

BOOK REVIEWS

Review 1

Title: Thinking through Islamophobia: global perspectives. By Sayyid, S. & Vakil, A. (Eds.). (2010). London: Columbia University Press. p. 319, ISBN 978-1-85065-990-7 (paperback).

Reviewed by: Jolanda van der Noll, Centre for Psychology of Religion, UCLouvain, Belgium.

Islamophobia is a widely used term to refer to a collection of negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors directed at Muslims. However, its usage is not uncontested and its meaning and relation with phenomena like racism and xenophobia is not always clear. It is here that the edited volume on *Thinking through Islamophobia: Global perspectives* by S. Sayyid and Abdool Karim Vakil steps in. The volume offers reflections on the way in which the term Islamophobia is and can be used. The editors did not impose a specific conceptualization of Islamophobia, but merely asked the contributors to reflect on the use of the concept of Islamophobia, both analytically and polemically. This resulted in a collection of 26 essays that deal with Muslims' problematized presence from various perspectives and in different geographical contexts. The essays collected in this volume can roughly be divided into four categories.

The first category encompasses conceptual and theoretical contributions that focus on the use of the term Islamophobia and related concepts such as Anti-Semitism and racism. In the contributions of *Sayyid* and *Vakil* the focus is on how the *term* Islamophobia became into use. The essay by *Allen* addresses the research that has been conducted on the meaning of Islamophobia some ten years after the publication of the influential report *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all* (Runnymede Trust, 1997). *Meer* and *Modood* as well as *Tyrer* discuss how Muslims have become racialized and how Islamophobia can be seen as a form of racism. The second category includes essays that focus on Islamophobia in different geographical contexts and among specific subgroups. Islamophobia is generally seen as a predominantly Western concept, but the chapters in this volume show that Islamophobic attitudes and behaviors can be found beyond Western societies. *Tlostanova* presents an historical account of negative attitudes and discriminatory practices targeted at ethnic groups with an Islamic background in Russia, and *Tzanelli* shows that the development of Islamophobia in Greece is related with the struggle for a Greek national identity, in particular in relation to Albania. *Yi* explores in her contribution to what extent features of a Western Islamophobia can be found in China, *McCargo* explains the existence of anti-Muslim sentiments in Thailand, and *Anand* describes Islamophobia among Hindu

nationalists in India. *Aktay* illustrates that also in Turkey, a country of which its population is predominantly Muslim there is a strong sense of Islamophobia among those who want to protect the secular state. *Sian* discusses the sense of Islamophobia among members of the British Sikh community. Two essays in particular illustrate that Islamophobia has become normalized in the public discourse: *Hasimi* argues that Islamophobia is more broadly accepted in neo-conservative circles and relates this particularly to developments in the Middle East. *Fadil* comes to a similar conclusion of the normalization of Islamophobia by analyzing Islamophobia among the Belgian political left, but places the origin for this normalization in the Belgian political debate.

A third category of papers discusses Islamophobia in relation to policies and political developments. *Kahn* focuses on the "Prevent Violent Extremism" (PVE) action plan of the British government and argues that Islamophobia and the PVE both find their origin in, amongst others, terrorism and other disturbances of social order, but *Kahn* also states that the PVE and Islamophobia can reinforce each other. *Bano* concludes that currently the law is unable to accommodate the needs of especially Muslim women and seems to attribute this to an institutionalized form of Islamophobia. *Birt* discusses how national and international events influence the (political) treatment of Muslims living in the United Kingdom. A final cluster of contributions consists of essays that discuss Islamophobia in cultural or leisure activities. *Brown* addresses the misperception that music is forbidden in Islam, while *Ranasinha* describes how novels and screenplays written by British Asians use the United Kingdom as a stage for discussing local and global tensions that are related to Muslims (for example gender inequality). *Millward* focuses on Islamophobia in football, and *Islam* describes anti-Islamic behavior in the virtual world of Second Life. Beyond these four broad categories, reoccurring themes in the essays are how opposition towards Islam is used for defining national identity, for example with regard to redefining national culture in terms of gender equality and sexual liberation attitudes (*Kuntsman Haritaworn and Petzen*), and the role of the media in shaping anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments, for instance with respect to the debate on face-veiling in the Netherlands (*Moors*).

