Book Review

Title: The feeling, thinking citizen: Essays in honor of Milton Lodge by Howard Lavine & Charles S. Taber (2018). Routledge, pp. 255. ISBN 978 0 81537 940 9, Paperback.

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This book, which was written in honor of the long career of Milton Lodge, offers an insight into the influence Milton Lodge had and still has on the literature with regards to motivated political reasoning and political psychology. The editors, Laving and Taber asked (former) colleagues of Milton Lodge to reflect on his work and to describe how it has influenced the careers of the contributors. Although the process of motivated reasoning is explained in several chapters of the book, some background in political psychology seems to be needed in order to fully grasp the implications of the work of Milton Lodge and his colleagues.

One of the virtues of this book is that it does not only give an overview of the research done by Milton Lodge himself but that it also offers an insight into the influence that Milton Lodge had on other researchers and their careers. Additionally, a number of the contributors express the importance of interpersonal communication, also for scientific research. This proves that good and thorough research often is teamwork and not a one man show. Authors and researchers can draw inspiration of regular talks and brainstorm sessions with other researchers and can use this inspiration in the research that they are undertaking. This book shows that it is even possible to draw inspiration from scientists who are not immediately related to your field of expertise. In doing so, there can be a kind of cross-pollination, where the insights of other researchers can prove to be an added value for your own research.

In the first and introductory chapter, Howard Lavine and Charles S. Taber emphasize the importance of Milton Lodge as one of the most influential scholars of the past half century working at the intersection of psychology and political science. Milton Lodge believed that explicating the rhyme and reason of the mass political mind, required a deep understanding of basic psychological theory. His aim was to explore the implications for democratic citizenship of basic features of human cognition. In order to do so, Milton Lodge examined how information is acquired, organized in memory, and retrieved when making political judgements. According to Lodge, ordinary citizens do not necessarily draw conclusions that respect the facts but people in their reasoning unconsciously draw from prefabricated conclusions which are designed to uphold standing political commitments (motivated reasoning). Therefore, people are often unable to control their preconceptions, even when encouraged to be objective. Our basic neurocognitive architecture facilitates judgmental biases on the basis of prior attitudes and unnoticed

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affective cues. This process is called rationalization and resulted in Lodges and Taber's magnum opus: 'The Rationalizing Voter'.

In the following and second chapter, Charles S. Taber addresses the fact that conversational partnerships with colleagues and students were of great importance for Milton Lodge. This also becomes apparent when looking at Lodges' bibliography, his most influential and significant contributions were co-authored. Furthermore Taber gives some more background on the processes which were described in 'The Rationalizing Voter'. In this book Lodge and Taber examined how prior feelings and knowledge about political candidates, groups and ideas might motivate and bias the evaluation of new information. The authors challenged the theoretical and empirical focus of political psychology until then, namely the focus on conscious thinking. In the book, the authors claim that all thinking, feeling, reasoning, and doing have an automatic, unconscious component as well as a conscious deliberative component. The authors of 'The Rationalizing Voter' paid special attention to the automatic component and the impact of automatic feelings on political judgement and evaluations. They found that citizens are biased with concern to political issues. For example, people will unconsciously feel that the information they agree with is stronger, more compelling evidence than the information that they disagree with. The result of such processes will be that the same stream of balanced pro and con information leads partisans to diverge in their attitudes. Contrary to what the literature believed until then, the authors of 'The Rationalizing Voter' argue that the biases will be particularly pronounced for citizens with political knowledge and strong prior attitudes. This is surprising as the normative democratic theory relies most heavily on those persons. It is also important to note that Taber acknowledges that the theory of him and Lodge could face some criticism as most of the research on which the book 'The Rationalizing Voter' rests, are laboratory experiments which means that questions can be raised about the external validity of these experiments and their results.

In the third chapter Kathleen M. McGraw addresses the importance and influence that Milton Lodge had on her career. McGraw studied to become a social psychologist but transitioned to become a political scientist at the university were Milton Lodge worked, Stony Brook. This shows that Lodge and the university where he worked, paid a lot of attention to the values of interdisciplinary scholarship and experimentation. They hired people with a psychology background in order to enrich political science and further develop the area of political psychology. According to McGraw, Milton Lodge made a huge contribution to contemporary political psychology by challenging the reigning assumptions in political sciences that citizens evaluate political candidates in a memory-based fashion. Contrarily, Lodge argued that people are motived by the desire to maintain existing impressions of the target and that existing attitudes can serve as an anchor. McGraw also applied this theory of motivated reasoning and possible biases in her research about the attitudes about nation-states. She found that when a state was personified through pictures and repeated references to its leader, attitudes about the state resulted from online processes. But when the state was not personified, memory-based processing dominated.

