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## Table of Content:

### Editorial

Andreas Kranebitter & Christoph Reinprecht, Authoritarianism, Ambivalence, Ambiguity. The Life and Work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik. Introduction to the Special Issue 1

### Articles

Andreas Huber, The Authoritarian Institution. Else Frenkel and the University of Vienna 13

Andreas Kranebitter & Fabian Gruber, Allowing for Ambiguity in the Social Sciences. Else Frenkel-Brunswik's methodological practice in *The Authoritarian Personality* 30

Christian Fleck, Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Contemporary Sociologists 60

Lucyna Darowska, How the Fascist and Non-Fascist Self May Develop: Else Frenkel-Brunswik's qualitative analyses in *The Authoritarian Personality* and their comparison to studies on resisters 74

Peter Schmidt, Logical Positivism or Critical Theory as the Methodological Foundation of *The Authoritarian Personality*? 102

Claudia Heinrich, Thriving in Ambiguity – A Dispositive of Self-Optimisation. On the Frenkel-Brunswik Theorem in Current Human Resource Development 134

### Interview

Dietmar Paier, Interview with Daniel J. Levinson, 16 November 1992, New Haven 148

### Book Review

Christian Fleck, Helping Hands 168

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EDITORIAL

# Authoritarianism, Ambivalence, Ambiguity

## The Life and Work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik. Introduction to the Special Issue

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This Special Issue of *Serendipities. Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences* deals with the works of the psychologist Else Frenkel-Brunswik (1908–1958), known to some for her research into authoritarianism, especially as one of the co-authors of the famous study *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950). This study without doubt had a crucial impact on social psychology in general and the research on authoritarianism in particular. In recent years, the rise of authoritarianism in the shape of Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Le Pen in France, the AfD in Germany, and the FPÖ in Austria, to name but a few, has prompted renewed interest in the original study and reinvigorated intense debate about it, not least following historian Peter E. Gordon’s republication of the study and Special Issues of *South Atlantic Quarterly* and *Polity* organized by Robyn Marasco and others.<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of the history of the social sciences, the reevaluation of *The Authoritarian Personality* falls into a period that we might term the “twilight of the idols.” Landmark social psychological projects of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most prominently the experiments by Stanley Milgram and Philipp Zimbardo, have been part of a public academic discourse for decades. In recent years, there has been a trend to reevaluate these studies by way of archival research. In both the cases of the Milgram Experiment (Perry 2013; Reicher et al. 2012) and Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Experiment (Le Texier 2018; 2019; Blum 2018), the opening of the archives has led researchers to believe that crucial methodological shortcomings question the validity of the results. In the first case, the Yale Archives revealed that the experimenters in Stanley Milgram’s famous experiment had induced the participants to give electro shocks to the unwilling “learners” to a far greater extent than previously thought (see Smeulers 2020, 222–225). “Induction” and acting were far more of a topic in the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter E. Gordon’s excellent essay on *Reading the Authoritarian Personality in the Age of Trump* (Gordon 2018), originally published after Trump’s election victory in 2016, was followed by his 2020 republication of the original study with Verso, London, including a formerly unpublished essay by Theodor W. Adorno intended as a draft of the study’s conclusion. Robyn Marasco’s *South Atlantic Quarterly* Special Issue “The Authoritarian Personality” (Volume 117, Issue 4) was followed by another Special Issue, *Polity. The Journal of the Northeastern Political Science Association* (Volume 54, Issue 1), based on a conference held at Yale University in 2020.

second case as well. Based on material from the Stanford Library Special Collections and University Archives, social scientist Thibault Le Texier and journalist Ben Blum found out that Philipp Zimbardo had told those participants posing as prison guards “that their role was to help induce the desired prisoner mindset of powerlessness and fear” (Blum 2018). The result of these reevaluations was that both idols have been knocked from their pedestals. Interestingly enough, both studies were criticized on ethical and methodological grounds from the beginning. Yet, this criticism was not perceived by a wider audience, which tended to accept the psychologists’ narrative uncritically for a long time until the mood shifted in the opposite direction. The exaltation of these studies, not least by historians making use of them in explaining the Holocaust, genocide, or the perpetration of mass violence in general, seems to have been the necessary condition for their condemnation. In fact, their treatment with either uncritical adherence or categorial rejection has resulted in an instrumentalization of the social science in them in media discourse, teaching practices, and textbook social science, and it is this that seems to lie at the core of the problem, likewise the simplifications in the first instance. In essence, this instrumentality has prevented their thorough reexamination, which in turn would allow for a critical continuation of this particular type of social research.

In the case of *The Authoritarian Personality*, the reception has been somewhat different. There too, the induction of interviewees into authoritarian response behavior has been highlighted as a methodological problem, as shown most recently by Kranebitter and Gruber in this volume; there too, research on authoritarianism has instrumentalized concepts without adequate problematization, as shown not least by Peter Schmidt in his contribution to this Special Issue. However, *The Authoritarian Personality* was never knocked from its pedestal because it was never placed on one in the first instance. On the contrary, criticism was published early on. Edward Shils famously criticized the study politically for its alleged failure to cover left-wing authoritarianism (Shils 1954), while the methodological shortcomings have likewise been addressed since its publication, most extensively by Hyman and Sheatsley (1954). Despite over 1,000 studies using the authoritarianism scales originally developed in *The Authoritarian Personality* until the early 1990s (Meloan 1991), numerous critics have tried to fundamentally challenge its research, leading to what Roiser and Willig have called a “strange death” (Roiser and Willig 2002), a kind of life as an undead classic.<sup>2</sup> The controversial reception itself prevented the study’s death, and rendered its manifold topics a major (and compared to Milgram and Zimbardo perhaps less symbolically charged) inspiration for later studies on authoritarianism.

One of the reasons for this, we would argue, is that *The Authoritarian Personality* was a truly collaborative work relying on multiple influences, which more than once “checked and balanced” the many authors and prevented them from jumping to conclusions. This variety of influences and backgrounds also hinders the pigeonholing of the study as either a product of the Frankfurt Critical Theorists or a classical quantitative study of personality alone. For decades, especially in the German-speaking world, *The Authoritarian Personality* was mainly perceived as a study by the critical theorists of the exiled Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Despite the contribution of several émigré social scientists from Germany and Austria, the study has never been fully translated into German. As was the case with other (mainly female) sociologists such as Käthe Leichter, Maria Hertz Levinson, and Marie Jahoda, Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s role in empirical research for the study in particular and the Institute in general remained seldom discussed in further reception. With their names, their influence was forgotten, yet this influence on *The Authoritarian Personality* was

<sup>2</sup> For a good overview of the reception of *The Authoritarian Personality* up to the 1990s, see Stone, Lederer, and Christie 1993.

significant—a specific combination of empirical sociology, (social) psychology, and psychoanalysis. These influences had emerged in Vienna in the period before World War II, where these women had been treated with hostility by established academic social scientists as feminist, Marxist, and Jewish, labeled bluntly as “odd” (cf. Kranebitter and Reinprecht 2019). After their forced displacement and flight from Vienna, this form of social research “transatlantically enriched” the US social sciences (Fleck 2011). Discussing traces and mutual influences, making visible marginalized actors as well as epistemological positions by way of archival research and theoretical comparison is what the present Special Issue of *Serendipities* aims to do. Seventy years after the original publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, taking a closer look at Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s life and works to reveal her impact on the study and research on authoritarianism in general was overdue. What was the specific role of Else Frenkel-Brunswik in the team of *The Authoritarian Personality* with Theodor W. Adorno, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford? What influences did she introduce into the research team? How did she adapt her earlier Viennese research in exile? How did she react to obstacles and the politics of exclusion—first and foremost to antisemitism during the austrofascist and National Socialist periods, but also to her lack of institutional backing in the US in later years? In what way was her participation in the study connected to research she did during and after her work on it, especially at the Institute of Child Welfare in Berkeley? What was her lasting impact on research on authoritarianism after her death? Does research today refer to her work, and if so, how? These are some of the questions underlying this Special Issue.

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Else Frenkel was born in August 1908 in the city of Lemberg (today Lviv in the western Ukraine) in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.<sup>3</sup> Before World War I, her family moved to Bad Vöslau in Lower Austria and finally to Vienna, where Frenkel first studied mathematics and physics, then philosophy and psychology. At the age of 22, she completed her studies with the dissertation *The Association Principle in Psychology*. Both of her reviewers, the psychologist Karl Bühler and the Vienna Circle philosopher Moritz Schlick, took a very positive view of her work. Else Frenkel soon belonged to the inner circle around Karl and Charlotte Bühler, where she played an important intellectual and social role, especially in coordinating Charlotte Bühler’s psychological research on the life course, which involved several social scientists of these days, including Marie Jahoda. According to Jahoda, Frenkel seemed to have practically lived at the Psychological Institute. “If you went there and she was not there,” Jahoda wrote, “you feared for her health.” (Jahoda, quoted in Paier 1996: 25, author’s translation). Within the Institute, Frenkel was assigned responsibility for the department’s biographical research, especially that done by Charlotte Bühler, and managed to publish some of her findings. She started to undergo psychoanalysis twice, once with Ernst Kris, a fact she hid from the Böhlers. In the 1930s, the University of Vienna was a stronghold of Nazism and antisemitism, and Else Frenkel had suffered verbal attacks as a Jew long before 1938, not least by students who believed it to be a “shame not being able to finish one’s studies without attending a seminar of the Jewess Else Frenkel” (quoted from Paier 1996: 32). She was even interrogated by the Gestapo before she fled. Her escape was connected to her private life. Starting in 1928, she became closely acquainted with the Institute’s assistant, Egon Brunswik, whose position she twice filled in for at the institute in 1931/1932 and 1936. After a visiting professorship at the University of California at Berkeley in 1937,

<sup>3</sup> The most extensive biography of Else Frenkel-Brunswik so far was written by Dietmar Paier (1996), the editor of a selection of her papers within the publication series “library of emigré social scientists” in German. Gerhard Benetka (2002) introduced her work through several entries in dictionaries of psychology. Recently, Andreas Kranebitter (2022) has given a sociogenetic view on the life and work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik for the yearbook of the recently founded Else-Frenkel-Brunswik-Institute in Leipzig, Germany.

Egon Brunswik decided to stay in the US and this finally enabled Frenkel to flee Austria to the US just in time in June 1938, marrying Egon immediately upon arrival on the ship.

After arriving in the US, Frenkel-Brunswik, as she called herself from this time on, immediately started researching and publishing as a research associate at the Institute of Child Welfare in Berkeley. A Social Science Research Council fellowship allowed her to pursue several interests. Thus, following her training in psychology and her own psychoanalysis in Vienna, she became familiar with anthropology, psychoanalysis, and sociology at the University of Chicago and in San Francisco during this fellowship, and even took a course on the history of Japan.<sup>4</sup> Later on, she was a member of the different associations in these fields, including philosophy (Heiman and Grant 1974: 7). As a research associate, she worked on different projects in Berkeley. From 1943 onwards she was part of the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group with R. Nevitt Sanford and Daniel J. Levinson, a group that in connection with Theodor W. Adorno and the exiled Institute for Social Research eventually published *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950). At the same time, Frenkel-Brunswik undertook several studies connected to this project, mainly on authoritarianism in children and adolescents, leading her to the formulation of what would possibly become her best-known concept: an “intolerance of ambiguity,” an intolerance of cognitive ambiguity and emotional ambivalence found in prejudiced children.

After the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Else Frenkel-Brunswik travelled to Europe in 1950 on a Rockefeller Foundation travel grant and wrote a report about the state of European psychology. Following some other fellowships, in 1956 and 1957 she stayed in Oslo, Norway, on a Fulbright fellowship (Heiman and Grant 1974: 7), where among other things she started work on a book on the “*Philosophy of psychiatric therapies*”, which involved interviewing and sending questionnaires to psychotherapists and psychoanalysts across the whole of Europe. After her return to the US in July 1957, she was still only research associate at the University of Berkeley. Despite all her successes and the scientific recognition she had received, there is a hidden story of exclusion to be observed in her case. While she was a renowned social scientist receiving a lot of fellowships and invitations, a “celebrity,” as Daniel Levinson has called her in an interview with Dietmar Paier printed in this Special Issue, this was not true on a structural, institutional level: due to a “nepotism rule,” she could not be employed at the University of Berkeley as it already employed Egon Brunswik, meaning that her job at the Institute of Child Welfare was paid privately and the teaching was done without pay. She consistently earned less than her co-authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, i.e., approximately 75% of their salaries,<sup>5</sup> and last but not least as a research associate at Berkeley in 1957, she was only half-heartedly being offered a part-time professorship combining psychology and sociology in November 1957, which, again according to Levinson, had to frustrate her (see Paier 1996: 67). Whatever the reasons and circumstances, her early death was believed to have been a suicide: on March 31, 1958, aged 49, she was found dead in her apartment with a picture of Egon Brunswik in her hands.<sup>6</sup>

How to relate scientific work to individual biography without dropping into the pitfalls of the “biographical illusion” Bourdieu (2017[1986]) spoke about? This fundamental question gains particular

<sup>4</sup> Else Frenkel-Brunswik: Letter to Laura Barrett, 18 October 1943 (Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria [AGSÖ] 25.1.6).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Budget Project for Writing Up Material Collected by U.C. Public Opinion Study, 4 May 1946 (Institute for Jewish Research [YIVO], AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 6).

<sup>6</sup> Frenkel-Brunswik seemed to have been depressed by her visit to Vienna at Christmas in 1956 as well as the set-back she experienced after her return to Berkeley in July 1957, but she was also seriously ill for a long time.

relevance and interest in view of a life profoundly shaped by critical historical and political contexts and developments. In the case of Else Frenkel-Brunswik, institutional antisemitism, the National Socialist regime, and exile had a huge impact both on her research interests and academic career, and her private life. Following Bourdieu, the “biographical illusion” refers to a specific way of representing life stories based on the “not insignificant presupposition that life is a history [...] inseparably the sum of events of an individual existence seen as a history and the narrative of that history” (Bourdieu 2017[1986]: 210). In contrast, Bourdieu argues that, from a sociological point of view, life trajectories with their various stations and positions can only be analyzed in relation to the social field where they are carried out. “In other words, one can understand a trajectory [...] only on condition of having previously constructed the successive states of the field through which the trajectory has progressed” (Bourdieu 2017: 215). With regard to the life and work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik, we may identify three structural aspects of being positioned. First: emancipation; second: the specific conditions enabling social sciences to develop as an academic field; third: the ambivalences of exile.

First, emancipation: Frenkel-Brunswik’s parents were actively involved in Jewish (also religious) life in Vienna but shared a specific understanding of Jewish assimilation, which went far beyond investments in good education. Else Frenkel attended Eugenie Schwarzwald’s educational reform school, the first school in the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy where girls could graduate (high school entrance examination), and the first which was known for encouraging young women to develop creativity, an open-minded spirit, and a sense of individual autonomy. Emancipation thus refers to a process of structural change enabling individual liberation as intellectuals, women, and Jews. Similar to many other women of her generation and social class, Else Frenkel-Brunswik became interested in “sciences” such as mathematics, physics, psychology, and national economy, and also shared a vital interest in Vienna Circle debates on logical positivism (as mentioned above, Moritz Schlick reviewed her PhD thesis). In other words: We can understand emancipation as both personal and intellectual liberation and as a fight for social recognition and equal opportunities; creative education as a lever; science as a key concept also for everyday life; and the scientist as an occupational profile of successful emancipation.

Second, the specific conditions enabling social sciences to develop as an academic field: Emancipation did not necessarily open up access to the hallowed halls of academia. As Andreas Huber shows in his contribution to this volume, in Vienna, the inner circle of academia had been usurped by German nationalism, male power networks (nepotism), and antisemitism. It is often said that Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s research interests (prejudice, antisemitism, authoritarianism etc.) can be interpreted against the background of her own experience of antisemitism and marginalization. More precisely, one should add the fact that the newly emerging fields of the modern social sciences, including social psychology and psychoanalysis, developed on the periphery of Viennese academia: newly established research infrastructure functioned as an incubator for innovation that had been impeded within the dominant institutions (such as the university). Its decentralized character brought albeit often underfinanced research closer to societal life and to social problems, also creating new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, exchange and dialogue (Reinprecht and Walch 2020). This modern understanding of empirical social research was crucial for later careers in exile contexts, which despite all the difficulties and ambivalences also meant liberation from the constraints of local production conditions.

Third, ambivalences of exile: Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s experience of exile in the United States after 1938 is marked by a double contradiction. On the one hand, she was confronted with institutional and also gender-related mechanisms that, for a long time, fixed her in a fragile position within the

US academic system. At the same time, this marginal position is related to her radical and autonomous approach to social research, marked by a transfer of Viennese-related scientific elements (Karl and Charlotte Bühler, the Vienna Circle, psychoanalysis) into a US context. Soon after her arrival in the US she distanced herself from the Böhlers, opened up more to psychoanalysis, while at the same time continuing to use and further develop the methodological skills she had been trained in by Charlotte Bühler. It was also due to this particular mixture of theoretical and methodological perspectives and competences that she gained access to the Studies in Prejudice research group. The resulting contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality* is the subject of several articles in this anthology. The experience of exile stands in conflict with a too simplified concept of continuity/discontinuity. Exile is a reflexive practice, and this refers, in the case of Else Frenkel Brunswik, not only to the transfer of knowledge but also to the transformation of a habitus socialized in Vienna. It is not simply an uncomfortable position, but one that requires a certain nonconformism. And this is perhaps how we should read Else Frenkel-Brunswik's unorthodox dialogue between social psychology, psychoanalysis and sociology.

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As mentioned above, one of the earliest and most outspoken critiques of the methodology of *The Authoritarian Personality* was a paper published by Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley (1954) in a volume edited by Marie Jahoda and Richard Christie, which was a thorough reevaluation of the study. Starting from a critique of the study's sampling procedures, Hyman and Sheatsley mainly focused on unjustified over-generalizations not based on empirical evidence. This not only affected the quantitative sections, but also Frenkel-Brunswik's in-depth interviews. According to the authors citing different evidence, rigidity as a general phenomenon was not necessarily correlated with ethnocentrism—at least, factors like sub-cultural differences, differences in the importance of ethical attitudes, group membership and degree of activism etc. would have to be taken into consideration (Hyman and Sheatsley 1954: 61). Both critics acknowledged, however, that the main differences stemmed from the fact that “*the concept of rigidity is ambiguous*” itself, being handled differently by different authors (ibid.). The problem, then, was not so much the study of the cases themselves, even though the authors criticized Frenkel-Brunswik's as well as Adorno's interpretations in some detail (ibid.: 89–107), but the over-generalizations based on single cases. But again here, the most severe instances cited referred to other parts of the study, most of all Morrow's study of prison inmates (ibid.: 56) and the quantitative sections. In fact, one particular point of Hyman's and Sheatsley's critique was that the “*understatements*” (ibid.: 57) found throughout the study misled the uncritical reader into believing some of the over-generalizations.

In our view, this “understatement” was closely connected to Frenkel-Brunswik's carefulness not to draw too wide a conclusion based on, at times, scant evidence. It was not her, however, who was to be criticized for this scant evidence. Hyman and Sheatsley seem to have indicated this, as well as the gender dynamics involved, when discussing the question of a positivistic or a more flexible treatment of data. Regarding the combination of multiple methods, they wrote (in the language of the 1950s):

Such a joining of methodologies loses much of its possible value if the rich clinical data are merely juxtaposed against questionnaire responses which are quantified and interpreted in a positivistic way. [...] In the marriage of the two methodologies, the quantitative statistical method is all too often cast in the role of the stodgy husband who just answers ‘Yes, dear’ to all the bright suggestions made by the wife (ibid.: 71).



What the two critics essentially confirmed by this, however inadequate the wording might be, is that despite the shortcomings of Frenkel-Brunswik's parts—inappropriately identified as the “wife” to the quantitative parts, which after all were no less her domain as a trained mathematician—these were a rich source that had been interpreted creatively, and were constantly undervalued by the social sciences in the study's reception due to a general gender bias. To us, it seems safe to say that her parts and influences make up much of the fascination the study provokes to this day, while at the same time they answered much of the criticism to come. Else Frenkel-Brunswik continued her own research on authoritarianism during and after publishing *The Authoritarian Personality*, thereby implicitly and explicitly responding to much of the criticism the study had received. This is true for her studies with a total of 1,500 prejudiced children aged 11 to 16 (of whom 120 were interviewed in depth, cf. Frenkel-Brunswik 1974: 64) for the Institute of Child Welfare, only parts of which have been published. We want to stress three important methodological changes she undertook in these studies compared to *The Authoritarian Personality*. Firstly, she used more open questions in her questionnaires, e.g., letting children complete sentences, thus moving away from a structured to a more unstructured questionnaire.

The solution which we have chosen for the group level was to administer a relatively unstructured questionnaire. Instead of asking ‘Do you think Negroes are lazy?’, we stated ‘Some people are lazy’ and then asked, ‘What people?’, thus giving the subject considerable freedom in how they could respond to such an item.<sup>7</sup>

Open questions were also used regarding the traits of communists, “real Americans,” and people with loud voices—thus always allowing for ambiguous responses. The results, interestingly enough, showed that in overall unprejudiced children, there was a greater readiness to exclude out-groups than to assign negative characterizations.

Secondly, she confronted one general critique issued early on (cf. Hyman and Sheatsley 1954: 66), namely that *The Authoritarian Personality* study was only concerned with so called “High Scorers,” i.e., respondents of the questionnaires scoring high on all questions measuring an authoritarian attitude, in contrast to “Low Scorers” and especially “Middle Scorers.” In her ongoing research, Frenkel-Brunswik shifted interest to middle scorers as well, and included them in her in-depth interviews.

On the whole our subjects with a high score on the ethnocentrism scale were freer in expressing prejudice in the interviews than the low scoring children were in expressing tolerance. Furthermore, the middle scorers who are more representative, at least numerically, of the total population show great similarity in their responses to the high scorers. Thus the attitude of the children as a group is predominantly a prejudiced one.<sup>8</sup>

Segregation, for example, was supported by 82% of the high scorers, 72% of the middle scorers, and 14% of the low scorers in her sample. This single item being the most distinguishing item, it showed that the middle scorers were in many respects closer to the high scorers than believed, again questioning the thesis that the latter were simply society's “pathological” cases.

