond worn notions of ethnicity and multiculturalism, Nederveen Pieterse proposes ethnicities and global multiculture as alternative, wide-angle perspectives on cultural diversity. Global multiculture, he convincingly demonstrates, offers a fresh account of layered cultural dynamics amid accelerated globalization.

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