The essays collected in this volume offer a broad overview of Islamophobia beyond the Western (and European) perspective. These essays show that Islamophobic features are not only present in societies that are struggling with a relatively recent influx of Muslim immigrants, but also in societies characterized by a predominantly Muslim population (Turkey) and countries with a long-established Muslim presence (for example India, Russia and Thailand). In the introduction, Sayyid identifies four main regions based on the presence of Muslims (p. 3), these are Muslim dominated (formally or informally) countries, countries with a Muslim minority that either originate in the country or have a long-established presence, countries with a relative recent presence of Muslim minorities and, finally, countries that have basically no Muslim minorities, as is the case for instance in Latin America. This last group is unfortunately not represented in the chapters in *Thinking through Islamophobia*, although research by the Pew Research Centre (2008) shows that despite the virtual absence of Muslims, negative attitudes towards Muslims are relatively widespread in Latin America, with between a third and half of respondents of a representative survey expressing an unfavorable opinion of Muslims.

Based on the essays in this volume the question arises to what extent the different countries deal with the same concept of Islamophobia; the reference for Islamophobia

takes various forms. The contributions on Greece and Russia, for example, focus on historical developments to explain Islamophobia, *Haşimi* relates the Islamophobic attitudes to developments elsewhere in the world, and others focus on current developments in the own country to explain Islamophobia (e.g., *Fadil* and *Khan*). Furthermore, the 'function' of Islamophobia can differ depending on the group which is studied. The essay by *Sian* on Islamophobia among the British Sikh community illustrates that discriminating against Muslims and Islam is a way to distinguish oneself from another ethnic out-group, and thus to avoid personal discrimination, whereas in other contributions Islamophobia is studied among the society's majority population. A comparison of the different expressions of Islamophobia is further problematic because not all authors clarify their understanding of the concept of Islamophobia, and the distinction between Islamophobia and related concepts such as a general xenophobia often seem to be intertwined. Especially in the contributions on Islamophobia in football (*Millward*) and the discussion of the inability of the British law to deal with arranged or forced marriages (*Bano*) discriminatory practices towards British Asians are interpreted as Islamophobic, while they could also be an indicator of a more general xenophobia. Finally, in defining Islamophobia it should be considered whether all critique to Islam and Muslims and all misperceptions or negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims can be categorized as Islamophobia, or that it is possible to criticize Islam without being Islamophobic.

In conclusion, *Thinking through Islamophobia: Global perspectives* shows that Islamophobia has many faces and provides a broad and timely overview of anti-Muslim sentiments in a time where the relation between Muslims and non-Muslims is one of the most pressing issues.

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- Runnymede Trust. (1997). *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all*. Runnymede Trust.

Review 2

Title: Race, Housing & Community: Perspectives on Policy & Practice. By Harris Beider. (2012). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 284pp., ISBN 978-1-4051-9696-3.

Reviewed by: Daniel B. German, Professor Emeritus, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608, USA.

At the outset, it must be mentioned that this book's title is misleading and does not capture the perspectives and policy recommendations contained within its covers. A better title could be: Beyond Race and Community: A Broader Cultural Agenda. The essential and bottom line message of the author, Harris Beider is that the traditional focus on British housing policy was to combat racism. However, Beider maintains that this policy has been a failure. In fact the author maintains that the focus on race had the effect of worsening the attempt to compensate for racial discrimination. The consequence of endeavoring to eliminate racism for the government's allocation of housing resulted in emphasizing black vs. white differences in British society. The effect of allocating housing in favor of predominately Caribbean and South Indian immigrants in order to combat racial discrimination was to create parallel communities. Black communities were created which were extremely segregated and emphasized a kind of cultural monism. Binary or dual societies resulted which exacerbated racial discrimination. The message of the book is entirely different than the title implies. This is important since Beider wishes to use academic analysis to influence policy so the title is misleading seemingly urging a continuing emphasis on race.