Thirdly and most importantly, however, she moved the study even further to what she called the more “neutral ground” of perception. Taking the finding of ambivalence towards authorities, who were feared and hated as much as they were loved and submitted to, as a starting point, she asked

<sup>7</sup> [Frenkel-Brunswik, Else]: Prejudice in Children. 1951 (AGSÖ 25.2).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6f.

about the recognition or denial of ambivalence towards objects and, furthermore, of “ambiguity of any sort” (Frenkel-Brunswik 1974: 67). Carrying over this thesis into experiments involving the recollection of stories and the perception of pictures moving slowly from showing a dog into a showing a cat, she proved a rigid adherence to the original stimulus until this was given up for haphazard guessing as soon as the stimulus-boundness contradicted reality too much, thus showing the close relatedness of rigidity and chaos.

A shift of research emphasis from the emotional to the perceptual area controls certain social biases which may interfere with the investigation of social and clinical topics. Controversial issues can be delineated and at least indirectly examined in a more neutral context. The experiments have shown that the tendency to resort to black-white solutions, to arrive at premature closure – often at the neglect of reality – and to seek for unqualified and unambiguous solutions which had been found so characteristic of the social and emotional outlook of ethnocentric subjects could also be ascertained in their perceptual responses. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954: 245)

These changes in Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s research design and methodology are but one example of a fruitful and promising inclusion of and answer to criticism expressed about different parts and aspects of *The Authoritarian Personality*. With the many contributions to this Special Issue, we aim to make visible and relatable the many contributions made by Else Frenkel-Brunswik to research into different forms of authoritarianism.

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A common concern of the six articles in this Special Issue dedicated to Else Frenkel Brunswik is to make visible, critically discuss, and contextualize Else Frenkel’s scholarly contribution to the studies on *The Authoritarian Personality*. The contributions are organized in a somewhat chronological order. In his article *The Authoritarian Institution. Else Frenkel and the University of Vienna*, Andreas Huber places Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s time in Vienna into the context of the history of Vienna between the wars, when antisemitism was steadily increasing especially among the staff and students at the University of Vienna, a stronghold of Nazism long before Austria’s “Anschluss” to the “Third Reich” in 1938. In this increasingly hostile and violent atmosphere, there were a few allies, including members of the Vienna Circle such as Rudolf Carnap and Moritz Schlick, and Karl and Charlotte Bühler, whose Institute of Psychology Frenkel-Brunswik soon joined as research assistant. Alongside her Jewish origin, the experience of gender discrimination and antisemitism at the University of Vienna definitely shaped the life and work of Else Frenkel, Huber concludes.

Andreas Kranebitter and Fabian Gruber—in their paper *Allowing for Ambiguity in the Social Sciences. Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s Methodological Practice in “The Authoritarian Personality”*—study the development of Frenkel-Brunswik’s research methodology from her early works in Vienna to her contributions in exile. By focusing on lesser-known publications and unpublished archival sources, they reread *The Authoritarian Personality* study within the context of her oeuvre, thus shedding light on the many ways of she contributed to the overall study. Particular attention is given to Frenkel-Brunswik’s critique of the Nazi psychologist Ernst Rudolf Jaensch, whose typology-approach is presented as an “authoritarian social science” in contrast to Frenkel-Brunswik’s social psychology of authoritarianism. After opening a dialogue between the approaches of Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Theodor W. Adorno, the paper shows how Frenkel-Brunswik—also in response to the numerous critics of *The Authoritarian Personality* study—distanced herself from quantification and a positivist approach.

Their paper is followed by Christian Fleck's closer look at *Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Contemporary Sociologists*, i.e., her encounters with academic sociology in the US. According to Fleck, these were characterized by "the closed-minded attitude of mainstream sociology towards social psychology, which was abandoned after a short interlude in the 1950s when attempts to establish an interdisciplinary field between psychology and sociology finally collapsed." Notably, Robert K. Merton's comments on Else Frenkel-Brunswik's parts of *The Authoritarian Personality* in a memo raise the issue of the relationship between psychology and sociology within her work. The analysis of the memo reflects the arguments (and demarcation lines) developed by Merton, emphasizing the explanatory differences between psychology and sociology.

Also drawing on qualitative parts of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Lucyna Darowska contrasts the findings of Frenkel-Brunswik with selected case studies on Nazi-resisters in her article *How the Fascist and Non-Fascist Self May Develop: Else Frenkel-Brunswik's Qualitative Analyses in "The Authoritarian Personality" and Their Comparison to Studies on Resisters*. She thus brings Frenkel-Brunswik's theorems into dialogue with the current field of "perpetrator studies." With reference to three qualitative case studies, she discusses the question of whether parallels can be drawn between the personality structure of "Low Scorers" in *The Authoritarian Personality* and the personality structure of Nazi-resisters. The studies presented differ essentially according to the consistence and stability of political attitudes dependent on family socialization, milieu affiliation, and socio-political change. Darowska finally points to the "reflective self" that characterizes a robust, undogmatic personality structure.

Subsequently, Peter Schmidt views Frenkel-Brunswik's work from the angle of current quantitative research into authoritarianism, thereby raising the question of the methodological foundations of her work in his paper titled *Logical Positivism or Critical Theory as the Methodological Foundation of "The Authoritarian Personality"*. His article is a methodological examination highlighting the ("invisibilized") key role of Frenkel-Brunswik in conceptualizing *The Authoritarian Personality*. The article also demonstrates how the study's F-Scale was adapted in further research into authoritarianism, and in particular discusses the effects of the idealization of parents on the measurement. Finally, with reference to more recently run tests, it hints at how some of Frenkel-Brunswik's methodological and theoretical ideas might be continued in research on authoritarianism.

The article section is concluded by Claudia Heinrich's contribution *Thriving in Ambiguity—A Dispositive of Self-Optimisation*, focusing on the uses of Frenkel-Brunswik's best-known theorem of the "(in)tolerance of ambiguity" in today's management trends. The author draws a line to current debates (and practices) in human resource development, in which "ambiguity tolerance" has become a skill that supposedly can be trained and a dispositive for self-optimization. Based on a literature review, the author argues that this trend was possible due to shifts in the reception of the term, and the diffusion of a once critical impetus into a management tool. The author points to the fact that while ambiguity tolerance is applied as a requirement for human resource development, the hatred of difference remains strong, and is even increasing.

In the forum section of this Special Issue, we print an interview conducted by the Austrian sociologist Dietmar Paier with Daniel J. Levinson, one of the contributors to *The Authoritarian Personality*, in November 1992 in New Haven, Connecticut.

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This Special Issue came out of a symposium hosted in Vienna in July 2021, organized by the Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria at the University of Graz (AGSÖ), which also holds the estate of Else Frenkel-Brunswik, and the Austrian Association for Exile Research (öge), supported by the Section for the History of Sociology within the Austrian Sociological Association (ÖGS).<sup>9</sup> The Special Issue publishes some of the contributions to this conference. We want to express our gratitude for the funding of this conference as well as of this Special Issue to the Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich (Future Fund of the Republic of Austria), the Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus (National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism), the Niederösterreichische Landesregierung – Abteilung Wissenschaft und Forschung (Department for Science and Culture, Office of the Federal Government of Lower Austria), and the Stadt Wien Kultur (Department of Culture, City of Vienna), and to Katrin Sippel for managing these funds on behalf of the Austrian Association for Exile Research (öge). Our particular thanks also go to many the colleagues who supported this publication and the earlier conference, among them (in alphabetical order) Emily Abbey, Mitchell Ash, Maria Czwik, Christian Dayé, Oliver Decker, Linda Erker, Stanley Feldman, Angela Kindervater, Robyn Marasco, Marietta Mayrhofer-Deak, Barbara Rothmüller, and Karin Stögner, as well as the reviewers of the contributions, and our copyeditor Joanna White.

We wish to conclude this introduction with some disciplinary remarks. The list of participants at our original 2021 symposium revealed a variety of disciplines relating in some way or another to the methods and topics Else Frenkel-Brunswik worked on. In our view, this resembles what some scholars have called her “constructive synthesis” (Paier 1996: 39) of different approaches, and at the very least her scientific openness and curiosity.<sup>10</sup> Whether Frenkel-Brunswik was “at home” in every discipline, as Gardner Murphy put it in his foreword to her selected papers, or rather *not* at home in any of them in the best sense of the word, is a question of perspective. Maybe Daniel J. Levinson put it most accurately in his obituary of Else Frenkel-Brunswik: “Finally, she was multidisciplinary in the best sense of the word. She was ready to engage in disciplined search for the relevant, no matter how far it led from her disciplinary origins.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://agso.uni-graz.at/frenkel-brunswik/> for more information on the symposium.

<sup>10</sup> Her scientific openness is also revealed by her readiness to engage in discussions with social scientists holding opposing epistemological views. The Austrian-American philosopher Herbert Feigl organized a symposium on psychoanalysis in December 1953, the two main speakers being Else Frenkel-Brunswik and B.F. Skinner. In a letter to Feigl, she wrote: “The choice of Skinner as the second speaker on the symposium on psychoanalysis seems to me quite a fortunate one. I felt all along that the second speaker should be an intelligent representative of the vast number of scientists who are very critical of psychoanalytic theory and who think that no scientific explanations are really offered by psychoanalysis. I can think of no one whose approach is more opposite to mine than Dr. Skinner’s and at the same time I have great respect for him. Our contrasting views may highlight better the problems involved and lead to a fruitful and interesting discussion.” (Letter by Else Frenkel-Brunswik to Herbert Feigl, 8 October 1953, AGSÖ 25.1.28).

<sup>11</sup> Daniel J. Levinson (1967/1968): A biography of Else Frenkel-Brunswik. Preliminary version of an article to appear in the forthcoming International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. [1967/1968] (AGSÖ 25.6.), p. 8.

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ARTICLE

# The Authoritarian Institution

## Else Frenkel and the University of Vienna

Andreas Huber

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### Abstract

Else Frenkel was associated with the University of Vienna for more than five years in total. She studied at Austria's largest university for eight semesters from 1926 to 1930, attained the position of a research assistant in the academic year 1931/32, and worked there a second time as a temporary employee in 1936. The political climate in these years was characterized by racist antisemitism and attacks against parliamentary democracy, by violence against "Jewish" and left-wing students, and by discrimination against scholars who did not fit into the racist and ethno-national template. Fascism and National Socialism enjoyed huge support, especially among the student body, many years before Austria became a part of Nazi Germany. The aim of this article is to draw an evocative picture of the University of Vienna during these years, especially 1926 to 1932, when Frenkel was almost continuously connected with the institution. It seeks to demonstrate the significant impact of antisemitism and gender on the academic life and work of Else Frenkel, and consists of two parts: her study years, and her subsequent career as an academic at the Psychological Institute. The focus is not on the content of the courses she attended or her academic work in the 1930s but rather on the political circumstances and context of her university career, seeking to answer the question: What did it mean to be a Jewish woman from Galicia at the University of Vienna during these years? In addressing this question, the article explores the forms of antisemitism she was confronted with, the student union (Deutsche Studentenschaft), professorial networks, and her chances of gaining the habilitation, the highest university qualification and the precondition to becoming a full professor.

### Keywords

Anti-Semitism, Antifeminism, History of Universities, History of Science, Racism, Discrimination, University of Vienna

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#### **ELSE FRENKEL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA I: A STUDENT LIFE IN THE FACE OF EXCLUSION AND VIOLENCE, 1926–1930**

When Else Frenkel began her studies at the University of Vienna, one of her first tasks was to fill out an enrolment certificate known as the *Nationale* (see *Figure 1*, Seidl 2004: 291–294). These documents provide sociodemographic data, such as birthplace, age, religious confession, place of residence and social origin (the father's profession). Some of these variables played a decisive role in

determining a student's position and opportunities within the student body: the level of course fees to be paid, whether a person was allowed to enter the student canteen, and whether he or she could apply for fellowships. Furthermore, the *Nationale* also listed courses and lectures including the name of the university teachers, and the number of semester hours—essential information when searching for traces.

### *Else Frenkel and her Nationale in context*

Else Frenkel's birthplace was given as "Lemberg (Poland)" (today Lviv in Ukraine), which at the time of her birth in 1908 was located in the Habsburg Empire, almost 600 kilometers east of Vienna. Her father Abraham was a Jewish bank employee and had a great interest in "German culture" when the family was still living in Galicia, and had probably been keen to move to Vienna for a long time. Economic crises and violent riots against the Jewish population of Galicia were most likely the crucial factor in finally taking this step (Paier 1996: 8–9). Else Frenkel and her family were, in a sense, typical of the Jewish population in Vienna but rather untypical of Jewish immigrants from Galicia; in these years, Eastern European Jewry was still characterized by traditional structures and a dominant orthodox Judaism (Raggam-Blesch 2008: 98, Freidenreich 2002: 7). Nonetheless, the Jewish enlightenment movement *Haskalah*, which strived for emancipation and combined enthusiasm for German culture with religious principles, succeeded in sections of the Eastern European Jewish middle-class and to some extent also in the orthodox milieu (Raggam-Blesch 2008: 86–90). Women especially became supporters of this movement because they were widely excluded from the religiously dominated world (Raggam-Blesch 2008: 92). "Ironically, the gendered nature of traditional Jewish education enabled some women to have access to modern ideas earlier than many men within their communities," the historian Paula Hyman concludes (Hyman 1998: 283). When Else Frenkel and her family moved to Vienna, the circumstances were quite different from those in Galicia. Liberal Judaism had become the dominant mode of religious affiliation and practice in Central Europe (Freidenreich 2002: 2). A good secular education for sons as well as for daughters was considered important in acculturated Jewish middle-class families (Freidenreich 2002: 5). Thus to some extent, Frenkel's pursuit of further education in Vienna was predefined and as characteristic as the career of her father: Abraham Frenkel became the owner of a private bank, which made him a prime example of the social mobility of the Jewish population in Vienna and of the leading role played by Jews in the banking sector. The end of the Jewish emancipation process can be dated to 1867 when both chambers of the Imperial Council passed the Basic Law on the General Rights of Citizens (*Staatsgrundgesetz*), which guaranteed equality and free choice of occupation. During the same period, the proportion Jews in Vienna's population increased from 2.2 percent in 1857 to 10.1 percent in 1880, but dropped to 8.6 percent in 1910 due to the incorporation of the suburbs (Pauley 1993: 55). By the first decade of the twentieth century, Vienna had become a city of more than two million inhabitants, having grown from only 400,000 in 1857. And Jews played a crucial role for the city's identity and development: 71 percent of all financiers, 63 percent of industrialists, and more than half of the journalists in Vienna were Jewish in the years 1900 to 1910, a period in which an antisemitic mayor (Karl Lueger) governed the city (Pauley 1993: 80). But the Jewish emancipation, as well as the industrial revolution, gave rise to a countermovement and a new phenomenon: racist anti-semitism.



Wird um deutlich lesbare Schrift ersucht.  
Organe der akademischen Behörden  
ermächtigt, Nationale mit schlecht  
baren Eintragungen zurückzuweisen.

Gegenwärtig im I. Semester.

### Nationale

für ordentliche Hörer der philosophischen Fakultät.

Nachname und Vorname des Studierenden:	Else Frenkel
Nationalität:	Österreich
Wohnort (Ort und Land):	Wien
Geburtsort und Land:	Lemberg (Polen)
Mutter- und Vatersprache, Alter, Volkszugehörigkeit:	Grünfeld, 18 Jahre, Grünfeld
Religion, welchen Ritus oder Konfession:	ist.
Postanschrift des Studierenden:	VI. Stumpersg. 39
Nachname, Stand und Wohnort seines Vaters:	Abraham, Bankier, Stumpersg. 39
Nachname, Stand und Wohnort seines Vorgesetzten:	
Bezeichnung der Lehranstalt, an welcher der Studierende das letzte Semester zugebracht:	in der Schulerwald'schen Sch.- Anstalt (Realschule) Lemberg
Erhält ein Stipendium (Stiftung) im Betrage von S. 8	
erhalten von unter dem 192. 3	
Bezeichnung der Grundlage, auf welcher der Studierende die Immatrikulation oder Zulassung anspricht:	
Lebendige Unterschrift:	Else Frenkel

Figure 1: Nationale of Else Frenkel, winter semester 1926

Antisemitism had always been present in the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire, but it was economic crises in particular, and the subsequent search for a scapegoat, that resulted in significant increases in antisemitic agitation and violence, for example after the stock market crash of 1873. Increasingly, hatred toward Jews focused on those who were apparent as “others”: Jews from Eastern Europe—so-called *Ostjuden*. Until 1867 most Jewish immigrants had come from Hungary, Bohemia and Moravia but over the following years, the majority arrived from Galicia. Many of these immigrants did not speak German and were orthodox. As a consequence, the percentage of Viennese Jews who had come from Polish and Ukrainian regions increased from 18 percent (1880) to 23 percent (1910) (Pauley 1993: 56). The hatred towards *Ostjuden* reached its peak in World War I, when up to 125,000 Jewish refugees settled temporarily in Vienna after the Russian army had conquered Galicia and the Bukovina (Pauley 1993: 106). These negative sentiments not only affected orthodox Jews but also people who had been members of the East European Jewish bourgeoisie (Raggam-Blesch 2008: 104). Else Frenkel and her family had settled in Austria shortly before the outbreak of the war. This is a small but very important detail, especially as the Austrian government introduced several measures to prevent *Ostjuden* from obtaining Austrian citizenship. The Frenkels had come soon enough not to be confronted with this discrimination and Else became an Austrian national.

According to the Citizenship Act (*Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz*) of 1918,<sup>1</sup> people who were able to “claim right of residence in a municipality of the German-Austrian Republic” became German-Austrian citizens automatically, as well as people who moved to German-Austria. But there was an exception for people coming from Dalmatia, Istria and Galicia. The intention was that the numerous war refugees from Galicia should not become citizens automatically. This discrimination did not end with the Treaty of Saint-Germain, even though the treaty allowed people to opt for citizenship of another successor state if their “race and language” differed from the majority population of the successor state they were in. Yet Austria’s Interior Ministry refused to grant this option for *Ostjuden*, following the view that Jews were “racially different from the majority of the population.” This exclusion from Austrian citizenship was officially confirmed by the Supreme Administrative Court of the Republic of Austria in 1921 (Burger 2013: 132–139).

As mentioned above, Else Frenkel was not a “typical” Jew from Eastern Europe. Her family, who lived at Stumpergasse 39 in Vienna’s sixth district, was more typical of the Jewish bourgeoisie, which can almost be equated with the *liberal* bourgeoisie in the former capital of the Habsburg Empire (Beller 1993: 43–49). Within this milieu women were expected to complete secondary school—and to continue their education at a university. “Emancipation, the liberation of groups or individuals from civil or legal restraints, is a central theme in modern Jewish history,” states Harriet Pass Freidenreich (Freidenreich 2002: 2). Education played an important role for women in particular and helped them to emancipate from conventional roles. Intellectual creativity, personal self-fulfillment and new careers could be achieved through university studies (Freidenreich 2002: 1–2). Besides the high value placed on education and study in Judaism for its own sake, for Jewish families who represented a secular Jewish culture, education was an effective means to accelerate integration into the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the educated middle classes (Freidenreich 2002: 17). As a consequence, modernization resulted in a crisis of Jewish identity for men and women, and not only in Vienna. A Jewish female intelligentsia who incorporated more and more aspects of the external culture visibly moved away from Judaism (Rose: 86). Furthermore, most Jewish university women were distanced from Jewish religion and traditions, with only a few involved in synagogues or Jewish activities organized by the community (Freidenreich 2002: 37).

In the winter semester 1926/27, Else Frenkel was one of 9,907 students, of whom 19 percent were female. These 1,865 women were unequally distributed across the faculties: at the Philosophical Faculty 31 percent of the students were women, followed by Medicine (15 percent), Law (6 percent) and Protestant Theology (3 percent) (Statistisches Handbuch 1928: 169). These percentages also reflected the dates when women were admitted to the different faculties. Alongside Prussia, Austria was the last European country to enable women to enroll at universities. While the University of Zurich affiliated women (albeit at first only from foreign countries) in 1863, followed by French, Swedish, English and other European universities in the years 1870 to 1894, Austria’s potential female students had to wait until the winter semester of 1897, when the Ministry for Education permitted women to study at the Philosophical Faculties. This was followed by Medicine (1900), Law (1919) and Protestant Theology (1923) (Heindl 1990: 17–18).<sup>2</sup> The admittance of women to study was preceded by long-running discussions. In the 1870s, the Academic Senate at the University of Vienna had argued that women should fulfill their nature-given role as wife and mother, and should

<sup>1</sup> Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich, 20. Stück, 91. Gesetz vom 5. Dezember 118 über das deutschösterreichische Staatsbürgerrecht, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Theological Faculty was still closed to women when Frenkel entered the university—and remained so for a further two decades.

thus be kept away from higher education. But there was also another argument repeated among these opponents of women's higher education: that women were not intelligent enough to study at a university. The German psychiatrist Paul Möbius played an influential role in this debate. He declared women to be more irritable, more easily scared and more cowardly. Only male women, i.e. "not real" women would reach for education and a profession. Viennese doctors claimed that a woman undertaking intellectual activities could not be a "woman" or a "mother" (Heindl 2015: 529–531). Antifeminism and misogyny went hand in hand with antisemitism. The German-national politician Georg von Schönerer, one of the most influential antisemites in Central Europe and a role model for Adolf Hitler, once stated that female suffrage, for Schönerer an "idiocy," would only be demanded by women who had failed in their calling as women—and by "Jewesses" (Rose: 100). Antisemites' frequent portrayal of the male Jewish body as feminine underlines the connection between these two phenomena. They became a cultural code to demonstrate membership of a particular sociopolitical camp, and the similarities between antisemitism and antifeminism were not only programmatic and structural but also present in terms of personnel and organization (Raggam-Blesch 2008: 55, 64). Antifeminist stereotypes did not disappear after World War I but to a large extent they were overlaid—by antisemitism.

