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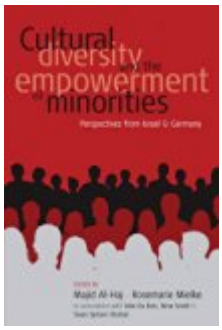

Majid Al-Haj, Rosemarie Mielke, eds.. *Cultural Diversity and the Empowerment of Minorities: Perspectives from Israel and Germany.*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007. xii + 291 pp. $90.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-84545-195-0.

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Two phenomena have contributed greatly to the cultural diversity of modern nation-states. First, the drawing of state borders by colonial powers often ensured that diverse and sometimes antagonistic ethnic and cultural groups were located within a state's borders. Second, a significant increase in immigration, particularly as a result of global economic forces and refugee flows, has led millions of migrants to settle permanently in host societies. As a result of these two phenomena, many modern nation-states have had to confront the reality of large ethnic minorities and growing cultural diversity within their borders. Academics and policymakers have worked diligently to assess the impact of ethnic minorities on the economic, social, and political environment of their homes. One particularly important aspect of this development involves the changing nature of majority-minority relations and the implication they hold for domestic conflict. Specifically, has the interaction between majority and minority cultural groups been relatively harmonious, resulting in widespread tolerance and peace? Or has it produced a growing schism between culturally disparate groups, characterized by marked inequalities, rampant discrimination, and conflict over scarce resources? The need to reverse this destructive trend and build greater unity while respecting the uniqueness of minority cultures will likely affect many pluralistic societies for decades to come, especially where increased immigration is expected. In attempting to deal with these issues in this valuable contribution to the literature, Majid Al-Haj and Rosemarie Mielke maintain that multicultural education is the key to empowering minorities and overcoming conflict. The fourteen essays in this collection were written by nineteen scholars and practitioners from the University of Haifa and the International Center for Graduate Studies (ICGS) at the University of Hamburg who worked in a multi-year collaborative project.

After a brief preface and introduction that outline a set of common themes and objectives, the book is then divided into three sections: three essays providing a general overview of "democra-

cy education" as the overarching theoretical construct used to argue for the empowerment of minorities; seven chapters dealing with the Israeli case study; and four chapters on Germany. As stated in the preface, the central goal of the book is to "shed light on different aspects of multiculturalism. In particular it delineates the German and Israeli experiences in terms of majority-minority relations through formal and informal education. It addresses the meaning and implementation of multiculturalism in these societies through issues such as cultural policy, linguistic policy, the shaping of the school curriculum, the absorption of immigrants, the promotion of women's status, and other related issues" (p. xi).

Individual authors attempt to address these issues through the lens of critical multiculturalism, a theoretical model that seeks to empower disadvantaged minorities to change existing social relations based on discrimination and inequalities into more equitable, just ones. These changes are achieved through democracy education, which views the acquisition of knowledge, including raising awareness; improving communication; and validating one's own cultural identity as the keys to greater empowerment. Hence, education can reduce socioeconomic gaps and is the basis for less discordant relations between disparate cultural groups. The ultimate goal is to build a democratic society founded on civility and tolerance of others that allows different groups to maintain their uniqueness. By presenting research on the experience of democracy education, the book moves outside the realm of positive social science to offer a prescription for a more equitable and just society. Many of the scholarly contributions in this volume provide evidence for how this latter goal may be realized.

The opening trio of articles defines "democracy education." Drawing on a number of country examples in the first, Gordon Mitchell identifies some of its core features, such as its grassroots nature and its call to various agents of civil society to empower local residents against gender discrimination and the impediments of the colonial legacy. The second, by Mielke, supplies the eleven substantive articles with a common theoretical foundation based on the underlying mechanisms governing group interactions; in particular, those that lead to discrimination and prejudice. While much current work in this field is based on social psychological intergroup and self-categorization theories, the author attempts to build on our current understanding of social behavior by drawing on the dual attitudes approach. Following this approach, Mielke advocates building a culture "that fosters a more balanced, reflective and fair-minded style of judgment" (p. 30) that over a period of years will condition moral intuitions toward rights, fairness, and justice. In the final introductory chapter, Juliane House outlines a prescription for intercultural competence as an antidote to intercultural misunderstanding. House conducts an empirical analysis using two hundred audio-taped open role-plays between Germans learning English and native English speakers, followed by retrospective interviews. Though House cautions against the ability to generalize from her findings, pointing out that "a deep-seated doubt whether such a concept as the culture of a linguistic community can exist at all" (p. 53), her suggestions for improving intercultural communication have clear implications for diverse sets of interethnic relations. The selection of Israeli and German cases offers an ideal starting point for comparative study, since both societies are modern and pluralistic with a dominant majority and recognizable minorities, though relatively little background information is given on the history of majority-minority relations in either country. Overall, a more systematic comparison of the two cases to explain differences in findings and policy prescriptions would have been helpful. For instance, one wonders how the widespread threat of terrorism in Israel shapes majority-minority relations differently than in Germany, or what role the unique historical context plays in each case.

