

Patriotism: Insights from Israel

By Eyal Lewin

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The major goal of this study is to uncover which social variables are capable of encouraging or discouraging patriotism. In other words, it aims to locate the basics of the social machinery that motivates individuals to set aside their personal well being and sacrifice their resources for the sake of the common good. However, this research also examines the social predictors of patriotism through a quest for the hierarchy of their importance. Following a thorough assessment of each variable, given that in real life none of them act in isolation, the great question is which social factor is dominant and which might practically be counted as ineffective. The book establishes an integrative overview of a relatively understudied social phenomenon. Patriotism has been examined and related to in bibliographical sources to which this study refers; however, this book enables a large overview of the different approaches and integrates a cohesive approach. In addition to the theoretical discussion, the presentation and analyses of empirical date enable a practical evaluation of the concepts that have been developed. Data from large-scale surveys data, together with in-depth interviews, enable a rare opportunity to confirm or to invalidate some existing theories, in particular those focusing on the social conditions for patriotism. All in all, then, this research provides a systematic inquiry of patriotism and its social and political causes. Yet beyond the conclusions stemming from its numerous quantitative and qualitative data, it also presents a holistic point of view and manages to put together the pieces that form one of the most unique social phenomena. Among other findings, the book presents research that invalidates a theoretical concept according to which patriotism is closer to conservatism than to liberalism. Whereas surveys and polls show a tendency of right-wing politicians to be more patriotic than leftists, this book has gone the extra mile of statistically analyzing the data in a multivariate regression; that is, examining how political attitudes affect patriotism in reality, once all the factors act together. This statistical analysis shows clearly how in practice political attitude is very loosely connected to patriotism. In addition to that, the patriotic conservative in-depth interviewees of this study have been inspired to love their country by their political ideologies just like the patriotic liberal interviewees. This finding thus reinforces how the accusations of one political party against another for not being patriotic should be taken with more than a grain of salt. The book will be of interest to specialists and students in the field of the social and political sciences, especially those whose research focus on social behavior in political contexts.

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Anna Harlow:

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