The practice of racist antisemitism at the University of Vienna can be observed in the fifth line of Else Frenkel's *Nationale*. Only two years previously a new category had been introduced by the Academic Senate: *Volkszugehörigkeit* (ethnicity). For Else Frenkel there was probably no doubt that her *Volkszugehörigkeit* was "deutsch" (German), especially as German was her native language and she had Austrian citizenship. But her answer of "deutsch" has been crossed out by somebody. Frenkel had stated "isr[aelitisch]" (Israelite) as her religion but according to the ideology of the leading university institutions—the academic authorities and the student union—Jews could not be Germans. This also meant that they could not be members of the student union (and were therefore excluded from social benefits and elections), and this six years after the Federal Constitutional Law had been decreed in Austria. The body responsible for this exclusion was the Deutsche Studentenschaft (DSt).

### *Student Fraternities and the Deutsche Studentenschaft*

The Deutsche Studentenschaft was the self-proclaimed "German Aryan" student union in the First Austrian Republic. It had been established after World War I by German-national and Catholic student fraternities, a coalition that would have been unthinkable in the Habsburg Monarchy. Catholic student fraternities (whose history started in 1864 with the foundation of Austria Innsbruck) had faced hostility from members of German-national student fraternities from the very beginning. Bones of contention prompting these often violent attacks were the appearance of Catholic students in traditional student uniforms including fencing weapons (although Catholic students rejected the *Mensur*, the traditional fencing bout between members of different fraternities), and ideological differences, especially the anti-Catholic agenda of the *Burschenschaften* and other German-national student fraternities. Georg von Schönerer, who had a great impact on these organizations, had propagated "Los von Rom" ("Away from Rome") in 1897. As the number of Catholic fraternities grew rapidly in the first decade of the twentieth century, these conflicts increased in intensity. Karl Lueger, then mayor of the city of Vienna, demanded a "conquest of the university" at the Catholic Day in Vienna in 1907, at which he also complained about the influence of Jews.<sup>3</sup> One year later, the conflict

<sup>3</sup> Ein Stich in's Wespennest oder Der 6. allgemeine österreichische Katholikentag (1907) und die katholische Universitätsfrage, 3. The article is published in Rathkolb 2014: 259–276.

between German-nationals and Catholics reached its peak with the “Wahrmund affair.” Ludwig Wahrmund, a German-national law professor at the University of Innsbruck, opposed the influence of Catholicism at Austrian universities, whereupon the Ministry for Education transferred him to Prague. This was followed by violent confrontations between the two camps (Hartmann 2001: 45–51).

In the wake of the outbreak of World War I a thaw began, culminating in a meeting between the leading figures of the German-national student fraternities in February 1918. The representative senior members of the *Burschenschaften*, *wehrhafte Vereine*, *Sängerschaften*, *Corps* and other organizations reached a momentous decision: to settle their differences (which had often been considerable in the Monarchy), to join forces against “Judaism,” and to put an end to the fight against the Catholic student body (Knoll 1923: 763). One consequence of this was the establishment of a common student union a short time later. Meanwhile, in Germany general student committees were founded at the beginning of 1919 with compulsory membership, obligatory fees, and a general, direct right to vote. A student parliament in Würzburg was intended to represent all students of German descent and native language, including student representations from the German-speaking areas of the former Habsburg Empire: Austria as *Kreis 8* and the Sudetenland as *Kreis 9* (of ten *Kreise* in total) (Jaraus 1984: 120). But the student unions of Austria and the Sudetenland did not agree with the rules and regulations made by the German ones. At the University of Vienna, a “German-Aryan list” was constituted and a vote was called in October 1919. For the next 14 years, until the breakdown of the DSt in 1933, its first election program would dominate student politics, namely: the fight against Judaism and the implementation of a *numerus clausus* (admission restriction) for Jewish students (Lichtenberger-Fenz 1990: 13–23).

For German-national student fraternities, especially the *Burschenschaften* and *wehrhafte Vereine* (the latter were organized in the *Kyffhäuser-Verband*), the exclusion of Jews and the implementation of an “Aryan paragraph” did not constitute a break since these had already been part of their statutes by the end of the nineteenth century (Stimmer 1997: 121–136). But for the Catholic student fraternities it did mark a change in direction. Although the attempt by Engelbert Dollfuß and the theology professor Nivard Schlögl to establish an “Aryan paragraph” for the *Cartellverband* (an umbrella organization of Catholic fraternities) was rejected in 1920 (Hartmann 2006: 493), and although *racist antisemitism* never became a generally accepted phenomenon in the Christian Social Party, *racist antisemitism* did take root in some parts of the Christian Social milieu, especially among the Catholic representatives of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*.

This ongoing process of radicalization reached a first peak in 1922 following the election of the Jewish historian Samuel Steinherz as rector of the German University in Prague. Yet not only in Prague did antisemitic students protest against his election and initiate riots in the university building, the protests also spread to Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck shortly thereafter. In an official statement, the DSt demanded a *numerus clausus* of ten percent not only for Jewish students but also for Jewish university teachers. With regard to academic authorities, especially rectors and deans, their demands went even further: only professors of German descent and mother tongue should be allowed to adopt such a position. As mentioned above, “German descent” could not be acquired or chosen, according to Austria’s high courts.<sup>4</sup> In the Rectorate of the university, this proclamation by the DSt was not shelved but taken very seriously. The rector Karl Diener, a geographer and geologist,

<sup>4</sup> Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt-Archiv, *Mappe Hochschulen* (1922), *Deutsche Studentenschaft der Universität Wien an den hohen Akademischen Senat der Universität Wien*, 27 November 1922.

even publicly sympathized with these demands. His reaction was published in several newspapers and cited hundreds of times over the following years. Not only did he exhibit sympathy with the quota demands but he became abusive against *Ostjuden*, whom he compared with a canker, stating that the first task of every rector at a German university would be to remove *Ostjuden*.<sup>5</sup> The following year, the academic authorities of the University of Vienna recognized the DSt as the official representative body of “German” students, thus formalizing existing unofficial practice.

The *Staatsgrundgesetz* of 1867 and the democratic constitution set limits on the racist agenda of the Rectorate and the Deutsche Studentenschaft. But these limits did not apply to foreign Jewish students, who were numerous due to the restrictive Austrian citizenship policy. Shortly after the proclamation of the Republic of German-Austria in 1918, the Academic Senate drastically increased enrolment fees for foreigners and made access to places in institutes and laboratories more difficult. In addition, foreigners (students from Germany were not classified as such) were excluded from fellowship programs (Goldhammer 1927: 39). In 1923, the Academic Senate went one step further: prospective students from Eastern Europe were no longer to be accepted as extraordinary students, and the already high barriers to ordinary students were raised once more. Enrolment was now only possible under certain circumstances and, in particular, school reports were checked even more closely than before (Lichtenberger-Fenz 1990: 51–52). As a result, the proportion of Jewish students in the interwar period fell continuously. Yet this decrease—from 42 percent in 1920/21 to 25 percent five years later—did not meet the expectations of the Deutsche Studentenschaft. Therefore the student union found other ways to decrease the percentage of Jewish students: constant hostility, further discrimination and violence.

### *Antisemitic Agitation and Violence*

In autumn 1926 Else Frenkel started her first lectures at the university and attended courses held by the psychologist Karl Bühler, the mathematician Josef Lense and the physicist Egon Schweidler.<sup>6</sup> The year 1926 fell in a period of relative economic stabilization and there was a general decrease in antisemitism in Austria (Hänisch 1998: 32, Pauley 1993: 145–146). However, the University of Vienna, as well as other universities and colleges in Austria, was an exception. Frenkel’s first semester was marked by protests against Josef Hupka. Hupka was Ordinary Professor of Commercial and Exchange Law and had been elected dean of the Law Faculty. Although Hupka had left the Jewish faith almost 30 years ago, the Deutsche Studentenschaft staged a protest rally in front of the university building. The students passed a resolution in which they objected to the election and demanded, once more, a numerus clausus.<sup>7</sup>

Hupka’s election was also harshly criticized on some notice boards in the main building, most of which were placed at the disposal of the DSt and other right-wing organizations, such as the Alldeutscher Verband (Pan-German League), the Akademische Vereinigung für Rassenpflege (Academic Association for Racial Cultivation) and the Völkische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (*Völkisch* Study Group) (Zoitl 1992: 338). Since most of Frenkel’s courses took place in the main building on the Ringstrasse, she had to pass these notice boards at least three days per week. They were covered with antisemitic propaganda, insults, and threats against the “Jewish race.” A flyer produced by the

<sup>5</sup> Neues Wiener Tagblatt (daily edition), 11.12.1922, 1–2.

<sup>6</sup> Vienna University Archive (VUA), *Nationale* of the Philosophical Faculty, winter semester 1926/27.

<sup>7</sup> Kundgebung deutschnationaler Studenten gegen den Dekan der juristischen Fakultät, Neue Freie Presse, 6.11.1926, 27.

DSt dated October 1926 accused Jews of economic enslavement and being responsible for “the plight of German academic youth,” and cited Richard Wagner: “The Jew is the plastic demon of the decline of mankind.” Furthermore, the flyer of the official student union called for “the elimination of Jewish exploiters, fomenters and destroyers of the German *Volk*.”<sup>8</sup> Flyers of other organizations went even further, insulting Jews as a “hideous bastard race,” as reported in the *Neue Freie Presse* in December 1926.<sup>9</sup> Although the Academic Senate implemented new rules during this academic year—flyers now had to be approved by the Rectorate—essentially the situation did not change.

This brutalized language did not fail in its intended effect. Violence became an almost everyday phenomenon in these years. And university autonomy was abused insofar as the police were not allowed to enter the university buildings. Policemen waited outside to collect what were often severely injured students and hand them over to an emergency ambulance. The institute most severely affected at the University of Vienna was the First Anatomical Institute run by Julius Tandler, who was a boogymen for antisemitic students for two reasons: not only was he a Jewish professor, but he was also a city councillor in the left-wing municipal government of “Red Vienna.” Students repeatedly disrupted his courses, entered the lecture hall, screamed “Juden hinaus” (“Jews out”), and attacked Tandler’s students (Taschwer and Nemeč 2014). As a consequence of these student riots, the Rectorate found itself repeatedly forced to close university buildings. Frenkel and thousands of other students who did not sympathize with the perpetrators were not able to attend courses, for example in June 1927, when the rector Hans Molisch ordered the closing of the main building as well as the Anatomical and the Physiological Institutes. More and more often, German-national and National Socialist students (the border between them was fluid) prevented Jewish and Socialist students from attending their courses and lectures, also by violent means.<sup>10</sup> Posters reading “Juden hinaus” (“Jews out”) became a commonplace sight next to the doors of Austria’s university buildings.

Another common occurrence were calls to boycott (supposedly) Jewish university teachers. This was at a time when course fees accounted for a considerable part of teachers’ income, especially of *Privatdozenten* (unsalaried instructors, the male form *Privatdozent* also applied to the few habilitated women). As early as 1924, the cultural office (*Kulturamt*) of the Deutsche Studentenschaft had published a list of Jewish professors and *Privatdozenten* at the University of Vienna.<sup>11</sup> Five years later the Völkische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, an organization with close ties to the DSt, created an updated list which was distributed in front of the main building.<sup>12</sup> Else Frenkel, who had to enter the building via the Ringstrasse every day during this winter semester of 1929 for courses given by the philosophers Robert Reininger and Rudolf Carnap and by the ethnologist Wilhelm Koppers,<sup>13</sup> might well have been handed such a list. It urged students not to attend the courses of the listed teachers and the approximately 200 names included Frenkel’s teachers “Bühler” and “Schlick” (although Schlick and *Karl Bühler* were not of Jewish descent). The message of the Deutsche Studentenschaft was clear: these teachers—but also students who attended their lectures—were not welcome. It is

<sup>8</sup> VUA, Senat, GZ 156, Flyer with the heading “Die Deutschenhetze der sozialistischen Studenten geht schon wieder los”. Original quote: “Wahre sozialistische Gesinnung verlangt Beseitigung der jüdischen Volksausbeuter, Volksverhetzer und Volkszerstörer [...]”.

<sup>9</sup> Eine Kulturschande an der Universität. Die antisemitischen Anschlagtafeln in der Aula, *Neue Freie Presse*, 20.12.1926, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Die Universität gesperrt, *Der Abend*, 14.6.1927; An der Universität wird weiter geprügelt, *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 6.11.1928; Die Zusammenstöße auf der Universitätsrampe, *Neue Freie Presse*, 9.4.1929.

<sup>11</sup> Rasse und Wissenschaft, *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung*, 23.4.1924 (TBA).

<sup>12</sup> UAV, Senat, GZ 152 ex 1929/30, Rector Wenzel Gleispach to the Völkische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 14.10.1929.

<sup>13</sup> VUA, Philosophical Faculty, *Nationale* WS 1929/30; VAU, Vorlesungsverzeichnis der Universität Wien 1929/30, 42-43, 52.

quite conceivable that “Frenkel” was also mentioned on this kind of list when she began to teach in the academic year 1931/32.

## **ELSE FRENKEL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA II: PROFESSORIAL NETWORKS AND THE NON-EXISTENT CHANCES FOR AN ACADEMIC CAREER, 1930–1938**

The Psychological Institute, where Else Frenkel began to work as an assistant in the Department for Biographical Studies shortly after her graduation, was a huge research institute in these years. Financed by the City of Vienna and the Rockefeller Foundation, by the end of the 1920s it had become an internationally renowned institute. No fewer than 34 psychologists from the United States studied and worked there in the years 1929 to 1935 (Paier 1996: 10). Yet this fact remained invisible in the staff index of the University of Vienna: for the years 1926 to 1938, when Frenkel was studying and working at the institute, the staff index normally listed only two scientific employees: Karl Bühler, ordinary professor, and his research assistant and later assistant Egon Brunswik. The only exception was the 1931/32 academic year, when the directory published in autumn 1931 listed a third person: Else Frenkel.<sup>14</sup> During this period Brunswik was living in Ankara, where he was involved in setting up a Psychological Department based on the model of the Viennese Institute—an idea brought to Karl Bühler by the Turkish Ministry for Education.<sup>15</sup> Frenkel returned a second time as Egon Brunswik’s substitute in 1936 when he was visiting the University of California in Berkeley, where he ultimately remained (Paier 1996: 31).<sup>16</sup> As a student Else Frenkel had, without any doubt, experienced excesses of racist antisemitism on multiple occasions. She was excluded from the student elections because of her confession, she undoubtedly noticed the brutal attacks against fellow students, and at the very least she was confronted with antisemitic flyers and slogans. But what were her chances for a university career? Was an assistant’s substitute the highest position a Jewish woman from Galicia could hope for in these years? The following sections illustrate the objective chances for promotion and the interaction of several non-academic criteria.

### *Non-academic Criteria and Academic Careers*

The year 1848 marked the beginning of the modern university as we know it today. In the same year the academic criteria for habilitations and professorships were decreed by the Ministry for Education: the *Habilitationsverordnung* (Decree on Habilitations) and the *Lehrkanzelerlass* (Decree on Professorships). The academic criteria set down in these decrees remained relatively unchanged until the 1930s, when Else Frenkel started to work as an assistant. Applicants for the habilitation had to submit a major scientific work—their *Habilitationschrift* (postdoctoral thesis)—on the topic they wanted to teach. If the thesis met the academic requirements, the Professorial Council would invite the applicant to what was known as a colloquium, a scientific discussion. The third step was a test

<sup>14</sup> Die Akademischen Behörden, Professoren, Privatdozenten, Lehrer, Beamten usw. an der Universität zu Wien, I., Ring des 12. November Nr. 3, für das Studienjahr 1931/32, Wien 1931: Verlag von Adolf Holzhausens Nachf. Charlotte Bühler, who had been a *Privatdozent* at the University of Vienna since 1923, was not officially affiliated with the Institute, at least from the point of view of the university and the Ministry for Education. As a *Privatdozent* she was not a public employee and her income at the university was limited to the course fees paid by the students.

<sup>15</sup> Egon Brunswik, Wiener psychologische Schule in der Türkei. Ein Institut nach Wiener Muster in Ankara, Neues Wiener Journal, 27.7.1932, 6–7.

<sup>16</sup> This information is based on Paier’s article. Frenkel was not listed in the directory.

lecture. After this, the Professorial Council would decide whether the applicant was qualified for the position of *Privatdozent*. The Ministry for Education was required to confirm the Council's decision. In 1888 the Ministry introduced a new passus: from now on, the Professorial Council was allowed to refuse an applicant because of "another reason relating to the personality of the applicant."<sup>17</sup> In 1920 the passage was slightly reformulated and expanded: the habilitation could be denied because of "a reason relating to the person of the applicant that queried their suitability for a university teaching post."<sup>18</sup> This legislation gave the Professorial Councils plenty of scope for refusing a candidate. When a new *Habilitationsnorm* was decreed in May 1934, one year after the passage of an authoritarian constitution, candidates for the habilitation now had to be Austrian citizens, because the Ministry only wanted people from the same "cultural area." This can be seen as a further barrier to Jewish scholars who were born in Galicia or the Bukovina (Erker 2021: 126–127). Likewise, the rules on professorial appointments did not change greatly between 1848 and the 1930s. The professors and a few representatives of the *Privatdozenten* had to agree on a list of three candidates, which was sent to the Ministry. The candidates had to demonstrate academic quality (via publications) and the ability to teach. A habilitation was not an absolute precondition for an appointment as a university professor but in practice a non-habilitated scholar was almost never appointed. A doctorate was obligatory. The state authorities were not bound by the suggestions of the Professorial Councils. De facto the Ministry took the decision but the Emperor had to confirm it. In the First Republic the rules only changed insofar as the Federal President, as the new head of state, had the final say (Staudigl 2017: 138–145).

It is obvious that not only academic criteria were decisive in determining whether somebody gained the habilitation or a professorship, especially under the aforementioned circumstances and given the scope for action accorded the Professorial Councils. One of the first people to investigate the influence of these criteria was Josef Redlich, a law professor at the University of Vienna. His dossier was a direct response to a speech by Vienna's mayor Karl Lueger in 1907, in which he had spoken of "Jewish dominion" (*Judenherrschaft*) over the universities. Redlich found out that the proportion of Jews among the ordinary professors was, compared to the *Privatdozenten*, extremely low. And he pointed out that a large proportion of these "Jewish" scholars were not practicing Jews and had converted to Christianity.<sup>19</sup> But these findings never came to light, Redlich never published the dossier. But religion, not to say "race," was not the only criteria that had an impact on an academic career. Gender, social origin, political views, country of origin and native language could be much more important than articles published in renowned scientific journals. Especially for women, it was extremely difficult to gain a foothold in academia. Before the Nazi Party came to power, only 84 women had been appointed to an academic post in Germany and Austria, and only four of these had reached the position of full professor. 32 of these women scholars were of Jewish descent but the majority were either baptized or without denomination. None of these 32 women became a full professor (Freidenreich 2002: 70). "You are a woman and a Jew and together that is too much." This was the sentence the physicist Marietta Blau was confronted with when she requested at least some form of

<sup>17</sup> Reichsgesetzblatt, 19. Verordnung des Ministers für Cultus und Unterricht vom 11. Februar 1888, betreffend die Habilitation der Privatdocenten an Universitäten, § 6 ("... oder wenn aus einem anderen in der Persönlichkeit des Bewerbers gelegenen Grunde sich die Ertheilung der *venia docendi* als unzulässig darstellt, so ist das Habilitationsgesuch sofort abzuweisen.")

<sup>18</sup> Staatsgesetzblatt 124. Stück, 415. Vollzugsanweisung des Staatsamtes für Inneres und Unterricht vom 2. September 1920, betreffend die Zulassung der Lehrtätigkeit der Privatdozenten an den Hochschulen (*Habilitationsnorm*), § 6 (1).

<sup>19</sup> Josef Redlich, Über die Situation für jüdische Gelehrte an den österreichischen Universitäten. Published in Rathkolb 2014: 277–317.



paid employment, after she had succeeded in establishing herself in the scientific world, and it illustrates the interconnection between these forms of discrimination (Freidenreich 2002: 75). When Else Frenkel started to study at the University of Vienna in 1926, only 3.3 percent of the university teachers were women. In the 1931/32 academic year, when she was employed as a research assistant, this proportion had risen slightly, to 3.9 percent.<sup>20</sup> Eight of these 39 women (of 1,008 teachers in total) had reached the last stage before a professorship, the position of a *Privatdozent*, Charlotte Bühler among them. Else Frenkel's supervisor at the Psychological Institute had applied for the transfer of her *venia legendi* from the Dresden Technical College to the University of Vienna. But this endeavor had almost failed: only 25 of 46 members of the Professorial Council had approved Bühler's application, 15 had voted no and six had abstained from voting (Huber 2019a: 177). Charlotte Bühler was a Protestant but of Jewish origin, which may have explained these 15 votes against her attempt. But her husband was an ordinary professor at the same faculty, which gave her a definite backing. Only one Jewish woman attained the status of *Privatdozent* in the interwar period: Anna Spiegel-Adolf, who gained the habilitation in Applied Chemical Medicine in 1931. A first attempt had failed in 1926 (Huber 2019a: 172). In the 1931/32 academic year, approximately 20 percent of *Privatdozenten* and more than a quarter of the extraordinary professors at the Philosophical Faculty were of Jewish descent; but not even one in ten ordinary professors was Jewish. However, the proportion of Jewish university teachers fell continuously during in the interwar period. Fewer and fewer applied for the habilitation; the chances were increasingly hopeless.<sup>21</sup> Frenkel herself was confronted with antisemitism shortly after the start of her university teaching career. An antisemitic student periodical complained that it would be a shame for "Aryan" psychology students to have to attend courses by "the Jew Else Frenkel" (Paier 1996: 32). To summarize, a few women and a few male Jewish scholars achieved the habilitation. But the interaction of female gender and Jewish religion proved an insurmountable obstacle. Scandalous rejections of this kind, for example that of zoologist Leonore Brecher in 1926, can also be attributed to the existence of antisemitic networks.