Whereas most members of minority groups living in Germany are immigrants or the offspring of immigrants brought peacefully under now-defunct guest worker programs, the Arab minority in Israel has witnessed ongoing armed conflict and insurrection, several major wars, and a significant loss of life. One would expect these differences to have produced profoundly different dynamics in inter-ethnic relations in each society.

Taken together, the chapters covering majority-minority relations in Israel constitute a rich collection that consistently reflects the common themes and theoretical concepts of the volume. The first two selections, by Al-Haj and Schirin Fathi, set out on a similar course: to assess the role of schools in promoting inter-ethnic knowledge and tolerance among Arab and Jewish children. Al-Haj uses content analysis to conduct a systematic review of history curricula and textbooks in the largely segregated Israeli and Arab schools. The author concludes that both school systems largely fail to empower youth with messages that reinforce mutual understanding, peace, and tolerance. Instead, the schools as agents of socialization are used to propagate a view of history based on conflicting majority-minority relations that impedes the implementation of critical multiculturalism. Fathi's article continues this discussion by focusing more directly on a conflict of interest reflected above all in Arabs' denial of the Holocaust and Jews' denial of the Other. These twin refusals serve as prime sources of the ongoing conflict as well as significant obstacles to a more objective rendering of circumstances in history texts. Though progress has been slowed by an upsurge in violence since the 2000 intifada, Fathi points to several positive signs, such as the emergence of a new willingness among Arab intellectuals who recognize the Holocaust as a crime against humanity.

Looking further into the Israeli case, Badi Hasisi argues that tensions between Jews and Arabs are reflected in the actions of government institutions-- specifically, the relations of Israel's police forces with the Arab minority. Using a diverse array of data, including attitudes of Arabs toward Israeli police and Arab representation on the police force, the author concludes that discriminatory practices by the Israeli police forces against Arabs abound and that a new multicultural approach to institutional behavior is needed that takes into account the cultural uniqueness of the Arab population. Using regression analysis and survey data from 383 Jews in Israel, Eran Halperin tests the effects of threat perception, a theory from psychology grounded on the idea that in- and out-groups face a conflict of interest, to explain the prevalence of xenophobic attitudes among European Jews toward three prominent minority groups: Arabs, foreign workers, and non-European Jews. Results indicate that threat perception is indeed a critical variable for explaining xenophobic attitudes and, in particular, has a mediating effect on the translation of socioeconomic indicators, especially education, into xenophobia. While the overarching premises of this study are solid, the empirical analysis might have benefited from the addition of interaction effects to more precisely assess the amplifying effects of threat perception.

One project that holds great promise for bridging the majority-minority divide is the cultural lexicon created by Oz and Tami Almog. The results of their pilot study showed that while Jews and Arabs were for the most part quite knowledgeable about their own cultural practices, they were largely ignorant of those of the respective other. From these results, the authors concluded that the absence of cultural knowledge correlated with prejudices and stereotypes and that the lack of knowledge was due to animosity against the other. In keeping with the overarching objective of the volume, the authors point to the role of democracy education in overcoming this ignorance, specifically their own computer-based multicultural lexicon, which is designed to familiarize users with various cultural aspects of seventeen different subcultures in Israel. To assess the lexi-

con's ability to educate its users and reduce violence, a follow-up study is highly encouraged.

The sixth selection on Israel, by Marilyn Safir, Shamrit Flaishner-Kellner, and Amir Rosenmann, uses survey data to explore how cultural dissimilarities between Jews and Arabs affect women's attitudes about body image. While this article continues the volume's focus on cross-cultural differences, it does not spell out as directly as other articles a link to democracy education. Finally, Amalia Sa'ar exposes the contradictions in the liberal Israeli state when it comes to treatment of different classes, ethnicities, and genders. On the one hand, the state's liberal order promotes inclusion by granting minority groups a basic set of rights, the prospect of upward mobility through education, and citizenship. At the same time, through prevailing currents of racism and patriarchy, it acts to perpetuate existing sources of discrimination and oppression as evidenced by higher unemployment and crime rates among select minority groups. Sa'ar looks to third world feminism for answers to this dilemma, since unlike its western counterpart, it does not neglect other non-gender-based sources of discrimination.

