

Language and Minority Rights



LANGUAGE AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Ethnicity, Nationalism and
the Politics of Language

Second Edition

Stephen May



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This is a masterful book - perhaps the most comprehensive, nuanced, and detailed treatment of minority language rights on an international scale in recent years. Clear, balanced, cogently argued, and remarkable in its depth and scope, Stephen May's "Language and Minority Rights" represents a major contribution to both scholarship and practice in the field. This interdisciplinary volume presents a provocative, comprehensive analysis of issues related to linguistic pluralism! May addresses arguments about ethnicity and nationalism, social and political theory, education, law, and history as well as the sociology of language and sociolinguistics. A wealth of examples drawn from communities world-wide illustrates his points. Accessibly written and extensively referenced, *Language and Minority Rights* is an excellent resource for students, teachers and researchers in the fields of anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, political science and education. In this provocative and ground-breaking book, Stephen May argues for a non-essentialist understanding of language rights, while at the same time outlining why language rights, particularly for minority groups, are defensible and important, both academically and politically. May argues that the causes of many of the language-based conflicts in the world today lie with the nation-state and its preoccupation with establishing a 'common' language and culture via mass education. The solution, he suggests, is to rethink nation-states in more culturally and linguistically plural ways while avoiding, at the same time, essentialising the language-identity link. "Language and Minority Rights" - a benchmark volume in the field of language rights and language policy - is an outstanding interdisciplinary analysis which draws together debates on language from widely different academic fields, including the sociology of language, ethnicity and nationalism, sociolinguistics, social and political theory, education, history and law, illustrating these debates via a wealth of different national contexts and examples. It is essential reading for students, teachers and researchers in the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, language policy and planning, sociology, politics, and education. Stephen May is Foundation Professor and Chair of Language Education, School of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

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