### *Professorial Networks*

At least two networks of antisemitic university teachers were active at the University of Vienna in the interwar period: the *Fachgruppe Hochschulen* (Universities Professional Group) of the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* (DG, German Community), and the *Bärenhöhle* (Bear's Lair), named after a paleontological seminar room at the Philosophical Faculty. The existence of *two* networks might be due to the fact that the paleontologist and evolutionary biologist Othenio Abel had been rejected by the DG.<sup>22</sup> The *Bärenhöhle*, which he ran, consisted of 19 professors in total and was probably active in the years 1923 to 1934 (Taschwer 2015: 99–132, Taschwer 2022). Somewhat more information is available on the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*. It can be seen as a parallel institution to the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* and as another consequence of the decisions made in 1918 between the leading figures of the German-national student fraternities: the common anti-Jewish approach and reconciliation with Catholic elites, who were mainly organized in the *Cartellverband* (see above). Like the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*, the DG was led by members of German-national and Catholic student fraternities but the secret society was not only limited to the universities. It was made up of approximately 20 groups of normally 20 to 30 brothers (the self-designation of its members, borrowing

<sup>20</sup> The numbers are preliminary results based on approximately 90 percent of the university teachers.

<sup>21</sup> These numbers are based on approximately 90 percent of the university teachers at this faculty.

<sup>22</sup> Archive of the *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Zeitgeschichte*, DO-1102, Jules Huf estate, Folder No 7.

from the freemasons, whom they actually fought against) who came together periodically. The club's seat was located in Vienna's first district, at Elisabethstrasse 9, only 200 meters away from Abraham Frenkel's banking business (*Bankkommissionsgeschäft*) at Elisabethstrasse 13.<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the Bärenhöhle, the DG was a registered organization whose official activities included organizing food banks for children suffering from lung diseases (Rosar 1971: 29–37). But the DG was only a cover organization for a secret society called Die Burg (The Castle) whose activities were a far cry from child welfare. The goal of the society was the patronage of its members and the exclusion of Jews—but also freemasons, socialists and liberals—from leadership positions. The members called themselves *Gerade* (the Evens), the persons they fought against *Ungerade* (the Unevens) (Huber, Erker and Taschwer 2020: 89–116). The clique blocked habilitations, influenced the appointment of professors by the Ministry for Education, and initiated disciplinary proceedings against “uneven” scholars. Another activity of the brothers in the Fachgruppe Hochschulen was to draw up lists of “uneven” university professors. It is remarkable that the secret society not only branded professors of the Jewish faith as “uneven” but also those who had converted to Christianity. Furthermore, the professors' wives were also subjected to judgement if somebody's career had to be hindered (Huber 2019b). Women were not mentioned in the protocols of this male-only society, and were obviously not seen as opponents. Although the DG disintegrated in 1930, it is likely that its activities continued. Looking at the careers of Else Frenkel's fellow colleagues, it is clear there were very limited opportunities for them within Austrian academia.

### *Frenkel's Scientific Environment and Allies at the University*

Else Frenkel's scientific environment at the university was strongly influenced by Karl and Charlotte Bühler and the Psychological Institute. The Böhlers had a clear vision for the theoretical and methodological orientation of the institute. They differentiated their work from psychoanalysis and declared the psychoanalytical education of the institute's employees to be a private matter. This also kept Frenkel and her scientific work away from psychoanalysis, although she underwent two analyses before her emigration (Paier 1996: 30). The Böhlers maintained close contacts with logical empiricism and the Vienna Circle, an intellectual group led by philosophy professor Moritz Schlick. The philosophy of this group was oriented towards the natural sciences and the members decidedly rejected metaphysics and shared a declared belief in the Enlightenment (Stadler 1997). Frenkel had already been a member of discussion circles under Moritz Schlick during her university studies (Paier 1996: 31). Klaus Taschwer (2018) has interpreted the formation of this collective and the first get-togethers in autumn 1924 as a direct reaction to developments within the University of Vienna, namely the appointment of Robert Reininger (Professor of the History of Philosophy since 1922 and, furthermore, a member of the Bärenhöhle network) as the head of the Philosophical Society, in which role he biased the organization towards metaphysics, and the rejection of habilitation attempts by well-qualified academics such as physicist Karl Horovitz. Some members of the Vienna Circle can be seen as victims of antisemitic networks who were unable to get a foot in the door at the University of Vienna, for example Edgar Zilsel, a philosopher, historian and sociologist with whom Frenkel maintained contact, who saw no other option than to withdraw his habilitation attempt in November 1924, 15 months after he had sent his application to the faculty (Taschwer 2022). Schlick's only scholar who became a *Privatdozent* (in November 1925) was Rudolf Carnap, who was born in Ronsdorf,

<sup>23</sup> Adolph Lehmann's allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger, nebst Handels- u. Gewerbe-Adressbuch für d. k.k. Reichshaupt- u. Residenzstadt Wien u. Umgebung, 1921–22, 1923 and 1924.

Germany, and who was without confession.<sup>24</sup> Else Frenkel had attended three of his courses in the summer and winter semesters of 1929.<sup>25</sup> Frenkel's future husband, Egon Brunswik, was also closely linked to the Vienna Circle. But Brunswik's habilitation proceeded without any problems. The vote was almost unanimous: only one of the 46 members of the Professorial Council abstained from the vote but no one voted "no."<sup>26</sup> Brunswik, who was Roman Catholic<sup>27</sup> and who had obtained Austrian citizenship, became a *Privatdozent* on 21 February 1934.<sup>28</sup> Had he already been married to Else Frenkel (whose confession had been publicized in an antisemitic journal, as mentioned above), the habilitation procedure might have been more difficult. But Brunswik was probably aware of the fact that, as a scholar of Karl Bühler, any professorship was a long way away. The same applied to Charlotte Bühler. When a commission at the Philosophical Faculty debated the award of the *title* of extraordinary professor (not to be confused with a real professorship, which came with the status of a civil servant) in 1927, the philosopher Robert Reininger pointed out that there was "no favorable sentiment" in the faculty.<sup>29</sup> Two more years passed until Bühler was listed as *Privatdozentin* with the title of extraordinary professor in the staff directory. A sad climax—and a direct result of continuing attacks against political dissidents by German-national but also Catholic forces—was the murder of Moritz Schlick in the main building of the University of Vienna on 22 June 1936. Schlick was shot dead by a former student, Hans Nelböck, who had made death threats against Schlick on two previous occasions. The murder was largely exonerated in an article published in the journal *Sturm über Österreich* by Johann Sauter, a philosopher and student of Othmar Spann. Sauter differentiated between a Christian and a Jewish philosophy (Schlick was not of Jewish descent), and claimed that Schlick was not a Christian philosopher and should not have been teaching at the Philosophical Faculty (Erker 2021: 214–217).<sup>30</sup> A plaque now remembers the assassination at the location where Schlick was murdered. "An intellectual climate poisoned by racism and intolerance had contributed to the act," states the inscription. Else Frenkel definitely also experienced this poisoned intellectual climate.

## CONCLUSION

The University of Vienna was an institution under the auspices of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education. As such the Basic Law on the General Rights of Citizens of 1867 and the Federal Constitutional Law of 1920 were legally binding. Nonetheless, Austrian universities became centres of antidemocratic tendencies in the interwar period. A large section of the student body, as well as of the university teaching staff, held liberal and democratic views. But these actors did not hold positions of power. Instead, through perfectly coordinated collaboration, their ideological opponents became rectors, deans and officials in the student union. It was they who determined the development of Austria's leading university and enforced the exclusion of several groups. By 1923, the academic

<sup>24</sup> Carnap was without religious confession in 1924, according to his registration form. WStLA, 2.5.1.4.K11, Carnap Rudolf, 18. 5. 1891.

<sup>25</sup> VUA, Philosophical Faculty, *Nationale*, summer semester 1929 and winter semester 1929.

<sup>26</sup> VUA, PH PA 249, fol. 29, Dean of the Philosophical Faculty to the Federal Ministry for Education, 19.12.1933.

<sup>27</sup> VUA, PH PA 249 fol. 17, Commission report on the habilitation attempt by Dr. Egon Brunswik (Psychology), 7.7.1933.

<sup>28</sup> VUA, PH PA 249, fol. 15, Dean of the Philosophical Faculty to Egon Brunswik, 21.2.1934.

<sup>29</sup> VUA, PH PA 249, fol. 21, Protocol, 19.3.1927.

<sup>30</sup> Ehs, Tamara, Johann(es) Sauter, *650 plus – Geschichte der Universität Wien*. Internet: [https://gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at/index.php?person\\_single\\_id=33757](https://gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at/index.php?person_single_id=33757) (accessed: 5.12.2021); Kniefacz, Katharina, Der Mord an Prof. Moritz Schlick, Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialism at the University of Vienna in 1938. Internet: <https://geschichte.univie.ac.at/de/artikel/der-mord-prof-moritz-schlick> (accessed: 5.12.2021)

authorities of all Austrian universities and colleges (*Hochschulen*) had recognised the Deutsche Studentenschaft as the only representative body of “German”—in the sense of “Aryan”—students. Appointments of Jewish, liberal and left-wing scholars occurred more and more seldom. Antidemocratic and fascist attitudes were a common denominator within these driving forces. To put it in slightly exaggerated terms, the University of Vienna can thus be characterized as an *authoritarian institution*.

Gender discrimination was also widespread in this institution, as well as in Austria in general, where women’s representation in parliament remained under 6 percent until 1975 (Rose 2008: 97). In her study of more than 400 Jewish university women, Harriet Pass Freidenreich concludes that these women “had been even more likely to encounter obstacles and hostility due to their gender than because of their Jewish origin” (Freidenreich 2002: 165). However, it is questionable whether this finding also applies to the University of Vienna, where antisemitism had become the dominant theme in the 1920s (the exclusion of women from the DSt was obviously never a matter of discussion). Misogyny was still present but it remained an undercurrent and was much less visible. Without doubt, Frenkel was aware of the interrelationship between antisemitism and antifeminism, and that it was “too much” (Marietta Blau) to be able to forge a stable academic career. She was witness to antisemitic excesses and the discrimination against her teachers and academic colleagues: against Charlotte Bühler, whose efforts to transfer her habilitation to Vienna almost failed, and against Edgar Zilsel, whose habilitation attempt failed under scandalous circumstances, to give but two examples. These antisemitic and anti-liberal campaigns reached their tragic culmination in the murder of Moritz Schlick in 1936.

All these personal experiences very likely formed an important impulse for research on the personalities of the discriminators. (This applies not only to Frenkel-Brunswik but also to Marie Jahoda, who had a similar biographical background and contributed to another influential and famous book on antisemitism and racism: “Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation”). Being born as a Jewish woman, the experience of gender discrimination and antisemitism at the University of Vienna definitely shaped the life and work of Else Frenkel.

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ARTICLE

# Allowing for Ambiguity in the Social Sciences

## Else Frenkel-Brunswik's methodological practice in *The Authoritarian Personality*

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### Abstract

This paper presents an assessment of Else Frenkel-Brunswik's contributions to the social sciences by reconstructing both her research practice and methodological reflections on this practice, which are most prominent in the qualitative methodology used in her parts of the study *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950). After a brief discussion of the study's general methodology, we contextualize the qualitative parts done by Frenkel-Brunswik along her earlier lines of research, looking at the impact of her pre-emigration influences of logical empiricism, academic psychology, and psychoanalysis in Vienna as well as her experience of persecution and exile. We argue that her understanding of ambiguity was key to her methodology from an early stage onwards, and was key to her distinctive confrontation with Nazi psychologist Erich R. Jaensch. Building upon findings from the Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria (AGSÖ) in Graz and the Institute for Jewish Research (YIVO) in New York, this article reevaluates Else Frenkel-Brunswik's epistemological position within the context of the study *The Authoritarian Personality*, allowing for a full appreciation of her role and contributions to the field of research on authoritarianism.

### Keywords

Else Frenkel-Brunswik, *The Authoritarian Personality*, history of social science methodology, psychoanalysis and sociology, Theodor W. Adorno, historical praxeology, mixed methods, research on authoritarianism

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### INTRODUCTION

To this day, the study *The Authoritarian Personality*, written collectively by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in the late 1940s (Adorno et al. 1950), is considered to be an outstanding example of interdisciplinarity in social research and one of the central works on authoritarianism. For decades, the study's strengths and weaknesses were widely discussed (see Christie and Jahoda 1954; Stone, Lederer and Christie 1993), yet criticism and



acknowledgement mainly focused on the quantitative parts, above all the infamous F scale that measured a potentially “fascist” set of attitudes. With notable exceptions (Hopf 1993; Fleck 2011), the predominantly qualitative parts of *The Authoritarian Personality*—and correspondingly their main author, Else Frenkel-Brunswik—were given scant attention in these debates and eventually fell into oblivion. It seems that the recent rediscovery of “the authoritarian personality,” influenced by current phenomena of authoritarianism in Europe, Latin America, and the U.S., has resulted in a reemerging interest in the study’s broader context, not least the impact of Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s work (Marasco 2018; Gordon 2021).

This paper tries to reconstruct Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s methodology used in *The Authoritarian Personality*, and discusses this against the background of a historical analysis of the methodology she developed in her work in general. In our archival research, we focus both on Frenkel-Brunswik’s practices of social research as well as her own methodological reflection of these practices.<sup>1</sup> The article thus aims to undertake a sociogenetic inquiry into her work (Bourdieu 1993; Heilbron 2011). An approach like this is not an end in itself. Instead, with its reflexive focus on the conditions of the possibility of knowledge produced in *The Authoritarian Personality*, it not only makes visible its diverse influences, but ultimately adds to the discussion of the many ways in which the study is providing inspiration for today’s research into current authoritarianism (e.g. Gordon 2018; Steinert 2007a). Some of the questions to be dealt with are: What was Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s role in the research team of *The Authoritarian Personality*? How did she follow up on her earlier work carried out both before being exiled and after her flight to the United States? In which ways did her parts of the study come in for criticism by the numerous critics of *The Authoritarian Personality*?

Firstly, a brief discussion of the study’s general methodology is followed by a closer examination of the qualitative parts done by Else Frenkel-Brunswik. From there her work is contextualized within her earlier lines of research, with consideration given to the impact of her pre-emigration influences of logical empiricism, academic psychology, and psychoanalysis, as well as her experience of persecution and exile. We will argue that her most outstanding conceptual contribution to dealing with ambiguity on a scientific level is her publication *Motivation and Behavior* (1942), which lays the groundwork for her later research. Her understanding of ambiguity was not only put to use in her methodology in *The Authoritarian Personality*, e.g. through her mindful way of interpreting data, but also in her confrontation with Nazi psychology, personified by Erich R. Jaensch. Since Frenkel-Brunswik’s approach to ambiguity not only implies ambiguity in empirical data but also includes awareness of ambiguity in her own methodology, we consider this a confrontation on an epistemological level. Building upon these findings, this article submits a reevaluation of Frenkel-Brunswik’s epistemological position within the framework of *The Authoritarian Personality* and beyond. It will be argued that only a detailed study of the theoretical and methodological practice of Else Frenkel-Brunswik allows for a full appreciation of her approach in the light of today’s social research on

<sup>1</sup> Contemporary methodological literature commonly distinguishes between practice and methodology, with the first meaning the many practices of doing social research from reading and conducting interviews to writing and analyzing data, and the latter referring to a theoretical reflection and justification of how all this is done (for a recent discussion see Ploder and Hamann 2021). In our paper, we deal with both under the term “methodological practice,” thus aiming to avoid a rigorous distinction between theory and practice of social research. In our view, the distinction is useful insofar as it is concerned with bringing the neglected “smaller” practices of research out of their shadowy existence, and with implicitly questioning the power relations that play a role in the canonization of some practices as legitimate methods while excluding others. However, we are not concerned with questions of “legitimacy” here.

authoritarianism. Focusing on the methodological level is understood as simply another way of engaging with the study's contents (Hyman and Sheatsley 1954, 70).

The source materials for this study are the archival materials available in the Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria (AGSÖ) in Graz, Austria, which holds parts of the estate of Else Frenkel-Brunswik, above all her correspondence and unpublished typescripts of later publications, and in the Institute for Jewish Research (YIVO) in New York, which holds the papers of the *American Jewish Committee*, i.e. draft reports, memoranda, and some interview protocols of *The Authoritarian Personality* study.

### **ELSE FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK'S CHAPTERS IN *THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY***

The methodological approach of *The Authoritarian Personality* was based, on the one hand, on questionnaires using scales for "Anti-Semitism," "Ethnocentrism," and "Fascism," but on the other it also involved detailed interviews. These were based, among other things, on "thematic apperception tests" used to examine authoritarian personality patterns as "readinesses for responses" (Adorno et al. 1950: 5) to a potential fascist "offer." The F-scale identified the underlying dimensions of authoritarianism in the following variables: a rigid adherence to middle-class values (conventionalism), authoritarian submission to idealized moral authorities of an ingroup, authoritarian aggression against outgroups perceived to break rules, an opposition to introspection (anti-intracception), a stereotypical belief in mythical factors, a way of thinking that revolved strongly around the categories of power and harshness, a generalized destructiveness and cynicism, a comprehensive and far-reaching projectivity and, finally, an overemphasis on sexuality (ibid.: 222–279). Respondents scoring high on these scale items, i.e. "High Scorers," were linked conceptually to an underlying authoritarian personality syndrome, whereas "Low Scorers" were thought to be (relatively) free of prejudice.

Despite being interpreted as a study on the individual psychological causes of authoritarian attitudes, *The Authoritarian Personality* study was in fact reluctant to make statements on causal relations at all. Statistical correlations revealed that the authoritarianism shown among High Scorers was not connected to a certain political ideology, social background, intelligence, or education, but rather varied widely. "Fascism" was not reduced to a psychological mindset, as some interpreters have stated. On the contrary: In Theodor W. Adorno's view, most clearly stated in his "Remarks on The Authoritarian Personality" published only recently in German (Adorno 2019a) and English (Adorno 2019b), High Scorers were not to be understood as the exception and therefore a singular pathologic phenomenon but rather as the new conventional norm, the individual resemblance of a pathological society that had the potential to produce fascism.

Besides her co-work on the scale construction and the quantitative evaluation of questionnaires, Else Frenkel-Brunswik was also responsible for the "clinical" in-depth interviews, i.e. semi-structured interviews following an interview guide, to which the interviewers did not have to adhere rigidly. These interviews were conducted by several professionally trained interviewers. Frenkel-Brunswik's supervision of the qualitative research part included setting up the guide, training the interviewers, evaluating and interpreting the results, and writing up the case studies.

Frenkel-Brunswik's interpretation of these interviews by and large supported the results presented in the preceding quantitative chapters of the study. However, it would be misleading to state that

they only confirmed earlier results. To be sure: The interviewees were ultimately selected for their high or low scores on the scales, as the authors noted in the publication. But it was the exploratory interviews that led to lengthy discussions of hypothesis for the different items in the questionnaires and, likewise, the first versions of questionnaires informed the interview guide for the clinical interviews. There is thus no linear and separate development of the two methods used. Rather, both the questionnaires and interview guides changed over time—their respective results cannot be separated; rather they were intrinsically entangled. In fact, many of the study's later famous results had already been published by Else Frenkel-Brunswik and R. Nevitt Sanford (Frenkel-Brunswik and Sanford 1945)—to such a degree that after a meeting in 1944 following a conference organized by Ernst Simmel (see Simmel 1946), Leo Löwenthal wrote to Max Horkheimer that by uniting the two alliances, the Institute for Social Research and the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group, the former would get “an affiliated field work which, for the time being, does not cost us a cent” (quoted in Ash 1998: 265).<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the structure of the in-depth interviews, it can be stated first and foremost that each interview was the same, with manifest questions and latent, “underlying” questions on the dynamics of the individual personality: asking a person about his/her vocation should thus also determine his/her attitude towards work in general, enquiries about income the degree of “money-mindedness,” questions on one's family history should reveal not only sociological classifications of the family background, but also aspects of parent-child dynamics like the father and mother imago. Asked about their views on minorities, the interviews should reveal “the cognitive and emotional line drawn by the subject between ingroup and outgroup and the characteristics he specifically ascribed to each” (Adorno et al. 1950: 322), in order to determine whether the respondent had negative experiences or was entirely stereotyped. However, in contrast to the “questionnaire highs,” who quite frankly and openly expressed ethnocentric and antisemitic opinions, the “personality highs” in the interviews were less uniform in their statements and seldom High Scorers in all respects (see Adorno et al. 1950: 333).

In general, corresponding traits established in the quantitative scales were observed in the interviews. As concerns the stance towards authorities, High Scorers showed an idealization of their parents and a tendency of submission to their authority:

Starting from this discussion of family relationships, subsequent presentation will show the very pronounced consistency, in the typical high-scoring subject, with respect to a materialistic, utilitarian view of interpersonal and social relationships. On the surface this may seem a kind of realism; actually it is pseudorealism, since it ultimately leads to an impoverishment and to hostilities in human relationships. The low scorer is of course by no means free of such trends although they are on the whole less pronounced in him. (ibid.: 356)

This is an example for Frenkel-Brunswik's careful manner of interpretation, since she was obviously reluctant to idealize the “Low Scorers” as the alleged opposite of the High Scorers. The latter nevertheless were the main concern of the research. High Scorers were said to split off a behavioral façade from the rest of their personality, leading to a “break between the conscious and unconscious layers in the authoritarian personality,” (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 265) as she later wrote in a paper defending the study against its critics. Her main point was that ambivalence was hidden, neglected and

<sup>2</sup> To be clear: Sanford, on the other hand, was also well aware of the Institute's corresponding funds from the AJC. Therefore, the initial phase of the study was underpinned by a shared pragmatic approach towards each other.

denied in this break—handled, e.g. in the case of the mother and father imagos, only by “establishing two separate images, one positive and one negative (good and bad women), without, however, being able really to love either of them” (Adorno et al. 1950: 404). Values were not integrated as an internal super-ego instance but feared (and resented) as external authorities. “Readiness to exchange these authorities mainly in the direction of a better bargain is one of the consequences of these attitudes” (ibid.: 455), resulting in a kind of potentially free-floating readiness to submit to authorities—as well as to project the underlying aggression onto outgroups:

In order to keep unacceptable tendencies and impulses out of consciousness, rigid defenses have to be maintained. Any loosening of the absoluteness of these defenses involves the danger of a breaking through of the repressed tendencies. Impulses and inclinations repressed too severely, too suddenly, or too early in life do not lose their dynamic strength, however. On the contrary, abrupt or unsuccessful repression prevents rather than helps in their control and mastery. An ego thus weakened is more in danger of becoming completely overwhelmed by the repressed forces. Greater rigidity of defenses is necessary to cope with such increased threat. In this vicious circle, impulses are not prevented from breaking out in uncontrolled ways. Basically unmodified instinctual impulses lurk everywhere beneath the surface, narrowing considerably the content of the ego so that it must be kept constantly on the lookout. (ibid.: 480).