Beider wants to develop a much broader concept to the development of community. A net must be cast encompassing much more than race. Race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age are variables which cut across the racial divide and bring policy emphasis on the newer and more all encompassing issues developing in contemporary society. These are the same topics which have become a great part also of the cultural political landscape of American and mainland European politics as well as around the world. The argument in this book is that if one brings an increased number of culture cleavages into the housing landscape many people are harnessed into the debate of discrimination as opposed to a simple black vs. white discussion.

Race and ethnicity are very different entities in the USA and Britain. The most successful in terms of incomes and educational achievement ethnics in America taken as separate groups are Asian Americans including Asians from India, China, the Philippines,

Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and other South and East Asian nations. The largest single Asian group in America now are Chinese and the most financially successful are Asian Indians followed by Japanese. America is very racially and ethnically diverse having been settled largely by Europeans and more recently the biggest immigrant numbers are Latinos. In Britain, the biggest wave of immigrants after 1945 came primarily from the Caribbean and South Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and Africa (e.g., Somalia). More recently there has been a wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe resulting from a broadening of the European Union in 2004. The largest group in this new wave came from Poland, but also included refugees from warfare in the Balkans. A relevant feature of immigration in the United Kingdom (UK) is that the immigrants generally have been poorer, less educated and more in need of public services. While Asians in America have been successful, Black Americans and Latinos have been more in need of civil rights legislation and government services. Another significant difference between America and the UK is that white Americans have moved out of central cities to suburbs whereas in the UK the largest immigrant concentrations are in London although in highly segregated communities. The challenges of minority issues in America are different compared to the UK. However, the move to broader cultural issues such as gender, religion (i.e., Muslim vs. Christian), sexual orientation, age and disability is occurring in both nations.

The book is divided into two parts. One is an academic/policy analysis by Beider and the other is a large Appendices written by Beider and others. Visual and written messages in the appendices are very interesting and convey the policy message presented in an extremely academic fashion earlier in the book. For example, a photo of a woman in head scarf on the left with a Caribbean male on the right are separated by blurred figures in the middle. The message is clear: forget "race," religion, and gender and merge into a kind of "British" society which provides opportunities to all cultural cleavages. The authors do refer to a Britain where everyone gets along. An entry in Appendix A, for example, is written by a West Indian who came to the UK in the 1960's. Leon Murray notes that what it means to be British has evolved (and is evolving) into a society which accommodates and includes new people but will take generations to truly achieve.

An entry in Appendix A by Julia Margo is very engaging. A subtitle "The rise of women and the decline of men" (p. 165) notes that women are doing better than men in modern Britain. Men and boys are being "disempowered" (p. 167). An implication is that the new emerging society "demands greater emotional sensitivity amongst its higher achievers, and which unwittingly places woman at an advantage" (p. 169). It may be that the meaning of "sensitivity" needs to be further expanded beyond this book's presentation. There is a lot of insensitivity in the world which manifests in confrontation and at the extreme warfare. Is there still a need for hardnosed people to face up to the likes of Vladimir Putin, Robert Mugabe, the Myanmar military rulers, and the Taliban?

The issues of age interestingly are explored by a professor emeritus (retired), Pat Thane. A new generation of very healthy mentally active elderly has emerged yet there is an age bias in favor of a sort of youth cult both in terms of looking younger and acceptance of youth's "fresher" ideas. There is also a divide between rich and poor older people resulting in a better life for the well off elderly compared to an often worsening life for poorer seniors. Gender appears again in this discussion. The tradition is respecting the gray-haired male elder. It is noted that there are fewer female role models to Harrison

Ford. However, this is changing for we now have, as an example, Laura Croft played by Angelina Jolie who is a role model for young woman. Maybe this will result in an equal appreciation of the white haired elder female.

The issue of religion is that in Britain there are Hindu, Muslim and Christian places of worship. Beider sees religious division as being a difficult problem for the future. In Appendix B equality in multi-faith communities is called for as a fundamental ingredient of diversity in British society.