The work of Milton Lodge had an influence on the work of the contributor of the fourth chapter, Robert Huckfeldt as well. This author's area of expertise is the sources of influence on individual and group behavior that are contingent on individual location within social networks and contexts. Although Huckfeldt only worked at the University of Stony Brook for one academic year, Milton Lodge had a big influence on the further career of Huckfeldt. In the research of Huckfeldt it became apparent that many of the effects arising on individual political cogni-

tion, occur beyond the boundaries of human awareness, and most are rapidly forgotten. Even though it is seldom possible to observe the cognition process directly, theories of cognition help us understand the events we observe. For example, with regards to new information, the key to the influence of this new information is whether the recipient trusts the message. The probability of trusting the message is linked with the previous preferences of the person and thus with motivated reasoning.

In the fifth chapter, Jennifer Jerit and Caitlin Davies delve deeper into the paradox of political knowledge. Lodge's research raises questions about the ability of people to arrive at reasoned judgement and instead he even argues that people often are held captive to their existing views and predispositions. The paradox in this is that people with the highest level of political knowledge are more susceptible to bias. This is contrary to the democratic theory which sees the informed citizenry as the pillar of a functioning democratic system. In general, according to Lodge, knowledgeable individuals and politically sophisticated are the most susceptible to decision-making biases. But as Jerit and Davies argue, recent research leaves a glimmer of hope. Some researchers found that people, even politically knowledgeable people, will relinquish prior beliefs in the face of compelling evidence. Future scholars should more fully elaborate the conditions under which this relinquishing of prior beliefs occurs. The issue that more knowledgeable citizens have the tendency to be more biased is further elaborated in the sixth chapter by Victor Ottai, Chase Wilson, Erika Price and Nathanael Sumaktoyo. According to these authors it is important to develop and test models of political information processing that explicitly incorporate the role of individual differences in political expertise. Therefore, this chapter focuses on how political expertise influences cognitive processing style and more specifically the influence on the Open-Minded Cognition: the willingness to openly consider multiple intellectual perspectives, attitudes or opinions -even those that contradict the individual's preexisting opinions and expectations. Summarized, they research the effect of political expertise on open-minded cognition. The authors and other researchers in this field found that self-perception is key. Individuals who perceive themselves to be high in political expertise, will be more likely to respond to political messages in a closed-minded fashion. It is also interesting to note that perceptions of expertise are relative and can vary within the individual across situations. When a person with a high amount of political knowledge is placed in a group with real political experts, that person will in general be more open-minded than in a group with people with less political expertise. In short, it became apparent in the research that conditions that promote self-perceptions of high expertise increase dogmatic and close-minded processing.

In the seventh chapter, Marco Steenbergen and Howard Levine take a closer look at the evidence that exists with concern to opinion change when faced with evidence or arguments that are inconsistent with those beliefs. Using a Bayesian framework, these authors observe two kind of biases. First of all, a confirmation biases which causes decision makers to interpret evidence that contradicts prior beliefs as it were neutral or even consistent with those beliefs. Secondly, a conservatism bias which causes decision makers to adjust their prior beliefs insufficiently in the light of new evidence. Additionally, the authors argue that biases should be less pronounced when individuals hold conflicting beliefs about a political issue, when there is ambivalence. Therefore, ambivalence seems to be a moderator of political behavior.

James Druckman, Thomas Leeper and Rune Slothuus explain in the eight chapter that the theoretical framework of motivated reasoning, can also be used to explain opinion formation in response to political communications like framing, partisan cues, and opinions about scientific

issues. With regards to framing, the authors suggest that citizens with weak attitudes are highly responsive to new information, with framing effects moving their opinions potentially wildly over a short period. Secondly, with regards to party cues, the authors argue that when forming, their opinions, citizens often rely on positions taken by political parties. Individuals simply do what their party tells them to do, and they ignore other substantive information. Motivated reasoning also becomes apparent even when talking about scientific issues, where knowledge is in general in short supply. Once an initial impression is formed, people tend to accumulate more and more evidence that is consistent with their prior beliefs, this was thus found with regards to framing, party cues and scientific issues.