With this kind of a super-imposed, rigid cognitive structure, there is no place for ambivalence and ambiguity in the High Scorer’s personality, Frenkel-Brunswik concluded. From a political standpoint, however, it would also be bad advice to remove the current prejudice, since “the removal of prejudice from the potentially fascist person may well endanger his psychological balance. The social implications of such a step have therefore to be carefully anticipated and preventive measures to be devised in advance” (ibid.: 480f.). In short: For Else Frenkel-Brunswik, there were no short-cut solutions to the problem of authoritarianism, either from a research or from a therapeutic, pedagogical, or political point of view. But what was research design that did not take short cuts supposed to look like? In order to understand why Frenkel-Brunswik’s answer to this question appears to be relevant, we have to look back at the genesis of her methodological approach.

## **A THOROUGH LOOK AT THE SURFACE AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF DEPTH: A SOCIOGENETIC VIEW OF FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK’S METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS**

### *Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s earlier works*

Else Frenkel was born in August 1908 in the city of Lemberg (today Lviv in Ukraine). Before World War I, her family moved to Lower Austria and finally Vienna, where Frenkel initially studied mathematics and physics, then philosophy and psychology. At the age of 22 she completed her studies and was soon a member of the inner circle around Karl and Charlotte Bühler at the Department of Psychology at the University of Vienna, where she was responsible for the Department’s biographical research. She started to undergo psychoanalysis twice, once with Ernst Kris, a fact she hid from the Böhlers. After Austria’s so-called “Anschluss” to the Third Reich, Else Frenkel fled to the U.S. in June

1938, just in time to escape Nazi persecution, and started working at the University of California at Berkeley.<sup>3</sup>

Frenkel-Brunswik's personal experience with both psychology and psychoanalysis had led her to value both in their own right, the idea being a separate, thorough study of psychological surface phenomena<sup>4</sup> followed by careful interpretations "informed" or "inspired," as she called it, by psychoanalysis. The basis for both was the collection of as much material as possible by as many available methods as possible—a "broad matrix of statements" (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 263). The structure of her chapters in *The Authoritarian Personality* resembles this. They start with detailed descriptive surface phenomena and end with depth interpretations.

In the 1940s, this was far from trivial. The idea that attitudes could be "measured" had only been formulated by psychologists L.L. Thurstone and Gordon Allport in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Feck 2020: 219f.). More generally, it was not until the 1930s that interviewing became a "problem," involving observation and thinking about, as Lazarsfeld put it, the "art of asking why." Until then, interviews were mostly conducted in a manner which can only be called spontaneously positivistic: interviewers asked experts ("informants") to provide information on something of which they had superior knowledge (see Platt 2012).

This was not the approach Else Frenkel-Brunswik had in mind for *The Authoritarian Personality*. While making use of standard interview methodology, she aimed for further improvement and the development of new methods of interviewing and interpreting.

The subject's view of his own life, as revealed in the course of the interview, may be assumed to contain real information together with wishful – and fearful – distortions. Known methods had to be utilized, therefore, and new ones developed to differentiate the more genuine, basic feelings, attitudes, and strivings from those of a more compensatory character behind which are hidden tendencies, frequently unknown to the subject himself, which are contrary to those manifested or verbalized on a surface level. To cope with such distortions cues are available or may be developed to guide interpretations. The methodological safeguarding of such interpretations is one of the central problems in the approach to the interviews. (Adorno et al. 1950: 293f.)

In developing these methods, Frenkel-Brunswik drew on her own research. One of her first articles after her emigration to the U.S. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1940) can be seen as a paper at the intersection between the Old and New Worlds. Being a reflection of her experiences in Vienna, she later described the paper as "a blue print for future work which I have been following more closely than I had been aware,"<sup>5</sup> thus becoming a maxim for her research philosophy. She wrote that interpretations had to be checked against surface data, in principle arguing for a methodological three-step-model from the surface to the depth to the surface. "In thus returning ultimately to the surface region, we will have attempted a deep psychology of the surface (*tiefe Oberflächenpsychologie*), rather than indulged in

<sup>3</sup> For more biographical information on her life in Vienna and during exile, see Paier 1996, Kranebitter 2022, as well as the introduction to this special issue and the relevant contributions by Christian Fleck and Andreas Huber.

<sup>4</sup> "We may sum up by saying that while psychoanalysis has been first in seeing the necessity of a distinction between the manifest and the latent, its conceptual apparatus has been inadequate in dealing with the manifest layer in its own right." (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a, 269).

<sup>5</sup> Else Frenkel-Brunswik: Letter to Fillmore H. Sanford, December 23, 1952 (AGSÖ 25.1.96.).

a superficial psychology of the depth (*oberflächliche Tiefenpsychologie*).” (Frenkel-Brunswik 1974 [1940]: 57).

When starting her empirical research in the U.S. at the Institute of Child Welfare in Berkeley, and thanks to a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (Heiman and Grant 1974: 7), Frenkel-Brunswik followed her methodology developed in earlier works while enhancing it extensively. In *Wunsch und Pflicht im Aufbau des menschlichen Lebens* (Wishes and Duties in the Structure of Human Life), written with Edith Weißkopf (1937), the authors had examined 400 biographies from published books, self-reports, and interviews, and had differentiated between external data (behavior), internal data (experience), and data on achievements. They used this in order to prove Charlotte Bühler’s thesis of the “dependence on age of the individual profile of wishes and duties” (ibid.: 6), using Bühler’s five-stage-model for the course of human life. Most of the book was devoted to the surface study of behavior and achievement. This trained Frenkel-Brunswik in her descriptions of behavior and behavioral results, as was the case with “life course diagrams” of musical celebrities like Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner (see figure 1).

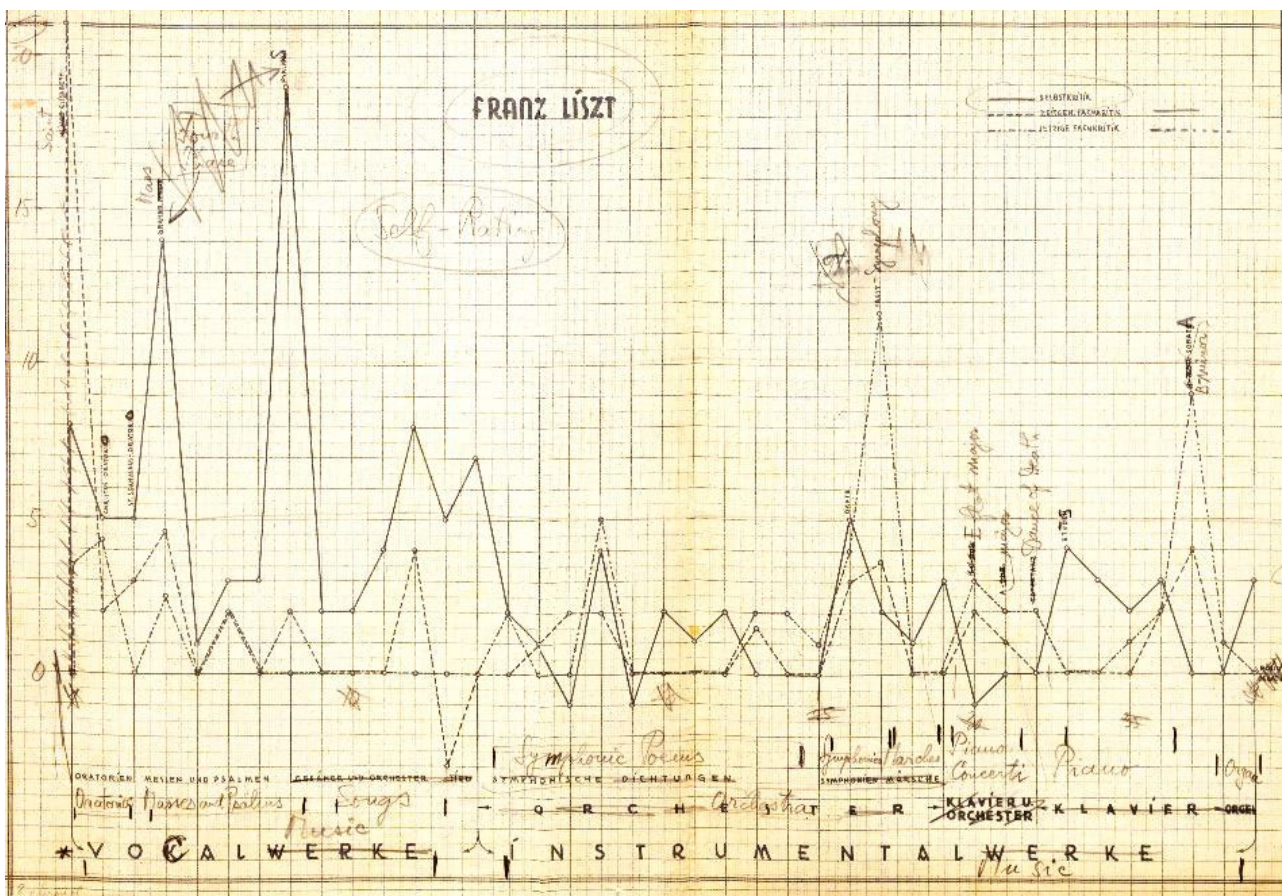


Figure 1: Graph showing an “Erfolgskurve” (“success curve”) for composer Franz Liszt, made in 1931/1932 by Else Frenkel-Brunswik during her project “Self-Rating of Achievements of Outstanding Personalities” (Source: AGSÖ 25.3.2.1.). In our view, this document shows that Else Frenkel-Brunswik not only intended to continue working on the project after her flight from Nazi Austria, but also did so, expressed by the English “corrections” on her German origin. While there is a typescript to be found in the AGSÖ, to our knowledge there is no English publication of this research. The archive document thus symbolizes neither a simple continuation of her practices nor a total break with them.

If at all concerned with perception, the authors focused on the changes to wishes with age (ibid.: 151–155). However, they also noted that their interviews, aimed at collecting surface data, would ultimately serve as data that revealed some form of reference to the unconsciousness.

In the course of the interview, we also asked appropriate intermediary questions on a case-by-case basis, which, however, were never suggestive, but served exclusively to clarify what the test person had already said spontaneously. We also insisted on keeping the statements as concrete as possible. All our questioning was intended only as a framework; it was not intended to be answered so much succinctly and precisely as to stimulate more of an informal conversation with the experimenter and to steer it in those directions which particularly interested us. The physician, who lets the patient tell him the history of his illness, helping him by encouragement and clarifying questions, is in a similar situation as we are; also, our method of our main experiments too is that of ‘anamnesis’. (Frenkel and Weißkopf 1937: 7; authors’ translation)

References to psychoanalysis, as the wish to conduct interpretations of underlying drives, were mentioned in this book (see ibid.: 8f.), albeit in hidden form. In a letter to Paul Lazarsfeld, dated October 1953, she referred to earlier discussions between the two about the role of Karl and Charlotte Bühler in their lives. Frenkel-Brunswik mentioned that while following a strictly behavioristic approach, she had already emphasized in this book that not everything was to be taken at face value. “Today, it is somewhat amusing to me that I put these considerations, which were already very important to me at that time, in small print and I wonder now whether I hoped that Charlotte would not read the small print.”<sup>6</sup>

Her simultaneous interest in behaviorism and psychoanalysis made her explore methodological ways of dealing with both the surface and depth layers of personality in a thorough, non-reductionist manner. With her first publication in the U.S., which came out as early as 1939 and used material gathered previously in Vienna, she developed the idea of quantitatively correlating “depth ratings” by expert raters with subjects’ self-reported data on behavior. In this first article published in exile, *Mechanisms of Self-Deception* (1939), she researched the auto-illusions of 40 of her former colleagues at the Bühler Institute:

The present study aims at an experimental investigation of illusions about oneself, and also seeks to discover formal criteria which may be used for diagnosing such illusions: The study is based upon a comparison between observations of the actual conduct of a group of students at the University of Vienna, on the one hand, and various kinds of statements made by these same students with regard to their behavior within the Institute, their ‘guiding principles’ of conduct, and their ‘demands upon the environment’ (i.e., their desires concerning the organization of the Institute), on the other. (ibid.: 409)

Their reported behavior and attitudes were contrasted with reports from “independent judges” who knew the students well, rating “in free form” the subjects’ personality traits, as they interpreted them. By operationalizing their ratings into statistical categories, Else Frenkel-Brunswik correlated an index of overt contradictions between self-reported and interpreted traits (ibid.: 411). In this way she

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Else Frenkel-Brunswik to Paul Lazarsfeld, October 13, 1953 (AGSÖ 25.1.56). Bringing up this episode, she went on to reflect on how much their “identities” had stayed the same despite all the changes. “It was indeed very satisfying to see you again and to speculate with you and then by myself about the changes and developments we have all undergone without losing our basic identities.” (ibid.)

determined the traits with the greatest discrepancies and general trends of the distortions. Thus, she found trends of “distortions into the opposite” (e.g. he who lacks sincerity mentions “sincerity under all conditions” as his guiding principle), of omissions, shifting of orders, and shifting of emphasis (ibid.: 412f.) etc. In her sample, 27% of behaviors and 66% of attitudes were reported incorrectly when compared to the expert ratings (ibid.: 414). She concluded that in the majority of cases, reported attitudes were “life lies” and desires rather than “real” attitudes, which should and could not be taken away from the subjects themselves. “In a certain respect, auto-illusions about behavior may be considered comforting; and helpful, especially in the case of deep-seated defects. They may become systematized into a form of merciful ‘life-lies,’ as they have been dramatically called by Henrik Ibsen.” (ibid.).

### *“Motivation and Behavior”: Statistical analysis of depth*

In our effort to reconstruct the development of Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s methodology as realized in *The Authoritarian Personality*, her prior study *Motivation and Behavior* (1942) is of great significance, since it can be seen as a comprehensive example of how Frenkel-Brunswik strove to deepen her understanding of personality, including the reconceptualization of her former concepts and thoughts.

The title of the study already pointed towards widening the classic behavioristic perspective on behavior by also including motivational aspects. Frenkel-Brunswik neither conceived motivation in behavioristic terms as a kind of internalized duplication of behavior (Frenkel-Brunswik 1942: 126), nor did she adopt “normative psychology” concepts of motivation she classified as implausible, since they were not verifiable qua behavior. In her view, the inadequacy of both approaches manifested the need for a new methodology, but also the criteria this new approach had to meet, namely supplying a deeper understanding of personality than behaviorism while also being verifiable through the observation of behavior. This requirement was met by two points we consider to be basic conceptual elements: (1) a constructivist conception of the notion of “drives,” and (2) a growing distance between data and interpretation, which led to her dictum of a “closeness of opposites.”

*Motivation and Behavior* was based on the observation and rating of the behavior of 150 students of public schools in Oakland, California (ibid.: 145), by three independent “judges” who had known the children for more than four years. The raters had diverse professional backgrounds ranging from school counseling to academic and clinical psychology, while one of them “[...] had a closer contact with psychoanalysis.” (ibid.: 147) A list of nine “drives” was handed to the judges, introduced as constructs distilled from psychoanalysis: the drives for autonomy, social acceptance, achievement, recognition, abasement, aggression, succorance, control, and escape (ibid.: 143f.). The judges were then encouraged to reach their assessment on assumed motivations, rather than similarity of displayed behavior (ibid.: 139). Apart from the ratings, there was further independent data collected in the form of the children’s self-reports (via achievement and attitude tests) and projective data (i.e. stories they wrote and drawings they created).

The ratings were reviewed by statistical means, as they were validated by inter-rater-agreement (ibid.: 150f) and standardized by averaging the three raters’ judgements, thus reducing “personal bias” (ibid.: 136; 160f.). Subsequently, these standardized drive-ratings were correlated with each other, as well as correlated with behavioral data, e.g. complementary ratings of behavior in social



situations (ibid., 183f). Finally, there was the intent of verifying the results with independent data such as self-ratings (ibid.: 241) and projective material (ibid.: 253f.).

The first accomplishment of this study we want to focus on is Frenkel-Brunswik's efforts to gain empirical access to a new dimension of personality: motivation. Moving beyond a behavioral perspective, the specific concept of "drive" applied in this study was inspired by psychoanalysis, while explicitly differing considerably from it:

The drives are here not conceived as faculty-like substantive units or vital agents [...]. The concept of drive implies a type of construct which may most economically and fruitfully integrate behavior data so that patterns of cause and effect may be recognized within the personality. [...] Drives may be conceived as comparable to the few factors found by factor analysis to account for many apparently diverse abilities. That is, a comparatively small number of drives in particular combination may account for a wide array of behavioral manifestations. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1942: 129)

Consequently, this concept of drive acknowledges flexibility, allowing a multitude of possible manifestations in behavior. The concept of alternative manifestations—being a result of the author's own experiences in psychoanalytic therapy (Frenkel-Brunswik 1940: 191)—found its implementation in methodological considerations, as well as its empirical verification via partial correlation (Frenkel-Brunswik 1942: 217f.).

The second point we consider essential regarding this study was Frenkel-Brunswik's efforts to move towards an objectivation of interpretation. The use of independent judges, drive-scales, and statistical means to standardize drive-ratings allowed for a comparison and "objective evaluation." An example of this is the correlation of the individual rater's own personality to the personality ratings he or she gave on a certain child (ibid.: 162). "The clinician relies on assumed relationships between cues and interpretation and often these assumptions of relationship are made only implicitly; here an attempt is made to analyze objectively the cues which have determined the interpretations of the raters." (ibid.: 136).

Throughout her study, Frenkel-Brunswik stated the necessity for concepts to become more abstract and dynamic in order to integrate more complex data (Frenkel-Brunswik 1942: 126). Explaining a wide range of behavior, assumptions are made about motivational tendencies that may not always be directly present in the behavior, but will eventually be verified through behavior as observed by raters. This more abstract consideration of data results in the possibility of one cause having alternating manifestations, e.g. destructive tendencies that can be shown in aggressive behavior as well as in "*exaggerated friendliness*" (ibid.: 127).

Any of the nine drives could be thought of as a tendency present in alternative manifestations in behavior.<sup>7</sup> Asking raters to use intuitional inference when rating the behavior of a single child made

<sup>7</sup> Frenkel-Brunswik compared this kind of explanation to the way of modeling explanations in factor analysis and structural equation models, comparing drives to their latent variables (cf. ibid.: 134, as well as the paper by Peter Schmidt in this special issue). Interestingly, at the same time she criticized this statistical analogy, the problem being that a latent variable "offers no way of handling the problem of alternative manifestations" (ibid.: 134). The cues between manifest and latent variable(s) being constant, structural equation models would still be too static, not allowing for dynamic concepts and thus the interpretation of situational differences.

their very process of inference observable and quantifiable in the last instance, i.e. it observed the observer himself:

Essentially, the procedure consisted in inferring motivation from behavior observed in a wide variety of situations. ‘Intuitive’ judgements about motivational tendencies were obtained in the form of standardized ratings from a number of judges well acquainted with the adolescents. These ratings, alongside of other, more rational, forms of inference about motivational tendencies, were utilized as a guide to dynamic personality. (ibid.: 134)

The observation of motivational or “clinical” ratings lay at the core of Frenkel-Brunswik’s methodological striving for an objectivation of interpretation:

Their advantage of the customary clinical judgements is [...] fourfold. First, the use of a rating scale permits quantification. Second, several judges can be used simultaneously, giving judgements in comparable terms, so that their ‘average hypothesis’ can be used instead of hypotheses of a single judge. The problem of reliability can thus be approached. The clinician uses the ‘bias’ of one observer, namely of himself; in our case it is the average and thus the more impersonal ‘bias’ of several observers. Third, the clinician relies on assumed relationships between cues and interpretation and often these assumptions of relationship are made only implicitly; here an attempt is made to analyze objectively the cues which have determined the interpretations of the raters. Fourth, the number of subjects can be increased with comparability of measures maintained. (ibid.: 136).

By integrating different source materials—from psychological and physical measurements and the ratings by adult raters to the children’s self-reports and projective materials like stories or artistic creations (ibid.: 138)—a variety of statistical correlation techniques could be used to check and balance psychoanalytically inspired interpretative procedures: “In conclusion, the present study uses statistical methods in a domain which until recently has been chiefly reserved to the clinical, ideographic approach. The attempt is thus made to combine exactitude, characteristic of the statistical approach, with the intuitive insightfulness, characteristic of the clinical approach.” (ibid.: 140).

In our view, these methodological ideas developed by Frenkel-Brunswik in her earlier works—especially in *Motivation and Behavior*—found their way into *The Authoritarian Personality*, thus exemplifying the influence Frenkel-Brunswik had had on the overall methodology of this study. There too, Else Frenkel-Brunswik would make use of different raters and thus of an objectivation of interpretation, with a reflexive observation of the rater and his or her position. In other words: Instead of being an objectivation of the observed, the focus is shifted from the single case, from the “problematic” or allegedly pathologic child or High Scorer, to the manifestation of “drives” in observable situational behavior, i.e. to the manifestation of the *potential* for fascism in certain individuals, not their allegedly static attitudes or their “personality” in the last instance.

