

Book Reviews

Germans or Foreigners? Attitudes Toward Ethnic Minorities in Post-Reunification Germany. Edited by R. Alba, P. Schmidt, and M. Wasmer. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003. Pp. 308.

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Germans or Foreigners? is an edited volume that provides important insights into the basic theme of the book summarized in the subtitle: *Attitudes Toward Ethnic Minorities in Post-Reunification Germany*. The volume tackles the multifaceted manifestations of negative attitudes against foreigners such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, support for right-wing parties, and lack of support for equal social and political rights for non-Germans. These phenomena are described and explained by investigating the impact of demographic and social variables, political socialization, interethnic contact, and geographical area.

Almost all of the chapters make use of the ALLBUS, a cross-sectional general social survey conducted bi-annually in Germany since 1980. Eastern Germans are oversampled; non-nationals are included in the survey if they are able to handle a questionnaire in German. In 1996, the survey's thematic focus was on attitudes toward minorities (an appendix lists the relevant parts of the questionnaire). The oversampling of Eastern Germans makes the survey particularly interesting for research on ethnocentrism, a phenomenon – as is shown throughout the book – that is not only stronger in the former GDR, but also partially influenced by different factors than in the West.

The book starts out with a basic description of the ethnic and demographic structure and of the economic and social situation of the immigrant-origin population in Germany. The following chapters provide an extensive overview of the attitudes of Germans toward ethnic minorities – and the determinants of these attitudes – and of immigrants' perceptions of the

relationship between the majority and minority population. Terwey's analyses present the essentials about the development of ethnocentrism in Germany over time, and look into the role of the most important explanatory variables. Many of Terwey's findings are corroborated throughout the book: Ethnocentrism is more prevalent in the East than in the West (although Bergmann and Erb show that anti-Semitism is higher in the East). It increased in the mid-nineties, and it is negatively influenced by education and positively by age. Alba and Johnson deal with the question of how to measure prejudice among the younger and less blatantly prejudiced cohorts. Their conclusion is one of the basic themes of the book: With regard to ethnocentrism, a stable fault line runs through German society, with those Germans located at the ends of the spectrum sharing either positive or negative attitudes not only against immigrant minorities, but also against Jews. This view is supported by Wasmer and Koch's conclusion that the denial of rights to foreigners is only partly explained by individual variables, but seems to be embedded in rather stable "politico-ideological belief systems." Similarly, Bergmann and Erb state that anti-Semitism is increasingly correlated with ideological rather than social-structural variables.

The last two chapters look into the influence of factors such as place on ethnocentrism. Böltken confirms and specifies the well-known hypothesis that contact reduces ethnocentric attitudes. But he also demonstrates that individuals' evaluations of these contacts matter and that independent of contacts, Turks are substantially less accepted socially than other immigrant groups. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik shows as well that there is an urban-rural divide with respect to ethnocentrism that cannot be reduced to individual factors.

Three features in particular are noteworthy about this extensive and methodologically elaborate collection: First, *Germans and Foreigners* is a book about Germany coedited by Germans – and by a "foreigner." Therefore, many national peculiarities are mentioned and questioned, particularly in the introductory chapter written by the editors, that are often taken for granted within the German context: That people born in Germany are still considered to be "foreigners"

when their parents were immigrants, that there is a close link between right-wing political orientations and ethnocentrism that is less strong in the U.S., and that Germans (unlike Americans) are much more hesitant to grant political rights to nonnationals than social rights.

Second, even though the book evolved around the ALLBUS module about attitudes toward foreigners, many of its chapters make additional use of other data sets to round off the picture. Data from the socioeconomic panel, the Eurobarometer, and the “Foreigners in Germany” survey are used in order to overcome the limitations of the ALLBUS. With regard to some chapters, more extensive use of this strategy would have seemed desirable. Given the many peculiarities of the German situation, such as a large and predominantly low-skilled immigrant-origin population, the combination of a lack of contact with foreigners, anomia, and economic disadvantage in Eastern Germany, and the postreunification increase in xenophobic attacks, an internationally comparative chapter drawing on data from the Eurobarometer would have offered additional insight into Germany’s position concerning the degree and the development of ethnocentrism and right-wing party preferences.

Third, the book is more exhaustive than much other work on ethnocentrism and attitudes about ethnic minorities in that it incorporates the perspective of minority members – and their perceptions of discrimination (Kühnel, and Leibold and Böltken).

In sum, the collection provides not only a highly informative overview of the relevant research questions, hypotheses, and methodological approaches in the field of majority-minority relations in general. It also makes an impressive collection of detailed empirical findings about ethnocentrism in Germany available for an international audience. Due to the fact that the data used was collected about a decade ago (a slightly different version of the book was published in German in 2000), those issues that have gained salience in recent years are naturally less prominent in the book. Although it does tackle attitudes toward religious education in school, readers interested in the much-debated role of Islam in majority-minority relations

should be aware that empirically informed studies on this topic are still rare.