

When ways of life collide: a critical analysis

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When Ways of Life Collide written by Paul Sniderman and Louk Hagendoorn is a book which focuses on the collision of Western European values and Muslim values.

The book tackles relevant information on the relationships of cultures values (with focus on the Netherlands): its injustices and reactions towards another culture. Moreover, the book explores multiculturalism policies and the diverging clash of values it causes between the Dutch majority and Muslim minority in the Netherlands. The book includes an introductory chapter, four body chapters which are based on a 1998 survey analysis that consists of scholarly designed statistical experiments and a concluding chapter.

Muslims, the first of the body chapters, tackles the culture of Muslims and the Dutch majority towards their treatment on women and children. The book was able to show that the obvious rejection of a particular group due to conflict over values might not be always take effect. In particular, one of the authors interesting conclusion is that individuals can view the Muslims values in a negative while at the same time creating a constructive attitude towards Muslims and in effect follow even their way of life and culture.

Chapter three, Prejudice, is a mere discussion and analysis of prejudice. Both Sniderman and Hagendoorn view prejudice as “ a readiness to belittle minorities, to dislike them, to shun them...” (p. 47). What the authors have to measure prejudice are based on statistical survey. The survey was designed for the individuals to agree or disagree on the eight most probable characterizations of minorities.

The authors find that intolerance can eventually result to an open denial of the equal rights of the immigrant minorities (Muslims). On chapter four, the authors use a decoupling experiment to basically improve the previous research. Both Sniderman and Hagendoorn believe that an observed threat to an individual's cultural identity shows a sturdy predictor of prejudice than a perceived economic threat. However, chapter five entitled Top-Down Politics illustrates that individuals who are committing negative attitudes and show prejudice to the minority immigrants are also on the same way the most probable to react positively towards the immigrants. The main argument of the book is that the Netherlands policy towards multiculturalism which was determined through consensus has led the central point on the political argument that involves group identities: immigrant minorities and Dutch majorities.

The increased conflicts between the immigrant minorities and Dutch majorities are triggered by the 9/11 attack, the rise to power of Pim Fortuyn and the Theo van Gogh murder in 2004 by a Dutch Moroccan. The book is particularly significant to a variety of audience concerned on the prevailing attitudes shown by the Dutch majority towards immigrant minorities, immigration and multiculturalism. This book is good in particularly using scholarly surveys and statistical studies in providing significant conclusions on the study.;