In *Motivation and Behavior*, however, Frenkel-Brunswik still gave primacy to the statistical treatment and quantitative evaluation of observations, leaving out much of the material she talked about, especially the projective material. We would argue that this positivist angle, understood in a narrower sense, was gradually given up in her chapters of *The Authoritarian Personality*,<sup>8</sup> and even

<sup>8</sup> To reach a better understanding of Frenkel-Brunswik’s development from *Motivation and Behavior* (1942) to *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950) it is necessary to mention her Social Science Research Council fellowship in 1942/1943, which permitted her the intensive study of anthropology and sociology. In a letter she describes this time as “almost traumatic in its richness of stimulation. The last three months I spent pursuing my anthropological interests [...].”

more so in her later research on authoritarianism. There, she held on to the idea of ratings and their statistical “control,” but less rigidly so—which is why her chapters in *The Authoritarian Personality* can be considered the most complex manifestation of her methodological ideas.

Before concluding with some observations in this respect, however, we want to dig deeper into her methodology by elaborating on a chapter of Frenkel-Brunswik’s personal and academic life which is seldom discussed at length—the way Frenkel-Brunswik confronted Nazi social science.

### **CONFRONTING NAZI PSYCHOLOGY: FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK’S ANALYSIS OF ERNST RUDOLF JAENSCH**

A crucial matter in Frenkel-Brunswik’s academic life was her intense discussion of Nazi psychology, as revealed through her close reading of Ernst Rudolf Jaensch (1883–1940), chairman of the German Society of Psychology (see Geuter 1988: 572; Wolfradt et al. 2017: 210). Never formulating a consistent critique of Jaensch’ work in one single paper, instead Frenkel-Brunswik dealt with it in her various papers (see Frenkel-Brunswik 1949; 1952; 1954b; 1954c; 1954d), essentially because it was a rather general issue for her. This also distinguishes her from many other German and Austrian émigrés, including Adorno (Adorno 1972: 500), who most often avoided any kind of reference to Nazi social science at all, simply labeling it non-scientific (see Christ and Suderland 2014; Kranebitter and Reinprecht 2019). Referring to Jaensch’s typology of personality in “*The Counter-Type*”<sup>9</sup> (Jaensch 1938), Frenkel-Brunswik wrote:

Jaensch concentrates on a very articulate description of the most desirable personality type from the standpoint of Nazi ideology and [...] this type shows marked similarities to our description of the authoritarian personality. The fact that Jaensch glorifies this pattern while our attitude is one of reserve, or criticism, adds to the interest of this parallelism. The parallel delineation lends confidence to our interpretation of our results, since they are concurred in by psychologists glorifying the authoritarian personality. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 252)<sup>10</sup>

Taking this at face value, historians of psychology have sometimes pointed to this parallelism, of linking perception types to types of personality (Benetka 2020: 92), thus accepting Frenkel-Brunswik’s parts in *The Authoritarian Personality* as a mere negation of Jaensch’s work. In our view, methodological and epistemological similarities as well as differences require a closer look. Examining this prima facie parallelism of Frenkel-Brunswik and Jaensch in greater depth leads us to the conclusion that the authors’ methodology and epistemology differ significantly, thus rendering the

I hope to be able to write soon an article on trends in personality research as influenced by psychiatry and psychoanalysis on the one hand and anthropology on the other.” (Letter from Else Frenkel-Brunswik to Percival Symonds, October 18, 1943, AGSÖ 25.1.107)

<sup>9</sup> Authors’ translation of the German original (“Der Gegentypus”). The translation in literature is both “anti-type” and “counter-type.”

<sup>10</sup> This is followed by the view that the resemblance was a peculiar form of corroboration of the findings in *The Authoritarian Personality*: “The glorification of rigid stimulus-response relationships by Jaensch and the assertion of their predominance in the Nazi ideal fits with our finding that ‘intolerance of ambiguity’ is a frequent accompaniment of ethnocentrism.” (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 253)

rather technical comparison of the respective typologies insufficient. In what follows, we give an introduction to Jaensch's typology and elaborate on what differentiates this from Else Frenkel-Brunswik's.

In "*The Counter-Type*," Jaensch distinguished two types of personality that differed in their ways of perception: the *I-typus*, showing an integrated personality (Jaensch 1938: 105), and his counterpart, the so-called *S-typus*, defined by his lack of personality integration. The term *S-typus* refers to Jaensch's assumption that this type of personality revealed "synesthetic" perceptions that stemmed, ultimately, from a "tuberculous culture" (ibid.: 241). Empirically, Jaensch tried to substantiate these hypotheses through perception experiments, e.g. experiments on spatial perception (ibid.: 276f.), time perception (ibid.: 290f.), perception of (surreal) art (ibid.: 307), and on drawings made by children under observation (ibid.: 315). Based on these experiments, Jaensch linked the *I-typus* to a rigid categorization of perception (ibid.: 105)—understood as a robustness of the ego against any outside influence—in comparison to the *S-typus*.

As Else Frenkel-Brunswik stated, Jaensch defined the *S-typus* by his "general lack of clear-cut and rigid evaluation of, and submission to the stimulus" (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 253). The alleged strength of the ego against outside influences is central to Jaensch; due to the alleged lability of his ego, the *S-typus* is also characterized as "projection-type." As a consequence of the limitation of his insufficient psychological structure—e.g. missing values and instincts (ibid.: 333)—the *S-typus* was said to depend on the situational projection of his inner self onto the outside world. Furthermore, in his attempt to compensate for his "psychological lability," the *S-typus* would try to rationalize his experience of perception of the outside world (see Jaensch 1938: 49). This ongoing failure to perceive the *world as it is*, according to Jaensch, would eventually lead to the substitution of the real world for an image of reality, dominated by subjectivism (ibid.: 50). As a result, the *S-typus* was determined to be extensively "category dissolving," from the cognitive layer to his bio-psychological structure, whereas the *I-typus* was simply believed to apply objectively existing categorizations rigidly. Transferring his alleged findings from the personality structure to the social structure in general, Jaensch believed the *S-typus* to be the reason for a culture of dissolution—liberalism (ibid.: 44).

To summarize, "*The Counter-Type*" was written as a politically antisemitic pamphlet and it stressed the biological or "racial" rootedness and causation of psychological and social phenomena. In Jaensch's view, the *I-typus* was to be considered the ideal of "Aryan" eugenic race politics, whereas the *S-typus* was most of all linked to "the Jew" (ibid.: 22):

The dissolution type [...] in its pronounced forms, in the broadest and most comprehensive sense, is an extremely liberalistic one: for him, there are no ties in any respect; for this lack of ties is biologically deeply rooted. The [national-socialist] movement is ultimately one towards character; it fights characterlessness. Our dissolution type, however, always lacks inner firmness; and in its pronounced forms, it lacks character, which certainly presupposes inner firmness. After all, it was clear that the dissolution type is the type against which the German National Socialist movement is directed. We call it the 'counter-type.' Out of instinct, the National Socialist movement represents the conviction that the rule of the counter-type and of the cultural system created by it should not exist, that it is something contrary to the norm, unhealthy, something not intended by nature. (Jaensch 1938: 19; authors' translation)

Regarding the question of a parallelism of *The Authoritarian Personality's* High Scorers vs. Low Scorers and Jaensch's typology of the *I-typus* vs. the *S-typus*, we want to point out that the authoritarian personality was not simply the counterpart of Jaensch's glorification of the *I-typus*. Besides

obvious differences in the experimental approach of the two studies, in the question of a biological rootedness of personality, and, not least, in the questionable verifiability of Jaensch's work, Frenkel-Brunswik herself addressed an epistemological dimension at stake here: Jaensch had stated a "unity of style" (*Stileinheit*) for both of his types. From an allegedly unstable perception of stimuli, he concluded a corresponding unstable personality. In Frenkel-Brunswik's words, Jaensch "assumes this to be degenerative, morbid, immoral, and dangerous for society. 'Liberalism' of every kind – and 'adaptability' in general – goes with this lack of strong ties, according to Jaensch." (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 253) According to her, this generalization was a simplification stemming from a rigid categorization that did not fit the empirical evidence: in neither the Low Scorer nor the High Scorer had such *unity of style* been evident. Rather, this was simply Jaensch's wish, who, "like our 'highs,' is struggling for a way out of his own and his culture's unbearable complexity" (*ibid.*: 255). As Frenkel-Brunswik stated, Jaensch did not consider principles such as the alternative manifestations of the same drives or the closeness of opposites. His description of personality became an example of rigidity in itself.

In spite of the rather consistent recurrence of elements of rigidity in various areas, there is no obvious or simple all-pervasive unity of style in the basic patterns of personality as we have conceived them. In surveying the attitudes which tend to go together in authoritarian individuals, we were faced with the coexistence of rigid perseverative behavior and an over-fluid, haphazard, disintegrated, random approach. This view of personal style thus involves 'closeness of opposites,' a principle not adequately understood by Jaensch. (*ibid.*: 255)

Jaensch's rigid categorization practices were not able to grasp the contradictions so often observed especially in *The Authoritarian Personality's* High Scorers. Indeed, one of Else Frenkel-Brunswik's major findings was to state the "paradox by saying that the authoritarian person tends to be consistently inconsistent, or consistently self-conflicting" (*ibid.*: 257). As was the case in her experiment using pictures that moved slowly from showing a dog to showing a cat, at some point rigidity was abandoned in favor of extreme fluidity by one and the same person. The same was true for other contradictions such as the simultaneous occurrence of cautiousness and impulsiveness, or generalizations and over-concreteness in the same high-scoring individual (Adorno et al. 1950: 465). The failure to unify contradicting needs marks the core of the High Scorer's personality, rather than any "unity of style." The high-scoring individual

combines within himself such traits as: rigidity with extreme fluidity; over-caution with the tendency toward impulsive shortcuts to action; chaos and confusion with control; order and over-simplification in terms of black-white solutions and stereotypy; isolation with fusion; lack of differentiation with the mixing of elements which do not belong together; extreme concreteness with extreme generality; self-glorification with self-contempt; submission to powerful authorities with resentment against them; stress on masculinity with a tendency toward extreme passivity; and many other seemingly incompatible opposites, which thus reveal an intrinsic affinity of style to each other. The higher-order unity of style given by these pervasive inconsistencies especially found in the authoritarian personality appears to be, as we may conclude, the result of attempts to reduce drastically underlying conflicts and ambivalences as well as cognitive complexities and ambiguities without producing reality-adequate or truly adaptive solutions. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954a: 257)

Frenkel-Brunswik developed her own methodology essentially by confronting National Socialist social science on an epistemological level,<sup>11</sup> evoking a different practice of categorization and typologization. This characterized the high scorer not only by rigidity, but also by his tendencies to be inconsistent and contradictory, thus exceeding Jaensch's typology.

Jaensch, on the one hand, explicitly feared the *S-typus* for destructing and deconstructing categories per se, writing that the *S-typus*'s "imaginative and fantasy activity is therefore 'category-busting' or 'category-mixing'" (Jaensch 1938: 302; authors' translation). Frenkel-Brunswik, on the other hand, thought that a rigid adherence to inflexible and unsuitable fixed categories when faced with individual experience would eventually destroy the ego rather than strengthen it. This difference is not a superficial one: the two perspectives were indeed opposed to each other in a contrary and irreconcilable way—an authoritarian psychology in opposition to a psychology of authoritarianism (see Kranebitter and Reinprecht 2020). Referring to Else Frenkel-Brunswik's theorem in particular, Austrian sociologists Heinz Steinert and Gunter Falk criticized much of their discipline as "authoritarian," i.e. as ethno-centrist, reifying, and unable to cope conceptually with empirical ambiguity:

[A]uthoritarianism is a worldview [...] characterized by reification to deification of the given, of the existing canon of rules, a conception of the 'object'-character of what could also be imagined as 'made' and as process, which in turn can be explained from narrow categories and limited social experience. (Steinert and Falk 1973: 22–23; authors' translation)

Fitting this description, Jaensch's rigid categorization practice can be considered an extreme example of authoritarian conceptualization. Frenkel-Brunswik's repudiation of Jaensch's work is not a detail, but rather an exemplification of the difference between Nazi social science and a reflexive social science, one that led her towards a reflexive way of conducting science—not as social scientific knowledge obsessed with the search for the "good order" (*Ordnungswissen*), but one associated with the search for emancipation (*Befreiungswissen*) (Steinert 2007b: 388–390).

This crucial epistemological difference was a point shared by many contemporary psychologists, notably Gordon Allport, who explicitly repudiated Jaensch's typology in a presidential address to the 1940 congress of the American Psychological Association, and made a plea to "avoid authoritarianism, that we keep psychology from becoming a cult" (Allport 1940, cited in Stöwer 2011: 321). An emancipatory social science needs to overcome the practice of rigid categorization.

## TOWARDS A DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTRUCTIVIST CONCEPTS

*Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Theodor W. Adorno: A reevaluation of their epistemological positions*

Re-reading Frenkel-Brunswik's critique of Jaensch revealed some crucial epistemological differences between an authoritarian social science and a social psychology of authoritarianism: Frenkel-Brunswik's use of categories (as well as methods) was dynamic and less rigid than Jaensch's. There simply was no unity of style, either in the high-scoring individual, or in the social sciences—this

<sup>11</sup> Reflecting her role as a scholar, Frenkel-Brunswik wrote: "Thus, for instance, I am thinking of myself as a woman of 'thought' rather than 'action'. I feel that the main line of contribution to society which I choose by temperament and inclination is research." (Letter from Else Frenke-Brunswik to Edward Tolman, AGSÖ 25.1.108). While here she is referring to the "loyalty oath" under McCarthyism (see the interview with Daniel Levinson in this special issue), this certainly also applies to her confrontation with Jaensch.

merely being the wish and (self-)obligation of any form of authoritarian sociology. Operating on completely different levels, Frenkel-Brunswik went far beyond Jaensch; a comparison based on a mechanical understanding of concepts like “types” would thus stay superficial. Rather, the whole concept of “types” was a different one, which did not affix reified social categories onto individuals but introduced dynamic constructs.

The results of our re-reading of Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s works led us to reevaluate the relation between the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, first and foremost between Frenkel-Brunswik and Theodor W. Adorno. So far, mostly the differences have been stressed. But considering their agreement on dynamic concepts, Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno seem to share epistemological ground. That said, our attempt is not an effort to label Frenkel-Brunswik as critical theorist, the point being that her productive and “constructivist” way of doing social science has to be located somewhere in between those categories. Hence avoiding categorization allows us to reach a deeper understanding of Frenkel-Brunswik’s influence in the overall study. We would like to introduce three points, which allow us to question the “primacy of difference” between Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno.

Adorno introduced his well-known “typology” of High and Low Scorers within *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950: 744–783) with a nine-page manifesto distinguishing the authors’ “dynamic and social” (ibid.: 747) use of typologies from statistical and static uses in general, not least from “that kind of subsumption of individuals under pre-established classes which has been consummated in Nazi Germany, where the labeling of live human beings, independent of their specific qualities, resulted in decisions about their life and death” (ibid.: 745f.)—thereby referring to Jaensch in particular. “To express it pointedly, the rigidity of constructing types is itself indicative of that ‘stereopathic’ mentality which belongs to the basic constituents of the potentially fascist character.” (ibid.: 746) Instead of fetishizing and reifying psychological categories by an “attempt to bring some ‘order’ into the confusing diversity of human diversity” (ibid.: 747f.), Adorno saw his practice of typologization as a critical and tentative one (ibid.: 749; 752), as trying to establish types scientifically as the outcome of a typifying social world.

Secondly, Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno seemed to have agreed on the question of how to “use” psychoanalysis for the social research required for *The Authoritarian Personality*, i.e. a certain reluctance to “instrumentalize” psychoanalytic theory or identify the interviews done for *The Authoritarian Personality* with a psychoanalytical procedure. As Frenkel-Brunswik put it:

Although these categories were to a considerable extent inspired by psychoanalysis, they should not be considered as psychoanalytic in the narrower sense of the word, since classification of our material is done primarily on the basis of present personality structure rather than on the basis of psychogenetic data. The entire framework, length, and condition of our interviews made it impossible directly to obtain material of a depth-level comparable to that of genuine psychoanalytic material. At the same time, however, there was enough spontaneous material at hand to make it possible for raters trained in dynamic psychology to infer some of the major structural problems and types of defense mechanisms in our subjects, in accordance with the categories provided by the Scoring Manual. (Adorno et al. 1950: 326)

Again, she clearly shared with Adorno this hesitance in “applying” psychoanalysis to “hastier” social research. In his “remarks” (Adorno 2019a, 2019b), Adorno stated that the authors were reluctant to superficially use psychoanalysis out of respect for it. In even more outspoken terms, in an undated memorandum written in fall 1945, Adorno warned against psychoanalytical “pseudo-explanations,”

as he put it, making demands similar to those in the statement quoted above from Frenkel-Brunswik's earlier works:

It appears to me both more common sense and more correct psychoanalytically to dwell on surface phenomena which can be interpreted as psychoanalytically revealing on the basis of our general knowledge than to make futile attempts of real psychoanalytical dives [which are actually dubious shortcuts]. Therefore I strongly advise a re-orientation towards symptoms which can be interpreted in terms of depth psychology, instead of flirting with depth categories easily deteriorating into a mere symptomatology.<sup>12</sup>

Besides these outlined similarities, which concern the critical or reflexive use of typologies as well as the reluctant use of psychoanalysis, a third similarity can be found in a critical stance towards contemporary culture and modern society in the broadest sense. It was Adorno who emphasized that it was a pathological society which was producing the potentially fascist individual, the study's High Scorer, as the "new man" better adjusted to late capitalism by thinking in stereotypical terms about what was conventionally "right" beyond individual experience (Adorno 2019a: 26f.). But quite similarly—and often ignored by research—Frenkel-Brunswik emphasized that authoritarianism must not be understood as a problem that concerns only a minority of more or less pathological High Scorers. Rather, conventionalism, defined as a rigid adherence to middle-class values, led High Scorers to resolve psychological ambivalences easily through their wish to belong to a problematic majority:

It may be ventured that the greater uniformity of the prejudiced sample derives from their greater closeness to the broader cultural pattern of our society. There can be no doubt that our prejudiced group shows a more rigid adherence to existing cultural norms and that its emphasis on status is in line with what has been designated by several authors [...] as the general trend of Western civilization. (Adorno et al. 1950: 484)

In our view, a similar approach in many epistemological and methodological matters exists and stems from their close cooperation during the production and interpretation of the material collected in the study's qualitative in-depth interviews, as can be shown from the archival documents. A more systematic analysis of this re-evaluation of similarities and differences cannot rely solely on these archival documents, but must also take the broader context into consideration, for example the differences between Else Frenkel-Brunswik and the other interviewees and authors of the study, namely Bill Morrow and J. F. Brown. To elaborate on this in detail, in the next chapter we will explore what was, at times, the suggestive character of the study's interview questions (see, most recently, Kranebitter 2020).

### *The practice of "inducing" as seen through archival materials*

The archival material concerning *The Authoritarian Personality* available at the YIVO in New York, as well as at the AGSÖ in Graz, is mainly composed of letters, memoranda, and draft chapters. Yet, some interview protocols conducted for the study can be found, including so-called *Thematic Apperception Tests*, a projective method asking interviewees to associate freely when telling stories

<sup>12</sup> T. W. Adorno: Memorandum regarding case interviews and typological problems (the Institute for Jewish Research [YIVO], AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7). In this memorandum, to our knowledge, Adorno outlined a typology for Low Scorers for the first time (thereby implicitly contradicting the claim that Low Scorers did not fit easily into categories).



relating to pictures shown to them. Some of these protocols were written by Else Frenkel-Brunswik, which permits a thorough reconstruction of her methods and findings from 1943 onwards until the publication of the study in 1950. To see whether her practice differs from the other interviewers, we would like to introduce J. F. Brown and Bill Morrow. Therefore, the analysis of the archival material is focused on one point of critique of the study: the suggestive character of the questionnaire and interview questions.

“Occasionally,” Frenkel-Brunswik, as the author responsible for supervising the interviewers, wrote in her introduction to her chapters, “some attempt was made, at the conclusion of the interview, to influence prejudice by argument, by making prejudice disreputable, or by other means, in order to gain information about effective methods of combating prejudice.” (Adorno et al. 1950: 322f.) In our view, in some instances this approach created a problematic practice during the interviews. The study suffered from a misconception about trying to “induce” interviewees, as the authors termed it themselves (see *ibid.*: 16), into revealing their “true” attitudes during the in-depth interviews. Since these interviews relate to psychoanalysis, one could argue that this practice has to be considered as a total rejection of the acknowledgement of the concept of the frame of the interview situation. In this view, the frame would consist of both “the inner world aspects”—the relation of interviewer to interviewee in their interaction, and corresponding processes like transference and counter-transference—and the “outer world” aspects, consisting of the setting the interaction takes place in, including e.g. the location, as well as power relations. To put it in sociological terms, what is clearly missing is the methodological reflection of the interview situation.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer<sup>13</sup> emphasized the omnipresence of antisemitism, with cultural appropriateness permitting the open expression of this antisemitism only to a certain extent. The suggestive character of the practice of revealing the “true attitude” of the interviewee was, then, an attempt both to reveal the social desirability bias of the respondent and to look behind the curtain, i.e. to see whether the respondent’s attitude to antisemitism is more pronounced than on the surface. But in their attempt to reveal the “true attitude,” social desirability is twofold and thus eventually uncontrollable. Firstly, there is a social desirability regarding the (non-)expression of antisemitic attitudes, a desirability to be avoided if the “true attitude” of the interviewees is to be explored. Secondly, however, the interviewers create a social desirability of antisemitic expression in the interview situation. The problematic nature of social desirability in this second meaning of evoking antisemitism or authoritarianism in the interview situation becomes obvious in some interviews conducted by Brown and Morrow.