It should be noted that the Appendices do not have separate sections on two issues – sexual orientations and disabilities. It is clear that “sexual orientations” refers to divides between heterosexual people and people with gay, lesbian and transsexual orientations. This obviously is an emerging topic which needs to be further addressed. Much is being accomplished with regard to the disabled, but this important topic while mentioned quite often, as is sexual orientation, does not receive special more in depth consideration.

Against the backdrop of all these discrimination issues is the state of the British economy. The UK has been in a recession which has resulted in less finance for public housing. Local councils manage race relations and today with an economic downturn, problems seem to be exacerbated in the UK. During flush times with low unemployment crime goes down and often so do the clashes of a diverse society. All the more seems to be the argument of this book to attempt to go beyond “race” to a multi value multicultural society which solves problems by getting everybody moving ahead to a better, economically growing and more dynamic society. Movement in this direction will take a coordinated effort of educational institutions as well as media attention which is mentioned in the book, but much more advice by communications experts could be contained in the book. Public relations firms and the media need to be active in promoting this new agenda if more tolerance of diversity is to emerge. Furthermore, an attempt to unify on these issues must take into consideration those who oppose the possible destruction of traditional values.

With regard to media coverage, it is noteworthy that Beider is so much at the liberal frontier on social values but omits any discussion of social media as a way to promote his agenda. This needs to be a part of his future research. While the USA leads the world in creating Internet developments and China is at the forefront of manufacturing digital equipment, Britain has the highest level of Internet penetration. The UK has an eighty four percent Internet usage followed by Germany and Korea at eighty three percent, then Japan at eighty percent with the USA at seventy eight percent (Internet World Stats, 2012, p. 3). It would seem that social media such as Facebook, YouTube and blogs could be an avenue for putting forth the “being British” outcomes hoped for in this book.

The UK recently has experienced a very successful 2012 world Olympics. It is notable that this event progressed without crime and no riots which would have revealed deep problems in British society. This book attempts to chart a future for the UK without divisive diversity problems – a course perhaps already underway as exemplified by an Olympics where security issues were absent.

Reference

Internet World Stats, Top 20 Internet Countries – www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm.

Review 3

Title: Democratic thought in the age of globalization. By Maria Marczevska-Rytko (Ed.). (2012). Marie Curie-Sklodowska University Press, 214 p. ISBN 978-83-7784-141-9.

Reviewed by: Hans IJsenbout, Amis, The Netherlands.

In this book the modern democracy of the 20th and 21st century is set against the political ideas that emerged from the Athenian polis, where political participation was common practice for Athens citizens. The editor states that there are many views on the meaning of the concept of democracy and that there is no way to formulate an objective and precise definition of democracy. She takes us back to the source of democracy and compares ancient direct democracy with democratic systems at the turn of our century. Translating the Athenian democracy to our current or future model of 'electronic democracy' might look like comparing apples and oranges. We can clearly see similarities between the two and with the emergence of sophisticated political marketing the discussion intensifies between pros and cons of political participation on how the game is played between rulers and ruled. The factor of globalization adds multiple layers and dimensions that make it more difficult to determine and analyze current developments. Democracy is in crisis and globalization makes this clearer than ever.

In this review I will discuss the papers published in the book, which is divided into three parts that deal with "conditions", with "participation" and with "examples". While the "conditions" section gives an overview of several concepts of democracy, the "participation" section details participation in democracy at different levels, and the third, "examples" section discusses the characteristics of selected democratic systems.

In the first chapter, which is entitled "Democracy as a form of life", Andrei Marga argues that a transformation is needed, from information and knowledge society to wisdom society. Universities could play an important role in this transformation. In the context of the resurgence of democracy, the 'third wave democracy', the incomparable advantages of democracy were clear. The challenges and problems of today's democracies bring Marga to the thesis that there is a demand of change from democracy as a technique of periodical choice of leaders to democracy as a way of life. A democracy can't exist without civil participation and is depending on individual liberties. These are exactly the mechanisms that are at risk in our information society. The author distinguishes a transformation to new types of power centers: economic, political and media-related. How

universities will deal with these powers and how will they keep their autonomy? Democracy has its deficiencies but it seems to be the only feasible institutional arrangement there is. Apathy and cynicism needs counterparts like civic competence and democratic empowerment. Marga sees three kinds of participants: bosses, managers and leaders. Bosses just 'earn' a position, managers are competent or have knowledge. Only leaders make the difference, based on recognition, hard work and continuous learning, 'there are no born leaders'.

