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Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion: Immigration, Ethnic Fractionalisation and Potentials for Civic Action by Merlin Schaeffer, Farnham: Ashgate, xi +pp.180, £60 (hardback) ISBN 978-1409469384

The relationship between ethnic diversity and social cohesion has long been a question of interest for both academics and policy-makers. In recent years, in the era of increasing 'super-diversity' and the associated 'crises of multiculturalism' (Lentin, A. and Titley, G. 2011, *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age,* London: Zed), this question has taken on renewed urgency for many western democracies. Indeed, as Merlin Schaeffer identifies in his opening chapter, 'The entire literature on ethnic diversity and social cohesion is engaged in a dispute on the question of whether ethnic diversity is one of the contextual factors eroding trust and engagement' (2014:12). Symbolic of this has been the work of Robert Putnam. His broader findings about the importance and possibilities of 'social capital' found a cross-over audience, exciting interest amongst politicians and media commentators, but his findings on the, apparently initially negative, relationship between increased ethnic diversity and levels of trust in neighbourhoods, have been more troubling. Such findings have been used in different countries to attack both further immigration and even the existence per se of significant ethnic diversity. For instance, in the UK, David Goodhart suggested a direct and negative relationship between increased ethnic diversity and the social solidarity that necessarily underpins the welfare state.

It is this relationship between ethnic diversity, social cohesion and trust that Schaeffer's very thorough and engaging book considers. The book presents, and is based around, data from the German element of the large-scale 'Ethnic Diversity and Collective Action Survey' (EDCAS), which utilised telephone interviews around trust in multicultural areas. Although it is published elsewhere, it would have been good to have more sense of the key findings from France and the Netherlands and some sense of the extent to which those findings differed from the German data. To contextualise this survey and its data, Schaeffer provides a rigorous, cross-disciplinary and most-impressive literature review that is both qualitative and quantitative (analysing 480 empirical findings from 172 different academic studies) in its consideration of the large amount of recent academic material generated around this topic. This enables Schaeffer to systematically outline differing perspectives on both the nature of ethnicity and ethnic differences and about why increased immigration and ethnic diversity might erode social cohesion and trust. This comprehensive overview and review in itself makes this book a valuable addition.

The book then moves on to its core consideration of the EDCAS process and resulting new data, first contextualising this through a summary of different approaches to the measurement of ethnic diversity and its effects. Helpfully, for a book that goes on to present detailed statistical data and analysis, there is significant methodological explanation in both the main text and in an appendix. Here, the inevitably low response rate for a telephone-based survey is both acknowledged and justified in terms of the data that does result from

this large-scale process. Another challenge acknowledged is the lack of ethnic monitoring data in Germany that leaves the survey to work with the discursively and statistically problematic category of 'immigrant', which only identifies recent migrants or those whose parents were immigrants. The survey's approach was adjusted to address the resulting inevitable underrepresentation of ethnic minorities. The resulting data (admittedly challenging for more qualitative-focussed researchers) is comprehensively presented and considered.

The resulting data seems to confirm the findings of previous research around an apparently problematic relationship between increasing ethnic diversity and reducing levels of trust but also offers some new and helpful insights in to this relationship and how it might be understood. These findings focus on the cognitive dimension of social cohesion (building on the Chicago-based work of Thomas and Thomas) and trust and how they are 'negatively affected by high degrees of perceived ethno-cultural diversity' (p.91). This relates particularly to how 'markers' of difference, such as use of minority languages and ethnic dress, can impact negatively on levels of trust in neighbours amongst both indigenous citizens and citizens of minority/immigrant backgrounds, with perceptions of racial intolerance to new migrants also negatively affecting trust levels amongst minority citizens. This leads Schaeffer to conclude that 'group threat mechanisms seem to play a more important role for persons of immigrant origin, whereas coordination problems in the form of language diversity have more pronounced impacts for natives' (p.92). It is important to note here that other forms of anti-social behaviour, often by 'native' Germans, were equally experienced as damaging trust in the neighbourhood, but perceptions of economic decline seemed to heighten feeling of racialized blame and loss of trust amongst the indigenous majority: 'this results in the sobering conclusion that while people do adapt to ethnic diversity, the negative impact of economic decline is accumulating in strength' (p.111).

More optimistically, Schaeffer uses this data to show that such negative effects are significantly ameliorated by types of inter-ethnic contact that actually become more possible as local diversity increases (and so can ameliorate the initial resulting reduction in social trust). Such contact clearly has to fulfil key criteria of 'contact theory' for success, and Schaeffer suggests that activities for children or personal contact with and through inter-ethnic personal relationships and friendships can lead to positive interactions. Given this finding, and my own interest in how integration policies are designed and enacted at local levels, I would have appreciated greater consideration of the implications for policy and practice, although a thoughtful discussion on this started to develop in the Conclusion.

This is both a thorough and very thoughtful book, with much to recommend it to scholars interested in the impacts of ethnic diversity on social cohesion and trust from a range of disciplines, and it deserves the very positive cover endorsements from Robert Putnam, Miles Hewstone and Michael Banton. It is a valuable contribution to understandings of

social issues and tensions that are likely to only grow in many western countries and which continue to need further quantitative and situated qualitative studies.

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