An example of the practice of “inducing” can be found in the work of Junius Flagg Brown (J. F. Brown). He was an important interviewer, a Marxist social psychologist and psychoanalyst (see Minton 1984) who studied with the Berlin Gestalt psychologists in the 1920s and who introduced the works of Kurt Lewin to an American audience. Being part of psychology’s movement outward from the laboratory, he must have been especially aware of the role of interview situation for responses. According to Brown, social psychology should deal “not with a laboratory fragment of man reacting

<sup>13</sup> The motivation to do so is probably to be found in preconceptions regarding an omnipresence of antisemitism, as mentioned by Horkheimer in his letter to Adorno, “[...] one does not have to be a ‘type’ in order to be an antisemite. One simply learns to speak disrespectfully of Jews as one would learn to curse [...].” (Letter by Max Horkheimer to Theodor W. Adorno, October 11, 1945, YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7). Combining this omnipresence of antisemitism with their finding that antisemitism, although present, is occasionally not shown in certain contexts, might have led to their eagerness to “induce” antisemitism in the interview situation and thereby reveal the interviewee’s “true attitude” behind the façade.

to isolated stimuli, but with real men behaving in a social world.” (quoted in Minton 1984: 34). Very much like Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Brown was highly critical both of nineteenth-century psychology, operating with overly broad theoretical principles, “based on such pseudoexplanatory concepts as instinct, sympathy, imitation, and habit” (ibid.: 35), and of “the post-1920 reaction by behaviorists that resulted in an atheoretical, atomistic, and mechanistic social psychology” (ibid.). Addressing, among other problems, the problem of the social position of the researcher in the “bourgeois region,” he can be called an early critic of positivism.

For *The Authoritarian Personality*, Brown conducted several interviews in Los Angeles in the fall and winter of 1945/1946, using the interview guide developed by Else Frenkel-Brunswik. The interview protocols by Brown and his team also contain several hints regarding the “induction” of ethnocentrism, some of which we want to quote here. For instance, to the question of whether there was a Jewish problem in the United States, “M45” replies: “I’m afraid so. Yes, it has become a problem. I’m glad you came to talk to me about this. [...] Guess I can talk quite frankly? I know you are one of us.”<sup>14</sup> To the question of what he would do if he were a Jew, the same respondent answers: “If I wouldn’t know you I’d say: only a Jew can ask such a question because it sounds like TALMUD. No sense to it.”<sup>15</sup> The interviewee’s impression of sharing beliefs (“I know you are one of us”) is not a problem per se. But evoking the impression of shared beliefs on multiple occasions becomes problematic, as it has to be interpreted as a manipulative practice of conducting interviews. The lack of consideration of the assumed agreement in a singular case becomes a methodological problem when further cases are affected. M 35, a multimillionaire in Bel Air, Los Angeles, answers the same question of whether there is a “Jewish problem” quite similarly:

Brother! If you ask such a question you’ll be sure to land behind the eight-ball. A problem! Why it’s no longer a problem, it’s a menace that’s threatening to wipe US off the map. [...] Do you mean it, or are you kidding? [...] Say – what are you driving at?<sup>16</sup>

Using the phrase “Jewish problem” leads interviewee M35 to suspect an agreement between him and the interviewer on what has to be “seen as a problem,” or even worse than that. The imagined consequences of “the problem” not only threaten the U.S., but also both of them personally on account of the repressive reactions that might follow their agreement on the problematic. Therefore, interviewer and interviewee become accomplices, since they share what the interviewee considers to be a “forbidden truth.” From today’s perspective, the question would have to be reformulated in the first place, but besides the wording there seemed to be a certain persuasive quality to Brown’s interview situation. Another case indicates that Brown formulated his questions in quite a convincing manner, as M46 replies to the question regarding knowledge of Jewish religion: “Now you’ve got me pal. What do you want to know all that junk for? You’re note [sic] going to start a Nazi party here, I hope.”<sup>17</sup>

Unquestionably, all these statements were given without any immediate influence from the interviewer on the answers and can be interpreted as the general attitudes of the interviewees. Still, in spite of his academic training, Brown was not fully aware of the influence of the social interaction

<sup>14</sup> M 45, Not Married, Boston, M.D., Type: Oedipal (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> M 35, Not Married, Los Angeles, Type: Leader (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7).

<sup>17</sup> M 46, Not Married, California, Swimming Instructor, Type: Manipulative (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7).

during the interview. Thus, the relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee lacks methodological reflection. The interviewer's precise influence on the interviewee's answers remains ambiguous.

A more severe instance of "inducing" took place at the San Quentin prison (Hyman and Sheatsley 1954: 56; Kranebitter 2020). There, Bill Morrow had 110 prisoners complete the 45-item version of the questionnaire in October 1945, followed by in-depth interviews with 15 inmates. The results of the study were presented in Chapter XXI of the publication and received great approval from the commissioning AJC. An internal, undated editorial revision even suggested that the chapter should be published as an independent monograph (Kranebitter 2020: 5). The authors' assumption was that prison inmates were particularly authoritarian. Both quantitative and qualitative material seemed to provide convincing confirmation of his hypothesis. The San Quentin respondents achieved higher than average values on almost all items, including, quite ironically, a very punitive attitude towards crime. However, on closer look, the results were achieved in a questionable way.

Even though Morrow acknowledged that the prison environment did influence the interviewees' response behavior, stating that the "general atmosphere of the prison [...] stresses compulsion and conformity" (Adorno et al., 1950: 819), he believed the effects to be of minor importance. However, not only were both the quantitative and qualitative samples strongly biased, since the selection was done mainly by the prison's chief psychiatrist David G. Schmidt,<sup>18</sup> but Morrow also induced them to "speak their mind" when interviewing them in prison.

Although it can be shown that some responses were highly connected to the situation in prison and to the interview itself, social interaction within the interview situation was interpreted by Morrow as a one-way street. The effect of social desirability, that is, the interviewee's desire to please the interviewer (who was believed to be associated with the mighty psychiatric department), was interpreted solely as "authoritarian submission" to the interviewer. Expressing the desire to conform to conventional opinions, the interviewee would finally also submit to fascism, Morrow concluded. Not only is this a severe underestimation of external influences on the interview situation, but it is also a manipulative way of obtaining desirable results. The lack of assured methodological reflection of the interview situation leads to the misreading of the interviewer's own position. Morrow himself becomes an authoritarian actor during the interview situation. Further proof can be found in his attempts to provoke the "right" answer, as in the case of one of the "fascists," Buck:

Buck, besides supporting Nazi persecution of Jews, exhibits an interesting mode of ideological opportunism in his behavior toward the interviewer. The first three inquiries about his views on 'the Jewish problem' and 'the most characteristic Jewish traits' elicited only pseudo-democratic denials of hostility. For example: "They got a right to make a living as much as anybody else ... They got a way to make money is all I know. More power to 'em is all I can say ... I don't know much about 'em.' But with the fourth question he apparently sensed that he would not be punished for expressing hostility and might (judging from the interviewer's non-committal attitude) even gain approval for having the 'right' view of things: (Can you tell a Jew usually?) 'You're damn right I can tell 'em as soon as I talk to 'em.' From this point on,

<sup>18</sup> David G. Schmidt himself was described as an authoritarian personality by the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*: "The prison situation and especially the psychiatry department (because of its top personnel) are highly authoritarian as well as very moralistic and conventionalistic" (Levinson, Daniel and Morrow, William (1946) Brief Memorandum on the San Quentin Group (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 19, Folder 4, 7).

Buck drops his façade and exhibits intense aggressiveness toward Jews. (Adorno et al. 1950: 834)

Mentioned here as an example of the art of interviewing, “unmasking” the real fascist behind his pseudo-democratic façade, in an unpublished memorandum Morrow openly speaks of having manipulated this interaction.

One particularly deferent high with a very externalized superego at first expressed somewhat friendly attitudes toward Jews: but he was quite easily induced to express rather violent and fascistic attitudes toward them when my permissiveness and only slightly provocative questions led him to feel that he would not be rejected for doing so.<sup>19</sup>

The main question resulting from this is: Can these induced attitudes be considered an expression of deeper personality structures in the interview situation? How much of this response behavior was, in another perspective, a concession to authoritative figures, as Ray (1984: 266) has asked, “to appear agreeable to the authorities” in a threatening institution like San Quentin? This is something we cannot determine today.

In the wider context this issue also affects Adorno’s typology. One of his sub-types among High Scorers, the “Rebel and the Psychopath,” often also identified as the “tough guy” and openly called a “fascist,” is heavily based on the San Quentin research (Adorno et al. 1950: 762–765). Even though Adorno acknowledged that there were not many “tough guys” among the interviewees, actually not one beyond the San Quentin group, this sub-type was mentioned quite prominently, despite the empirically scarce evidence and the problems of interpretation involved. Polemically put: The sub-type was modeled on Sinclair Lewis’ novel *It can’t happen here* and Adorno’s view of what he believed was the typical German SA storm trooper, but it cannot be found as an empirical manifestation within the study itself. This example supports Christian Fleck’s claim that Adorno’s typology was developed early on during the project without much consideration of empirical results (see Fleck 2011: 257–263). At the same time, we think that this neither affects the whole typology nor Adorno’s practice of typologizing itself—rather it shows a complex relationship between empirical research and typologizing, between a dynamic development and a static goal of “*Improving Teddie Typology*” (see figure 2).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Levinson, Daniel and Morrow, William (1946) Brief Memorandum on the San Quentin Group (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 19, Folder 4, 7.

<sup>20</sup> In our view, what is still needed is a closer look at each of the types and the precise changes made throughout the process due to empirical research.

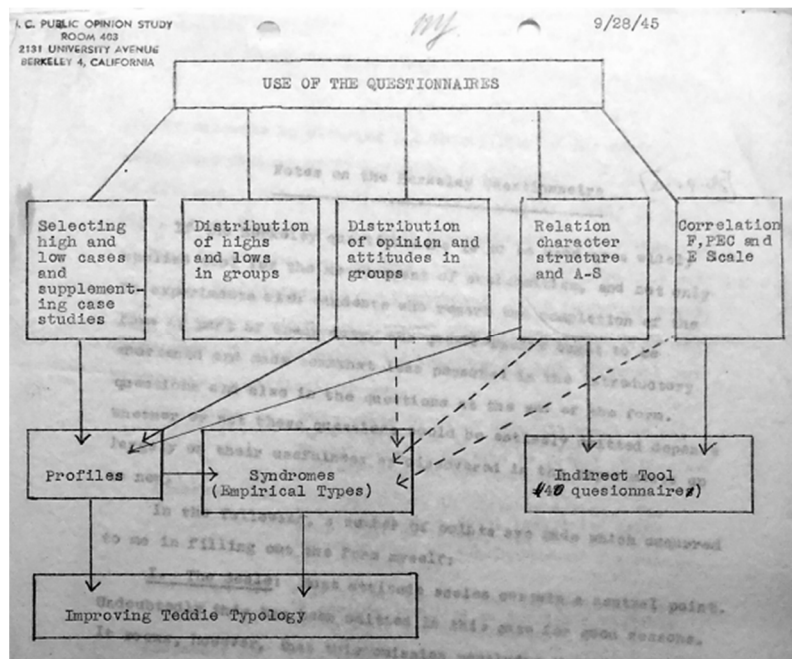


Figure 2: A graphic representations of *The Authoritarian Personality's* research design, September 28, 1945 (source: YIVO, AJC Archives, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, box 19, folder 5). In our view, it acknowledges both the pre-existence of “Teddie” Adorno’s typology and the aspiration to carry out theoretical and methodological improvement during the research process.

Admittedly, the “tough guy” sub-type might be the most pronounced example of this problem within the whole study, but in its consequences, it is a burden for the whole typology. The symptom of this burden is the practice of “inducing interviewees” into saying something that was not necessarily an expression of their deeper personality traits. The root of the burden is the missing methodological awareness of the (psycho-)dynamic implications of the interview situation (e.g.: Steinert 1984).

In some cases, the feeling of being manipulated as an interviewee became conscious even to them. Archival materials prove this for one of the high-scoring college girls, who were the first to be interviewed from 1943 onwards. In one interview (“case 7”), one of the women expressed her view of being manipulated through her interpretation of art. Being shown picture 8 of the TAT (see figure 3), she stated:

This is a psychologist doing one of his jobs. He is trying an experiment. [...] He wants to see how far he can put a person out. (Q-m) He wants to see what he can make people do when he has them under his will. The reclining person is a psychologist, too. They are in on this experiment together. They want to see through the mist of consciousness. (long pause) (Q-o). He is fairly successful. (throws card down in an irritated manner) That’s all I can do with that.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Thematic Apperception Test, Case 7 (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7). The same interviewee clearly shows an effort to please the interviewer: “I enjoyed it a lot. Of course, a lot of my stories didn’t turn out just right. I like to imagine things; I think it is a good thing to strengthen one’s imagination. (Q: Why?) It makes you think clearly, but everybody can’t do it. I don’t think I’m especially good at it. It’s really relaxing. I have wanted to be psychoanalyzed. Would you consider analyzing me?” (ibid.). All of these interactions and the dynamics involved were not interpreted any further.

Since, at the same time, this interviewee showed a high level of interest in the interaction, stating “I enjoyed it a lot. Of course, a lot of my stories didn’t just turn out just right. I like to imagine things [...]. Would you consider analyzing me?”, a more extensive case study of this girl in particular and the dynamics involved in the interview would be interesting to read, to say the least.

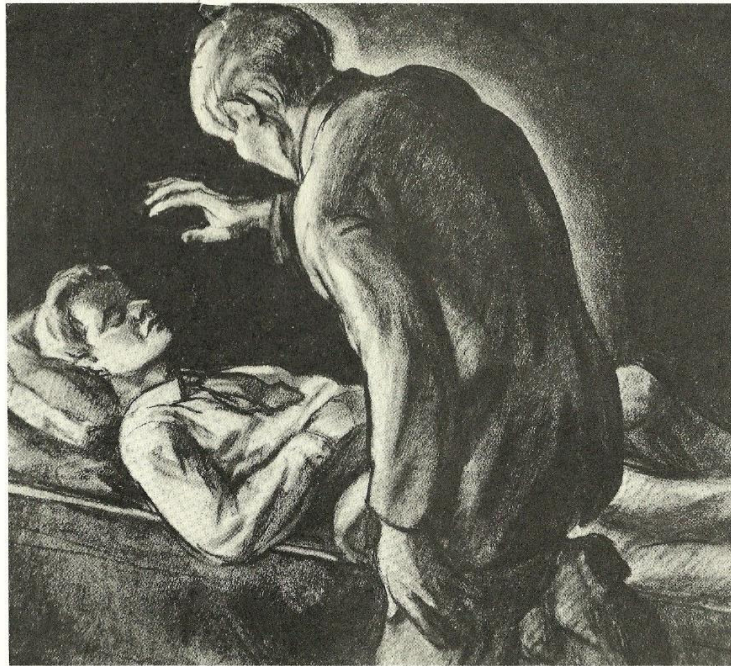


Figure 3: Image (“picture 8”) used for the study’s Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT) (source: Thematic Apperception Test, Case 7, “Female, extremely high on Anti-Semitism” (YIVO, AJC Archives, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7; for the published version see Adorno et al. 1950: 508).

To summarize, it seems safe to say that the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* did not pay sufficient attention to their practice of “inducing” or to the interview situation in general. Not least, this conclusion is supported by the way R. Nevitt Sanford looked back at this practice in an interview in the 1980s:

S[anford]: If you interview someone, with the view of getting some data, and you pay no attention to the effects of being interviewed upon people who are being interviewed, or upon the interviewer, you are missing the boat really. [...] I don’t think it occurred to me so much when I was simply studying students, but when we began interviewing professors, I really became impressed with the notion of the potency of being interviewed.

H[arry Canon]: It wasn’t ‘til then?

S[anford]: Not really. I think the point when we were interviewing people in *The Authoritarian Personality* [...], I don’t think I was quite aware of the effects of the experience of the interview upon interviewees. But now everybody talks about that.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Transcript of an interview by Harry Canon with Nevitt Sanford, November 1984 (Nevitt Sanford Papers 1981–1995, Bowling Green State University, University Libraries, cac MMS 1963).

As Hyman and Sheatsley (1954, 80) and Mitchell Ash (1998: 267) have already pointed out, Frenkel-Brunswik only interviewed Low Scorers, not High Scorers, since the latter were deliberately to be interviewed by “gentiles.”<sup>23</sup> She herself reported: “The interviews with the girls who were found to be extremely low on antisemitism were conducted by myself, those with the girls medium and high on antisemitism were conducted by a non-Jewish, American, female graduate student of psychology, who had had contact with depth psychology.”<sup>24</sup> This was a rare instance of an understanding of the interview situation, which has parallels to the psychoanalytical setting, e.g. taking into account phenomena such as transference and countertransference between the interviewer and the interviewee.<sup>25</sup>

In our attempt to reconstruct Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s approach towards the practice of interviewing, we started by examining the interviewers Brown and Morrow and their extensive use of “inducing.” Archival materials indicate that Else Frenkel-Brunswik herself, contrary to the other two, had at least some awareness of the interview situation, and at the least, no case of “induction” can be found in Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s own interviews among the archival material available.<sup>26</sup> This conclusion nevertheless has to acknowledge the fact that she was exclusively interviewing Low Scorers, not High Scorers. The question regarding the possibility of inducing Low Scorers, or possibly their resilience against being induced, remains interesting. But since she mentioned the practice of inducing only once and in a quite concealed way, and considering her earlier methodological considerations, it seems plausible to say that Frenkel-Brunswik does not appear to have been susceptible to the practice of “inducing.” We would thus conclude that it is thanks to her carefulness that the distortions found in other parts of the study did not spread to her parts of the study.

## CONCLUSION

In bringing our sociogenetic reconstruction to a conclusion, we would like to summarize our main findings. Taking her earlier work into account, it can be stated that Else Frenkel-Brunswik’s initial expertise in developing methodology stemmed from her mathematical training. Inspired by psychoanalysis and herself unsatisfied with a solely descriptive approach, she widened her perspective, as seen in the methodology for her study *Motivation and Behavior* (1942). The methodology used there allowed for the quantitative verification of an ideographic approach towards “personality.” The challenging task of merging these two approaches was met by her conscientious integration of motivational tendencies into her primacy of verification qua behavior and following statistical analysis of behavioral data. A crucial innovation, which allowed for the statistical verification of motivational tendencies, was her modified concept of drive, which implied the possibility of alternative manifestations of singular motivational tendencies. Hence, *Motivation and Behavior* can be considered a

<sup>23</sup> See Else Frenkel-Brunswik: Description of the material based on the responses of ten girls, students of the University of California, and of some of the hypotheses which seem to have evolved in connection with them, Berkeley, January 1944 (YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> A more comprehensive discussion of the particular matter of how Frenkel-Brunswik’s awareness of the interview situation is linked to her psychoanalytic expertise would have to include a systematic examination of the history of the concepts of transference and countertransference, as well as how their understanding has changed over the history of psychoanalysis. In this context, Körner (2018) emphasizes the prevalent rigid understanding of abstinence in psychoanalysis until the 1950s, related to an avoidant stance towards phenomena of countertransference.

<sup>26</sup> See YIVO, AJC Archive, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 18, Folder 7.

turning point in Frenkel-Brunswik's academic practice, since for the first time it went beyond positivism and quantification.

Further on we were able to illustrate that this approach not only helped her to deal with authoritarianism as a research subject, but also in her analysis of authoritarian research—as was the case for works by the German psychologist Erich Jaensch. A closer look at their practice reveals that Frenkel-Brunswik's work is neither a replica, nor a continuation of Jaensch's work. Frenkel-Brunswik's methodological accomplishment in grasping the contradictory and ambiguous aspects of authoritarianism is, first and foremost, an overcoming of Jaensch's rigid mode of categorization.

Stressing the dynamic side of Frenkel-Brunswik's methodology, we continued by re-evaluating her epistemological position in comparison to Theodor W. Adorno. Besides the traditional emphasis on differences, we found evidence for agreement on at least three points. Firstly, a similar stance towards the rigid praxis of an authoritarian sociology can be found, resulting in their reflexive use of typologies. Secondly, both approached the psychological depth provided by psychoanalysis carefully, interpreting authoritarianism within the concept of personality instead of increasing the use of psychogenetic data. Thirdly, both Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno shared an understanding of the authoritarian character as a social phenomenon of a pathological society, emphasizing the importance of avoiding the pathologization of an authoritarian individual.

Finally, we were able to examine the practice of “inducing” in *The Authoritarian Personality* through the use of archival material. The lack of methodological consideration of the interview situation in this study clearly had an effect on the empirical data. In the case of J.F. Brown and Bill Morrow, two of the interviewers, “inducing” was used to an extent which questions the empirical provability of certain aspects of the study's typology. Although there is no certainty of Frenkel-Brunswik's rejection of “inducing,” we came to the conclusion that to some extent, she was aware of the interview dynamics. Archival materials concerning Frenkel-Brunswik's reflection on the interviewer-interviewee relationship, as well as the potential bias introduced by the interviewer when conducting interviews, support our thesis.

It is not an exaggeration to state that of all the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Frenkel-Brunswik is the only one to have been familiar with, supervised and used all the methods involved. When, in the light of her earlier work, she eventually moved away from quantification and a rigid understanding of positivism—in her parts of the study as well as in her later research—this was her deliberate decision, not the result of her having responsibility for the study's qualitative methods. Her shifting of research to the more “neutral ground” of perception in her further research on authoritarianism, thereby implicitly and explicitly responding to much of the criticism the study had received (Frenkel-Brunswik 1974; 1996), was accompanied by a shift away from quantification and, ultimately, a positivist approach within the social sciences. At a time when positivism was on the rise and decades before the “hermeneutic turn” in the social sciences (Steinmetz 2005), this was not a decision rewarded by the established social sciences (see Kranebitter 2022).