Nathan van Camp, in his (second) chapter on "Bios or psyche? Thinking power after Foucault", describes the evolution of new technologies, starting from Foucault's concept of bio-power to the psycho-power of Stiegler. Van Camp distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary retention and strokes the importance of the latter in (collective) individuation. In present time, he states, the mnemotechnical system is exploited by cultural capitalism, leading to global de-individuation. In Stiegler's opinion mnemotechnical systems, appearing in new technologies can be poisoning as well as curing. Van Camp believes that it is high time to use the potential of the current system to support new forms of (collective) intelligence. Current cultural capitalism has brought us to the dark ages, keeping its consumers immature and docile. A new period of Enlightenment, in which the most important task will be to work to a psycho-politics, that can handle the challenges of a globalized society in an effective way, is seen as inevitable. Van Camp's answer to the pessimistic opposing power mechanisms is to reinvent the mnemotechnical systems, as a basis of a new culture of care. How to achieve this bright future stays an open question.

In the third chapter, "Mediatization and Globalization under the conditions of democracy", Dobrinka Pecheiva discusses the axes of globalization in democratic society. The author sees mediatization as the identifier, presenter and controller of democratic society. Today's world turns to be a mutual penetration of communications and social spheres and of media and societies. This happens on several layers that transform to new shapes. Home is transforming from a domestic haven to a global communication center that merges with a 24/7 operational working place. Private, working and public sphere form parallel environments. New media offer opportunities on the level of professional development and in personal and social life. A lot of assets, processes and activities have become prerequisites, without them existence in democratic societies is not possible. There is no life without social media and mobile devices. The wisdom lays in the recognition of the inevitable innovations in the global media landscape and to cooperate effectively with it.

Globalization is both necessary and painful, especially in education. This is what Nikos Koutros concludes in his (fourth) chapter that deals with "Education in the age of globalization". Globalization promises an ever-evolving peaceful global society, but also one that is subject to risks and threats. After the dismantling of the welfare state, education and culture are looked upon in a different way. Technological and political changes transform the traditional educational structures. The university is no longer in the lead. The author identifies several fields of globalization but limits his chapter to the fields of economics, politics and culture. In education institutions like the EU and UNESCO helped to shape global education. In the cultural field increased confidence in information technologies and new forms of communication alternate with prejudice and isolationism. The chapter examines the way education participates in the creation of a global multicul-

tural society. How to combine the pros and cons in a democratic, financially sound way without offending human dignity and cultural identity?

Maria Marczewska-Rytko introduces, in the fifth chapter on "What democracy do we need? Electronic democracy in contemporary discourse" the notion of electronic democracy. The author starts with a focus on the theoretical arguments, looks at determinants of electronic democracy and discusses the (dis)advantages of the internet as an instrument of electronic democracy. Due to the digital revolution changes are far-reaching. The idea of one form of representative democracy is undermined whereas direct participation in decision making is no longer limited by technological barriers. Access to government information, civic organizations and the providing of return opinions to civil servants as well, are several ways of participating. Protection of data and privacy are nevertheless crucial in this process. Electronic democracy can act as an instrument for citizen's participation and influence but it might be an instrument for manipulation and tyranny of the majority where populism can flourish. The danger lies in adopting technology as the answers to all questions. Opponents fear that the (assumptive) ignorance and incompetence of citizens in indirect democracy will continue in electronic direct democracy. The fact remains that new technologies appear helpful in widening participation and improving debate on public issues.

