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Symbols of Nations and Nationalism explores the significance of national symbols and ceremonies in the building of nations. Nations come into being by stages, marked by the adoption of national symbols and ceremonies that reflect significant events. Nation building can therefore be traced alongside the complex process of adopting, altering, abolishing, re-establishing and inventing flags, anthems and national days.

This book identifies distinct *symbolic regimes* founded on 'pre-modern', 'modern' and 'post-imperial' narratives that, in turn, are linked to specific flag and national day designs. National symbolism usually embellishes the past in order to justify nations and states in the present. However, divisive territorial claims have recently produced post-historical or counter-nationalist narratives that avoid references to the past altogether.

National flags and days are central images of nationhood and are used to represent, justify and glorify nations. The use of flags and participation in ceremonies help symbolize commonality and the imagined *oneness* of nations but such notions can also become highly divisive. National ceremonies and *national day design* have therefore become of great importance for nation builders and policy makers in multi-national and multi-ethnic states.

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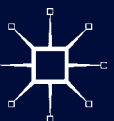
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Symbols of Nations and Nationalism Celebrating Nationhood



Gabriella Elgenius



Cover photograph by Gabriella Elgenius:
Children's parade on Constitution Day, 17
May, Karl Johan's Avenue, Oslo, Norway
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