In the nineth chapter David P. Redlawsk and Douglas R. Pierce examine the effects of first impressions on subsequent information search and evaluation. This chapter can be relevant for new politicians as they still need to make a first impression. In line with the theory on motivated reasoning by Milton Lodge, Redlawsk and Pierce find that in learning about a candidate for the first time, the impression formed by that candidate through whatever means becomes the baseline and lens through which all additional information is considered. Additionally, especially negative first impressions matter. Candidates who got off on the wrong foot, created an 'impression deficit' and it seemed hard to overcome that deficit afterwards. Furthermore, an interesting finding was that the data of these researchers suggest that, contrary to research arguing that negative information increases vigilance and attention, subjects who experienced a negative first impression, were no more or less motivated to seek out information about a candidate than were subjects who had a neutral first response. The data even suggest that it is positive first impressions that boost information seeking and not negative first impressions.

Stanley Feldman and Leonie Huddy zoom in on racially motivated reasoning in the tenth chapter. According to these authors, group-linked attitudes like race, provide an especially fertile domain in which to study motivated reasoning. Therefore, they expect that motivated reasoning would play a major role in the maintenance and defense of racial attitudes. Discrimination is difficult to document. From previous research it became clear that judgements about such issues, are likely to reflect basic beliefs about the world and can prove to be biased. To study this, the researchers, asked to question if most Americans are reasonably even-handed in their assessment of potentially discriminatory events. The findings suggest that racial prejudice, political ideology and plain ignorance still present obstacles to the acceptance of well-established facts concerning the history of recent American race relations. But the good news is that the tendency to reject evidence of racial discrimination is not the response of the majority of white Americans. Even politically conservative whites who harbor negative racial views, find it difficult to reject clear-cut evidence with regards to discrimination. For this to happen, evidence needs to be clear-cut, frequently cited, and indisputable in order to solve some of the biases.

In the eleventh chapter Gaurav Sood and Shanto Iyengar try to explain the paradox of unabated partisan support despite increased ideological divergence within parties between followers and leaders. In short it seems that the major parties in the US become more ideologically extreme while far less centrifugal movement is seen in the ideology of median voters. Despite this fact, supporters of the political parties still express strong affection for their party. This can be explained by motivated reasoning and this is partly a consequence of the different spatial calculus that partisans use to judge co-partisan and opposing party representatives. For example the researchers find that the most ideologically extreme politicians draw nearly as much support from co-partisans as the more moderate representatives. On the other hand, notably fewer par-

tisans support more extreme out-party politicians than their more moderate out-party counterparts. Even when given more information, partisans are disinclined to penalize more distal and more extreme co-partisans. Summarized, low approval ratings of opposing party elites are to a large degree a consequence of the positions they take on certain issues, but high approval rating of the same elites among co-partisans are likely a result of motivated reasoning.

In the twelfth and last chapter, Tessa Ditonto and Richard Lau try to address one of the critics that Lodge and Taber got on their work, namely that the results are solely based on laboratory experiments. These experiments were conducted in a highly controlled laboratory setting in which very particular protocols were followed. This leads to high internal validity, but the question is if such results could also be found in the real world, under less rigid conditions. The researchers find that the results in less rigid conditions are not as strong as Lodge and Taber's and that certain design choices led to better results than others. For example, image primes seemed to work better in the studies than did word primes. A surprising result is that in less rigid conditions, the researchers found extraordinarily little support for the hypothesis that political sophisticates were more influenced by implicit primes than their less sophisticated counterparts.

Overall, this book offers great insight in the impact of motivated reasoning in diverse areas of political psychology and the role that Milton Lodge played in this field of political psychology. Especially in times were there seems to be growing polarization within the society, motivated reasoning can possibly be one of the explaining factors. For example, people seem more critical about extreme politicians of other political parties than of their own party. A virtue of this book is that it also gives an insight in possible solutions to lessen the bias with regards to motivated reasoning. When people are faced with clear-cut, frequently cited and indisputable proof, people are less prone to be biased. Another virtue is that it also pays attention to some possible arguments against the motivated reasoning hypothesis like the fact that most of the results in this area are done in experiments in laboratories which raises questions about the external validity of the experiments. For these reasons, this book is highly recommended for academics who want to develop their knowledge about motivated reasoning. A point of critique, as a European, is that this book especially focuses on the experiments in the US and that it is unclear if such results were also found in other continents than the USA.