According to Christ'l De Landtsheer, internet and websites form a new channel for political communication. In this sixth chapter entitled "Participation friendliness of political websites", she describes the use of internet and the role the user friendliness of political websites plays in it. Advantage and disadvantage of internet compared to traditional media are discussed by believers and non-believers. Bottom-up communication of ideas and mobilization of public opinion could lead to enrichment of the public. Global activism and global thinking are important aspects of internet communication. Cyber optimists and pessimists disagree about the potential of internet. The author sees four forms of political participation: active information seeking, active political discussion, voting and political activity and she distinguishes four related categories to measure the participation friendliness of political websites: information, inter-activity, user-friendliness and aesthetics. The movement towards new media provides many opportunities but participation depends on more than friendliness of websites.

Participation of citizens can be analyzed on the level of attendance. This seventh chapter by Arkadiusz Zukowski does so by looking at what extend women use their passive voting right, i.e. the right to be elected ("Contemporary trends in changing democracy: increasing participation of women in elections"). Despite the fact that there is an increase in female participation, women remain underrepresented. Several theories reflect about the representation of the population in representative bodies. Opponents and supporters of parity and quota for women use different arguments for and against those quota. There are some political, socio-economic and ideological/psychological difficulties that are responsible for the lack of women's equal participation. In mature democracies men and women show equal political activity. But even then certain political parties do not promote gender equality inside or outside their party. Political systems should be a reflection of society and in that light the growth of female participation will be a positive factor in a political system and for democracy.

It will be interesting to see how democracy will manifest itself in countries like Tunisia and Egypt in the coming years following the Arab Spring. This could be concluded

from the (eighth) chapter “Islam and democracy in the age of globalization”, by Aydin Topaloglu. The question whether Islam is compatible with democracy has been lingering on for centuries. Islam, globalization and democracy are not conflicting terms. Relations between Islam and democracy are essentially ethical, not controversial or conflicting. Islam could coexist peacefully with the rest of the world although some cultural or traditional obsessions could stand in the way of practicing democratic values. Not the Islam as a religion but its political appearance in nation states could be a reason for friction between Islam and democracy.

In “Democracy and the crisis of confidence” (chapter nine), Max J. Skidmore explains the term ‘crisis of confidence’ that emerged during President Carter’s administration after a famous speech in 1979. Anti-government feelings are part of American popular culture, there has always been a tension between the demands of civic republicanism and a strong preference for individualism. US citizens tend to have reservations about their political institutions. Criticism of institutions came from both ends of the political spectrum. In Carter’s 1979 speech he asked attention for the concerns about America’s institutions and although his tone was optimistic, it led to decreasing confidence in government and political institutions. Later republican presidents cultivated anti-government rhetoric and promoted deregulation and decrement of state interference.

Modern societies have universal literacy and access to information through internet. Yet this literacy and information did not bring us a virtual utopia. A known fact is that citizens voted routinely against their own interest, relying on emotion rather than on reason. A way to win the educated voters’ mind, and not only their heart, could be to find a way to appeal to critical thinking and not exclusively to emotion.

Bogdan Stefanachi and Roxan Constinescu explain, in their (tenth) chapter on “The Lisbon agenda – the European Union and the challenges of the new economy”, how the process to achieve goals as growth, stability and cohesion was placed under the umbrella of the Lisbon Strategy. Named after the EU Council in Lisbon in March 2000 it aimed at reforming the EU into a productive knowledge-based economy. Measures and actions were taken to make changes in the architecture and functioning of the social and economic European Model. Some economists consider this model to be inefficient in a new global economy. The market should take over the role of the state. Investment in R&D, higher education and flexible labor markets are necessary to generate economic growth. After a few years it was clear that most targets of the Lisbon agenda were not met. That is why the EC launched a new strategy, Europe 2020, to give an impulse to the intended implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. Reform is the only option and according to the authors the way to achieve that consists of deregulation, the creation of a competitive environment, and the promotion of an entrepreneurial mindset. This opinion can be seen as questionable given the economic developments in recent years.

The rapid changes of economic, political and technological developments are hard to keep up with. Since the publication of this book new crises, challenges and technologies have arisen. The authors all recognize that new technologies and trends will result in inevitable changes towards democracy in this age of globalization. How to deal with these changes depends on all sorts of factors and will be subject to changes. This book is a welcome addition to the ongoing debate on globalization and democracy.

