



Review

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The authors show the racist roots of immigration policy and how those roots persist in contemporary policy. Despite demonstrating the compatibility of racism and liberal democracy, the authors ultimately chronicle a long-term decline of racial and ethnic preferences in immigration policy. In doing so, they critique critical race theory by showing real progress and reforms.

Despite these merits, the book is a tad long. The case studies understandably take considerable space to detail and document the evidence. However, one gets the sense that more focus and clarity in the theoretical argument could have contributed to a slightly more concise account. In relation, at times, this reader felt the authors could have better articulated the competing theories and scholars to more clearly identify how their book shifts the debate. For instance, I wondered how this book engages with and challenges the lively debates on immigration policy in Europe.

Nevertheless, these concerns are minor and the book's many virtues are far more salient. The book should be read widely, especially by scholars of race and ethnicity, Latin America, international politics, the world polity, immigration, and political sociology. The book should be taught in a wide variety of graduate seminars. Sections of the book (I recommend the Argentina chapter) can be taught in undergraduate classes as well. Though the book is a fine piece of historical scholarship, it represents what sociologists can do best: constructing a more general theory across and above and beyond the case-specific detail. The book is a role model for how to do historical and political sociology. I highly recommend it and learned a great deal by reading it.

The Headscarf Debates: Conflicts of National Belonging. By Anna C. Korteweg and Gökçe Yurdakul. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii+257. \$85.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

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The Headscarf Debates begins on a promising note. Anna C. Korteweg and Gökçe Yurdakul want to understand the production of narratives of national belonging in the context of debates on the headscarf in four countries: France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey. The authors indeed analyze these debates in detail and show how political actors “continuously revitalize the meaning of national belonging” (p. 175). The book is empirically rich in showing *how* the debates develop. Since few readers will have in-depth knowledge of all four countries, much of the information in the respective country chapters will be new (though country spe-

cialists will find more elaborate analyses in books such as—to limit myself to the French case—John Bowen’s *Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves* [Princeton University Press, 2007] and Joan Scott’s *The Politics of the Veil* [Princeton University Press, 2007]).

The book is particularly promising so long as it maintains distance from the “national models” approach—the unfruitful tradition that has dominated the field of comparative immigration studies for far too long—by analyzing how certain key concepts have been mobilized in the specific contexts of the four countries. Korteweg and Yurdakul can then provide interesting insights into the specificities of various debates over the headscarf, ranging from a rejection of the headscarf in France to its reinvention in Turkey. Rather than looking at general immigrant integration policies or questions of secularism in liberal democracies, the authors analyze how the headscarf as a perceived threat has factored into the production of national narratives of belonging.

The book moreover does this from a feminist position: the authors not only wonder why the debate is so focused on women’s clothes, but also examine the (lacking) discursive positions of (Muslim) female participants in the debate. Since Korteweg and Yurdakul apply the same intersectional approach to all four countries, they can reveal interesting similarities and differences in gender (in)equality between the countries and more generally in their debates on national belonging. In this way, they are able to show that national specificities prevail over transnational similarities. How exactly the countries differ remains, however, a theme for readers to ponder, as the concluding chapter ventures scarce comparative analysis. Instead, it introduces new countries, notably Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Unfortunately, the book promises more of an innovative approach than it realizes. It doesn’t deliver on its promise to take national narratives seriously in all their ambivalences and transformations or to get rid of static “national models” reasoning. As it turns out, even the selection of the four countries is based on the erroneous assumption that there are, historically speaking, country-specific “forces that might impact national narratives of belonging” (p. 10). “France and Turkey adhere to a strict form of secularism that renders religious practice largely a private affair. The Netherlands and Germany share an approach to religiosity in which state neutrality in religion means accommodation for religious behavior in the public sphere” (p. 10). The authors don’t elaborate on the exact status of these “forces” or “approaches,” except that they have the power to dramatically affect national narratives. Here—and in a surprising move—they relapse into reasoning in terms of national stereotypes in which countries have fixed approaches to, for instance, religion. This at times brings the authors close to reasoning in terms of national models

where assumed historical continuities, if not causalities, render changes within countries enigmatic (as Christophe Bertossi and I have shown in “National Models of Immigrant Integration: The Costs for Comparative Research” in a special issue of *Comparative European Politics* 10 [2012]: 237–47).

Indeed, Korteweg and Yurdakul also mobilize historical continuity to explain actual debates over the headscarf. They claim for instance for the Netherlands—the case that I know best—that “the Dutch (have been) practicing religious tolerance and pluralism over the centuries” (p. 11). More precisely, they state that “ongoing legal cases and parliamentary debates generate a continuous stream of arguments that appeal implicitly to the concepts that have historically structured the Dutch national narrative, namely tolerance, pragmatism in everyday interactions, and strong support for liberal values including gender equality and gay rights” (p. 100). Which concepts have “structured” this narrative? Since when have gender equality, let alone gay rights, been doing this? Perhaps since the late 1960s and early 1970s? Have the Dutch always supported liberal values? In fact, the Netherlands was until the 1960s one of the most conservative countries in Europe, where women lost their jobs as civil servants when they got married. The authors here risk making the same historicist mistake Russell Shorto does in his painfully inaccurate book *Amsterdam: A History of the World’s Most Liberal City* (Doubleday, 2013), in which he claims that Amsterdam’s current progressiveness is directly related to, and even caused by, its liberal moment in the 17th century.

Instead of assuming that the championing of gay and women’s rights has always been characteristic of the Dutch, Korteweg and Yurdakul should have asked themselves how and why these themes have recently become such important tropes in the new national narrative. Moreover, they should have taken their own stated approach much more seriously by not relapsing into transhistorical forces that affect actual national narratives, and by examining how certain themes—or schemas—are mobilized at specific moments by political actors as “typically Dutch” (or French, or Turkish, or German) while other themes have become obsolete (e.g., tolerance and multiculturalism in the Dutch case). This book has much to offer when and where it sticks to analyzing narratives of national belonging, but it erroneously assumes that “history” is the explanans rather than the explanandum.