While all seven articles on the Israeli case focused their efforts on Israeli's Arab minority, the four articles on Germany look at four different non-Arab (and non-Muslim) minority groups. In certain respects, this shift in focus is unfortunate, since many of the perceived shortcomings of Germany's integration policies directly concern its large Muslim minority. In particular, immigrants from Turkey are often cited as experiencing greater levels of discrimination, xenophobia, and social ills such as unemployment, than other immigrant groups. Without at least some coverage of the Turkish case, it is therefore difficult to generalize more broadly about majority-minority relations in Germany and the extent of success of certain approaches or programs. Including Muslim minorities in Germany would have also represented an opportunity to conduct more systematic cross-national comparisons between the two cases, with the chance to control for certain aspects of ethnicity and religion. Such comparisons might have yielded interesting findings regarding the ability of the state to integrate and empower its Muslim minority. In other words, could Germany have learned something from Israel and vice versa?

The first article on Germany, by Joana Duarte, examines the acculturation attitudes (assimilation, integration, separation) of Germans and Portuguese toward each other, as well as the various factors driving these attitudes. Using original survey data collected in Hamburg in 2003, Duarte finds a significant generational effect: second-generation immigrants are far less likely to choose separation as their acculturation strategy. Similarly, respondents with higher education levels and greater competence in German are more likely to support integration over separation. While these quite intuitive findings support previous scholarly work, the study could have been strengthened by discussing specific measurements and results from the regression analysis. Moreover, the author might have outlined in greater detail the study's implications for promoting greater integration of ethnic Portuguese in Germany and discussed whether they correlate with recent policy proposals aimed at integrating members of ethnic minorities in Germany.

Inke DuBois's article examines the reconstruction of national identity of American expatriates living in Germany. From a content analysis of thirty-two semi-structured interviews with U.S. citizens in Germany, the author is able to identify some of the more meaningful experiences of her interviewees and analyze how these have reshaped their national identities. Of particular interest is how recent political events, from the election of George W. Bush to the ongoing war on terror, have shaped German-American relations and led these informants to view their national identity in a more critical light. The third contribution,

by Olga Visbal, looks outside Germany to examine critically the process teachers and students undertake when correcting mistakes in second-language classrooms at a German school in Colombia. The author assesses the correlation between the type of reaction by the teacher and the ability of students to correct mistakes. Contrary to existing theories, student ability to correct mistakes did not vary with the type of correction technique or teacher reaction. While these findings might appear to diminish the overall value of the study, the author is quick to offer alternative hypotheses and further avenues of study that may in the long run, with additional research, lead to new ways of empowering students in the classroom.

In the final article, Melissa Lamson examines intercultural training and the development of intercultural competence, defined as "the ability of a person or an organization to act in an appropriate manner in an intercultural environment" (p. 240), among management consultants and human resources personnel in German firms. The author argues that such competence is increasingly important in the consulting industry as it attempts to understand and utilize the strengths of a multicultural workforce more effectively. On the positive side, all fourteen consultants stated that they had had experience with cultural difference. A majority considered it very important. A majority also cited experience with cultural difference in the workplace and rated their own understanding as high. Given these various attitudes and experiences, it was therefore surprising to learn that only a small minority of firms offered employees intercultural training and that the vast majority do not analyze or document cultural experiences at the end of a project. According to the author, this gap constitutes a serious shortcoming for a multicultural society that operates in a global economy.

Despite its many strengths and interesting perspectives, one notable shortcoming of this book is the failure to consider the merits of multiculturalism against other strategic models of incorporation. Specifically, while the editors correctly identify the shift away from the "melting pot" strategy in favor of multiculturalism beginning in the 1970s, they neglect to discuss the extent to which multiculturalism has become an embattled concept and fallen out of favor in recent years. Part of the problem certainly lies in the editors' heavy reliance on older literature to define their subject, with no sources published after 2001 considered. A more careful review of the most recent academic literature and policy initiatives reveals a marked shift away from multiculturalism in favor of assimilationist strategies. From the state's perspective, recent developments now call into question the long-term viability of multiculturalism as a policy option. As illustrated by the perceived failure of the Dutch model, many observers now argue that one unintended consequence of multiculturalism has been the isolation and even segregation of minority groups. These charges have been politicized in the post-September 11 climate of heightened security concerns, in which poor integration is viewed as a recipe for alienation and anti-democratic behavior. Consequently, a number of states, particularly other advanced democracies in western Europe, have adopted a more strongly assimilationist strategy that sets out fairly strict criteria for the incorporation of ethnic minorities into mainstream society.

Viewing the fourteen articles together, this volume makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the various dynamics and manifestations of conflict underlying majority-minority relations in Israel and Germany. Furthermore, the book makes a unique contribution in its application of democracy education as a means of empowering minorities and alleviating tensions. For these reasons, the book will likely appeal to both policymakers and scholars alike in its reference to a wide range of issues such as education, immigration, and gender issues. Many chapters also offer teachers and other practitioners distinct models and strategies for dealing more effectively

with majority-minority conflict in a multicultural setting. For example, it is not unreasonable to think that certain ideas presented here--especially the multicultural lexicon and teacher-student correction strategies--could be implemented in other diverse settings. In this way, the book's value could easily resonate beyond the halls of academia.

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