Review 4

Title: The role of cognition and affect in right-wing ideology: Relationships of cognitive style, threat proneness and psychological well-being with social attitudes. By Emma Onraet. (2012). Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ghent, 279p.

Reviewed by: Christ’l De Landtsheer, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Populist and right-wing attitudes as well, are well-spread over the world and they keep puzzling political psychologists. What are the underlying factors that drive people to support extremely conservative or even unpleasant and aggressive opinions, and to hold those negative opinions against other human beings that are – most of the time – completely innocent? Is it the genes, is it socialization through authoritarian upbringing, or is it just the threat from the outside that at particular occasions happens to be more threatening than before? Since Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sandford launched in 1950 their “authoritarian personality theory”, many scholars contributed to the development of it. But what is the core of the findings, and moreover, after all those years of empirical research, how many aspects of the theory survived? Emma Onraet decided to take care of this most intriguing question in her psychological dissertation, and we can be pleased as she did so with great persistence and much detail. The dissertation consists of a collection of articles that were earlier published in such journals as *Journal of Personality*, *Political Psychology*, *International Journal of Psychology*, and *European Journal of Personality*.

Authoritarianism is, in practice and in research, more prominent than ever. While the pioneers’ theory has paradigmatic importance, empirical evidence is not always complete or convincing. The ambitious enterprise of the author was to meticulously review the results of such findings, to look for errors, missing information, conflicting perspectives and methods of data gathering, and if necessary, to complement the findings with new empirical research that might offer more correct answers to the basic questions.

Since Adorno’s (et al.) 1950 influential publication, many scholars have identified authoritarianism with right-wing attitudes and party preferences, with nationalism, ethnocentrism, prejudice against (ethnic) minorities, sexism, and political conservatism, and they have associated it with various cognitively limiting factors that include rigidity, low complexity and threat perception (Onraet, p. 1).

Chapter 1, as a general introduction of the book, summarizes the research area of “right-wing ideological attitudes” and the most pregnant problems, that include “the role

of cognition and affect in right-wing ideological attitudes”. It furthermore offers an overview of the chapters.

Chapter 2 consists of a meta-analysis of 124 samples with a total of 29,209 participants that solely includes studies using objective tasks for cognitive styles. This chapter aimed at reinvestigate the ‘classic’ relationship between cognitive styles and social-cultural ideological attitudes. In Chapter 3, Onraet takes a closer look at one particular cognitive style variable, that is rather popular, being the “need for Closure” (NFC), and she compares it with the personality dimension of Openness to experience” that is opposed to a preference for familiarity and tradition.

She does so by way of two new empirical questionnaire studies in which she explores the relationships of these variables with social-cultural right-wing attitudes. Three following chapters 4, 5 and 6 concern the relationship between threat and right-wing attitudes. Onraet empirically investigates what kind of threats is specifically important, and she also focusses at the national level, in order to complement earlier research at the individual level. Are country-level indicators of threat related to mean levels of inhabitants ‘social-cultural and economic-hierarchical right-wing attitudes? The answers of the author to all of her questions were based upon a meta-analysis of 109 unique samples with 22,086 participants, in addition to a representative sample of 800 Dutch participants, a questionnaire study with 588 heterogeneous voters, and data from the European and World Value Survey from 91 countries and 134,516 participants. We learn that external threats are extremely important for explaining right-wing ideology, even though it could be argued that this kind of threat perception could be mediated by individual-level threat perception. In chapter seven, furthermore, conclusions from research contradicting the classic view that right-wing attitudes are bad for the self (Adorno et al., 1950) was reconsidered and investigated by way of a meta-analysis of 97 samples with 69,221 participants and with use of data from the European Social Survey of 23 European countries from 43,000 respondents. The conclusion that personal and societal well-being in general yields no significant relationships with right-wing-attitudes is only one of the findings by Onraet that convincingly challenges the great classic’s theories. The being said, her ideas on the aesthetic preferences of right-wing individuals deserve further elaboration, so does a further distinction between right-wing ideology and the extreme-right based upon her findings.

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