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Autore	Dudley-Jenkins Laura
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### Sommario/riassunto

Can a state empower its citizens by classifying them? Or do reservation policies reinforce the very categories they are meant to eradicate? Indian reservation policies on government jobs, legislative seats and university admissions for disadvantaged groups, like affirmative action policies elsewhere, are based on the premise that recognizing group distinctions in society is necessary to subvert these distinctions. Yet the official identification of eligible groups has unintended side-effects on identity politics. Bridging theories which emphasize the fluidity of identities and those which highlight the utility of group-based mobilizations and policies, this book exposes didactic enforcement of categorizations, while recognizing the social and political gains facilitated by group-based strategies.

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