On the basis of our findings, we would argue that among the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Else Frenkel-Brunswik contributed to many of the study's strengths, above all to a position of *reflexivity* concerning methodological considerations (see Reinprecht 2022). In his interview with Dietmar Paier in 1992, Daniel J. Levinson pointed out that from the beginning, Frenkel-Brunswik's careful interpretations represented a big step in the development of the study:



And as I say, the big intellectual development then was Else's case study in developing more ideas about antisemitism as an aspect of personality. I think her case study then brought our work to the attention of psychoanalysts. See, what Nevitt and I did was more standard academic psychology. There were ideas about personality, but they were hardly developed. Her case study, then, was concerned with what would have been called the psychodynamics of antisemitism.<sup>27</sup>

This is in accordance with a general emphasis by Levinson on the mutually stimulating ways of thinking among the four senior staff members of the study—a very reflexive and open-minded appreciation of the different approaches synthesized in the study, which changed the way of doing social science for all of them, the methodological and theoretical practice of the whole group.

What we had in common was an interest in psychoanalysis and in individual personality and in society, and the relationship of the individual to society. All three of us in Berkeley considered ourselves sociologically oriented, but I think we didn't understand how limited our sociological thinking was. We were very much involved in operationalizing concepts and measurement. But Adorno couldn't care less about measurement... [...] I think there are a lot of things we did for him and a lot of things he did for us. I consider it, all in all, a marvelous collaboration. [...] [N]ot that it was always happy or even mostly happy, there were lots of conflicts, but I believe that the end result was different from what would have been—and much better than what would have been—if any one of us had been stranded alone [...]<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Dietmar Paier: Interview with Daniel J. Levinson, New Haven, 16 November 1992 (AGSÖ Tonbandsammlung). See the published version of this interview in this special issue.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Further on: “Well, he helped us thinking more broadly and stand back a little from measurement. He was somewhat free from the concept of operationalism, which has a kind of tyrannical quality.”

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**ARTICLE**

# Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Contemporary Sociologists

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## Abstract

The article presents and discusses an unpublished critical remark written by Robert K Merton which addressed Else Frenkel Brunswik's contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality*. The author contextualizes both Merton's remarks and the book's reception by other contemporary sociologists.

## Keywords

Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Robert K. Merton, *The Authoritarian Personality*

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## INTRODUCTION

Else Frenkel-Brunswik's name (in the following abbreviated to EFB) is seldom mentioned in sociological texts, partly because her name is hidden in the "et al." behind T. W. Adorno, whose *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) (Adorno et al. 1950) has found some resonance in sociology, past and present. EFB's non-existence in sociology is rooted in the closed-minded attitude of mainstream sociology towards social psychology, which was abandoned after a short interlude in the 1950s when attempts to establish an interdisciplinary field between psychology and sociology finally collapsed. However, it is worth noting that EFB's education and academic career took place in departments of psychology. Given this circumstance, it comes as a surprise to find some sociologists showing up in EFB's life as discussion partners, peers, and advisors. The following paper proceeds as follows: I start by looking at EFB's years in Vienna and her relationships and networks there; then I switch to the Studies in Prejudice project and its advisory board; finally, I describe and discuss a memo written by Robert K. Merton (abbreviated to RKM) at the time when EFB was working on her part of TAP. In his comments, RKM put forward some suggestions and criticism vis-à-vis EFB's draft. His major concern was related to the differences between psychology and sociology with regard to the standards of explanation.

## EFB'S VIENNA YEARS

Else Frenkel was born in 1908 in Lemberg, Galicia (today: Lviv, Ukraine), and lived in Vienna from 1914 until 1938. She attended high school at the private reform school of Eugenie Schwarzwald—and began her further education in the autumn of 1926 when she entered the University of Vienna. Her

social background could be described as upper middle-class and Jewish, where her Jewishness was not only through descent, but also through religious observance, at least as far as her parents were concerned. After a short period of orientation, during which she attended courses in mathematics and physics, she found her calling in psychology. Since at that time psychology was taught by professors holding professorships in philosophy, EFB learned much more philosophy in comparison to the present-day psychology curricula. Karl Bühler and his wife Charlotte directed the Institute of Psychology as a separate entity within the Department of Philosophy, where Karl Bühler was officially professor of philosophy and Charlotte a lecturer, or *Privatdozent*, with only the title but not the position of professor. However, Charlotte was the recipient of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, which enabled her to hire research assistants for her work in developmental psychology. EFB's dissertation topic was closer to Karl Bühler and his only paid assistant, Egon (von) Brunswik, who specialized in the psychology of perception; EFB's PhD thesis belonged to this specialty. Under the direction of Charlotte Bühler, EFB switched to life-cycle and biographical psychology. Whereas only part of her PhD thesis had been published as *Atomismus und Mechanismus in der Assoziationspsychologie* [Atomism and Mechanism in Association Psychology] (Frenkel 1931), in the eight years following her graduation in 1930 EFB published two conference presentations, one handbook entry about the psychology of fairy tales, one article in an English language journal (*Character and Personality*) and, in 1937, the first volume in a new series *Psychologische Forschungen über den Lebenslauf* [Psychological Research on the Life-Cycle] written together with Edith Weisskopf and edited together with Charlotte Bühler (see list of her writings in Frenkel-Brunswik 1996: 314-6).

During her Viennese years, EFB was influenced by three thought collectives: besides the academic psychology of the Böhlers, she received psychoanalytic training from Ernst Kris and intellectual stimuli from the circle of philosophers around Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, and Otto Neurath. In contrast to her peers, EFB seems not to have developed any political interests or activities. One of her fellow students remembered that if Else did not appear at the institute every day, everyone was concerned about her health (Marie Jahoda, quoted in Paier 1996: 289, n. 84).

## EFB IN BERKELEY

After the takeover of power by the Nazis in Austria in March 1938, EFB managed to escape to the United States. Egon Brunswik had been living in Berkeley since 1935 thanks to an invitation from Edward C. Tolman, who had visited the Böhlers' institute in 1934. Frenkel and Brunswik married after her arrival in New York.<sup>1</sup> Because of what was known as the anti-nepotism rule, EFB was unable

<sup>1</sup> Some claim that the ceremony took place on board the ship to ease EFB's entry into the United States. The official documents of her arrival do not contain any hints of this story. EFB traveled on the SS Britannica and the ship had departed from Le Havre on 27 May 1938 and arrived at the harbor of New York on 5 June 1938. "Psychologist" Else Frenkel (no title added) gives her "nationality" as "Austria" and someone has corrected it by hand to "Germany", her "place of birth" is reported as "Poland, Lemberg" and in the column "race or people", the answer given is "Hebrew." (The form lists about 50 categories to determine "the stock from which aliens sprang and the language they speak. The original stock or blood shall be the basis of the classification, the mother tongue to be used only to assist in determining the original stock.") EFB further indicated that she will travel to California to join her fiancé, Dr. Egon Brunswik. <https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger-details/czoxMjoiOTAxNzYxODM2OTMwIjs=/czo5OiJwYXNzZW5nZXIiOw==> (accessed December 22, 2022).

to obtain a position at the University of California Berkeley and remained a research associate for the rest of her career.

In 1943 EFB was invited to join a small research group, which later on became known as the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group. The head of the group, R. Nevitt Sanford (1909-95), had studied in Harvard with Gordon Allport and Henry Murray and came to Berkeley as a professor in 1940. In 1943 the provost of his new university offered him \$500 (about \$8000 in 2021) given by an anonymous donor for an investigation into antisemitism. Sanford accepted and hired his PhD student Daniel J. Levinson (1920-94). EFB became a member of this group when Max Horkheimer approached Sanford and invited him to collaborate on a larger research project on the same topic.<sup>2</sup> EFB had met Sanford and probably also Levinson over the preceding years at Berkeley's Institute of Child Welfare. The fourth co-author of TAP, Theodor W. Adorno (1903-69),<sup>3</sup> made only irregular visits to see these three because he lived in Southern California in the same neighborhood as Horkheimer, who had retreated from muggy Manhattan to the airy Pacific Palisades for alleged health reasons. From 1944 Horkheimer was officially the research director of the huge Study in Prejudice project.

Starting in around 1941, Horkheimer and his associates had been forced to raise money following the loss of a large proportion of the Institute of Social Research funding foundation's assets in speculative transactions (see for details Fleck 2022). One of their most promising future partners became the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the advocacy organization founded in 1906 on behalf of Jews in the US and abroad. The negotiations, conferences, and meetings brought together German refugee scholars, American academics, philanthropists and administrators. In October 1942, the AJC awarded a grant of \$10,000 (about \$170,000 in 2021) to Horkheimer's Institute of Social Research. Somehow, the Horkheimer circle also finally persuaded the representatives of the AJC to expand the funding by establishing the Studies in Prejudice project (for a more detailed heterodox analysis see: Fleck 2011, chapter 6).

Later on, in early 1945, a special advisory board was established to help the Horkheimer circle improve their research agenda. Members of this committee were individuals with weaker and stronger ties to EFB and Sanford. Paul F. Lazarsfeld did know EFB from their shared years at the Bühlert's institute in Vienna, and Ernst Kris had been her psychoanalytic therapist in Vienna. Gardner Murphy and Solomon Asch represented psychology and social psychology on the committee. Gordon Allport, Sanford's advisor at Harvard, did not participate in this advisory committee but had occasionally acted as an expert for the AJC. Besides these personal networks, Sanford had also published several papers which might have come to the attention of the Horkheimer Circle. These papers were certainly known to fellow psychologists:

- "Some personality correlates of morale" (Sanford and Conrad 1943),
- "Scales for the measurement of war-optimism: I. Military optimism; II. Optimism on consequences of the war" (Conrad and Sanford 1943),
- "A Scale for the Measurement of Anti-Semitism" (Levinson and Sanford 1944)

<sup>2</sup> When Horkheimer started looking around for American collaborators, Ernst Simmel, a German psychoanalyst who had been living in California since 1934, most probably suggested Sanford as a candidate. See Horkheimer (1995): 585-7 (letter from Horkheimer to Simmel, 21 April 1939) and 602-3 (letter from Simmel to Horkheimer, 8 May 1939); Adorno and Horkheimer (2004): 206-7 (letter from Horkheimer to Adorno, 28 August 1941).

<sup>3</sup> In the book, Adorno's name is given ungendered as "T.W. Adorno", most probably not because of gender troubles but to avoid having to choose between the German and English versions of his first name Theodor/e.



Levinson completed his studies in psychology in 1947 with a thesis on the measurement of ethnocentrism.

Sanford had also had a psychoanalytic education. While EFB had visited Kris back in Vienna, Sanford saw Hanns Sachs, an early collaborator of Sigmund Freud, who was now based in the Boston area. Sachs had migrated to the US in 1932 from Berlin, where he had been living since 1920. Whether Levinson undertook psychoanalysis is unknown to this author; Adorno did not need a therapist, learning whatever he needed to know from his reading and imagination.

In contrast to EFB, Sanford's background in psychological testing stemmed from his collaboration with Murray, who invented the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) in 1935. Sanford also seems to have possessed more expertise with scaling, while it is likely that EFB's interest in and study of mathematics opened her mind to this style of analysis. Adorno, on the other hand, lacked any competency in testing or statistical analysis and instead favored a version of building typologies, which were already outdated at the time the four began their collaboration. An eye-witness account of the situation in Berkeley has been offered by Marie Jahoda, who visited the team at that time while working as an assistant to Horkheimer at the AJC. Her impression of Adorno, whom she did not know from earlier days, was not very favorable, to say the least (Dahms 1996). From the published correspondence of Adorno and Horkheimer, the reader definitely has an impression of a working climate that left much to be desired. Sanford and Frenkel-Brunswik complained more than once about their exclusion from decision processes and about unfair remuneration—the final dispute about the order of the authors' names did not come out of the blue (Horkheimer 1995, 1996a, 1996b; Adorno and Horkheimer 2004, 2005; Fleck 2011, chapter 6).

The Berkeley group's links to sociology were weaker and less remarkable. Of course, Adorno would have claimed to be at the forefront of the theoretical conception of advanced modern societies, but his short encounter with empirical social research in Lazarsfeld's Office of Radio Research had strengthened his disapproval of team research (for a detailed analysis of this encounter see Fleck 2011, chapter 5). No CV of any of the three professional psychologists indicated any familiarity with empirical social research or sociological theorizing.

Given this distance from sociology, it is even more surprising that EFB approached a rising star of contemporary sociology when her core chapter for the collaborative research report was being prepared for printing.

### **EFB ASKS ROBERT K. MERTON FOR COMMENTS**

Merton (1910-2003) had participated in several of the meetings of the advisory board set up by the AJC to support Horkheimer and his collaborators. There are no hints as to whether EFB and Merton met each other in person, but among the Robert K. Merton Papers I found one letter from EFB and a reply from RKM. The undated handwritten letter (on stationery from the Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley) from EFB reads as follows:

Dear Dr. Merton,

This manuscript is my contribution to a book, for which Adorno, Sanford and others have also written some contributions.

Skipp section A and C entirely. Section D. is most important. The term “high-scorer” refers to the prejudiced subject, low scorer to the unprejudiced. In section D. psycho-analytical hypotheses alternative with sociological (see page 114/115). If you have time to dig into the data and to discuss possible alt hypotheses, I would be most grateful.

There is much more material for discussion. But this manuscript might provide a good basis for departure.

Thanks again

Else Brunswik

Office Child Welfare Inst.

Campus

Home: Thornwall 3 – 9417.<sup>4</sup>

The informal style of writing might indicate that the two must have met each other on some previous occasion. Unfortunately, the Merton Papers contain only four typed pages “Running Notes and Comments on the Else Brunswik ms.” No covering letter and no dates survive.<sup>5</sup>

We therefore do not know which parts of EFB’s drafts Merton received for commentary. Her single-authored part of TAP is titled “Personality as revealed through clinical interviews” and runs in the printed version from page 291 through page 486. Three of the five chapters are subdivided by capital letters and run down to D or further into the alphabet. The most likely scenario is that EFB’s first three chapters were sent to Merton (IX. The interview as an approach to the prejudiced personality, X. Parents and childhood as seen through the interviews, XI. Sex, people, and self as seen through the interviews).

As indicated, the annotated manuscript itself has not been preserved, but we get a reasonably good idea of Merton’s criticisms from his four pages of single-spaced typed comments. His remarks start with reference to “D 67” and cover the next 50 pages of EFB’s manuscript (the last comment refers to “114-115”).

One general, but for Merton only “minor terminological point,” are the “rather awkward terms” of “high-scorer” and “low-scorer.”

I assume you want to use terms which remind the reader of the actual basis of classification, i.e. their scores, thus avoiding connotations. Well and good. Once you have impressed upon the reader the criteria of classification, why not use terms which take up less space and lead to less awkward grammatical constructions? Almost any neologism or conventional term will do.

A rather broadly argued concern on Merton’s part relates to the calculation of percentages and it seems that this point at least has been taken on board by EFB. In the manuscript, the “neutrals”—those with neither high nor low scores—were divided equally between the highs and the lows. Merton

<sup>4</sup> Robert K. Merton Papers, Box 5 Folder 5-7, Columbia University Libraries, Archival Collections, Rare Book & Manuscript Library Collections.

<sup>5</sup> For readers unfamiliar with the Merton Papers, the sketchiness of the “Brunswik file” is surprising because Merton was a very careful correspondent and self-archivist. However, that her letter and his memo were found in the collection of correspondence labeled “BR, 1945-2002” indicates that Merton did not exchange more letters with her because it had been his custom to start individually labeled folders when correspondence became regular.

explains at some length the consequences of such an arbitrary data strategy with regard to the significance of the results.

One point of disagreement Merton repeats is the lack of an elaborated theoretical model. He quotes from the manuscript: “it was expected on theoretical grounds that ...,” before asking where it is that these theoretical grounds are explained. After the final repetition of this concern he adds in parenthesis: “I shan’t repeat this general point hereafter for fear of laboring ad nauseum – the nausea being yours, of course.”

Several remarks are directed towards EFB’s attempts to develop an explanation of the family dynamics of prejudiced and non-prejudiced respondents. Where EFB writes about the “conventional idealization of parents,” Merton wants to know the “nature of such idealization. Do you treat it as a ‘sub-culture pattern’ (found typically in certain subgroups and strata) or as an ‘individual’ (i.e. idiosyncratic) byproduct of particular sets of interpersonal relations in the subject’s family?”

Merton continues his questioning of EFB’s argumentation when he asks whether “idealization” and “objective appraisals of parents” are correlated with formal education “or any other index of articulateness: Otherwise the reader may wonder whether the difference is not essentially one of ability to articulate, to verbalize fine distinctions, to ‘observe’ less obvious characteristics of parents, rather than a genuine difference in parent-appraisals.”

Another serious criticism, which again indicates the differences between psychologists’ and sociologists’ frames of reference, Merton labels as the “‘culture-pattern’ interpretation.” EFB writes “from this material we may infer that repressed resentment leads to glorification of the parents” and Merton remarks:

This is an example of your moving promptly to a ‘psychological’ interpretation of a finding before considering the possibility that it can be derived sociologically. You’re probably right, in this instance; your interpretation has a certain plausibility. But should you not consider the alternative that the correlation between ‘glorification’ and resentment of parents may not only represent this dynamic of psychology but also a culture-pattern: e.g. in certain groups, it is laid down as cultural axiom that ‘parents can do no wrong’, thus accounting for ‘glorification’ among the conformists to this axiom, but in due course this leads to resentment as the individual experiences discrepancies between the parents’ alleged infallibility and his actual behavior.

To make his point, it would have been sufficient for Merton to direct EFB to consult his paper on anomie from 1938 (Merton 1938), which was still famous at that time. However, Merton continues to elaborate alternative explanations when he writes:

Pursuing the ‘culture-pattern’ interpretation further: IF some of your subjects have been exposed to a pattern which asserts that ‘not only are one’s parents above criticism, but they have deep and abiding obligations to their children which they will carry out’, is it not likely that these subjects will more often feel themselves ‘victimized’ by parents, since their expectations of continuing care, having all dependencies recognized and succored by parents, are too exaggerated to be fulfilled. Thus the ‘dynamic’ relation bet[ween]. glorification, resentment and victimization may be derived from the pre-existing culture pattern. The problem is, of course, where does one locate this pattern in terms of social structure – in which groups is it typically

to be found? Italians, for example, typically have this authoritarian family pattern, with rigorous discipline of children, particularly girls in their adolescence, plus a requirement of family solidarity.

The Italians Merton references here are obviously American-Italians, and it seems plausible that he extracted this finding from William Whyte's recently published study on the Italian district in Boston (Whyte 1943).

Merton elaborates the same culture-pattern perspective when he comments on the conceptualization of "father-dominant vs. mother-center[ed] or egalitarian." He calls it the "key-item discriminating the two culture patterns in American society. 'Henpecking-dominance of mother' is merely a variant of the authoritarian pattern." And in parenthesis he adds suggestions for further reading: "Have you seen some of Franklin Frazier's accounts of the matricentric family, the egalitarian family, etc.? I believe Burgess has something on this too. Neither are particularly penetrating accounts, but they will lend credence to these being established and identifiable culture patterns."<sup>6</sup>

A further culture pattern discovered by Merton in the manuscript is the distinction between "principled independence" and "rebellion against authority." Parents who "subscribe" to the pattern of "principled independence" will not view the behavior of their children as hostile or aggressive; "they will accept it as 'proper' without having it sabotage the relation with their children." But if "the culture pattern prescribes submission to parents," a deviation by their children will force the elders to react with outrage. "The intensity of feeling, therefore, may be derived from the mores or culture pattern" and thus may not stem from character or personality, upbringing, or unconscious drives. He then further elaborates a sociological explanation of measured differences:

The authoritarian family pattern includes a basic orientation of parents toward conformity with the pattern; they are concerned, above all, with whether children abide by the 'rules', i.e. the pattern. Affection may occur, but it is not prescribed; what is prescribed is discipline. Thus, the parent becomes for the child largely an object which must be taken into account if the child wants to satisfy his impulses: the parent becomes an object, an obstacle, a source of (or a denial of) things, not an independent source of affection. The parent is, so to say, as much a part of the social environment as a police officer; he is not so much a person as a relevant and possibly dangerous object – one to be manipulated, if possible, or utilized. Hence, the utilitarian orientation toward the parent derives from the parent's role in playing out the instructions of the culture pattern.

And he continues by elaborating a role theory as an alternative explanation:

"The quid pro quo sub-pattern has much the same source, I suspect. The child is given things, not because the parents love him, but because the parents are obliged to take care of him; correlatively, the children have their rigorously defined role; they must reciprocate, not so much in term of love (which they have not received) but in terms of an implicit 'agreement' of reciprocity involved in the authoritarian culture pattern. Reciprocity of love and reciprocity

<sup>6</sup> Merton might have had in mind these books by these two sociologists of the family, who were influential at that time: E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States*, Chicago: University of Chicago 1939; Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, New York: Prentice Hall 1939; Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family: From Institution to Companionship*, New York: American Book 1945. None of these authors are cited in TAP, however.

of things are very different; the first does not imply a careful weighing of equivalences, the latter does.

Since you say that the ‘utilitarian outlook’ will play a central part in your later discussion, it would seem all the more desirable to attempt to derive this outlook, rather than take it as a datum.

It is not without some irony that Merton has to remind EFB to avoid stereotypes with regard to the sexes (gender as a category was not yet born). He asks in criticism:

why do you leave ‘unexplained’ [i.e. underived] the hypothesis that H[igh scoring] men have a greater ‘submission ‘problem’ than H women? Is it derived from the different sex-roles in relation to authority? From what? If you don’t ‘derive’ the hypothesis, it becomes merely an empirical generalization, which some readers may even ascribe to biologically grounded differences between the sexes.

EFB seems to have accepted this point but her solution in TAP is not very convincing when she writes:

related to glorification of parents is an attitude to be characterized as submission to parental authority and values out of respect based on fear. ... It is therefore interesting to note that this category shows marked differences between prejudiced and unprejudiced interviewees. The percentage of high-scoring men who manifest this attitude .... Is greater than that of the high-scoring women. (TAP: 350)

Deleting the remark admitting the necessity of further study of the hypothesis of a difference between men and women with regard to authoritarian submission does not prevent mis-ascriptions by readers.

Whereas most of Merton’s concrete criticisms resulted in rewriting or deletion, the changes EFB made with regard to the sex differences discussed above were minimal. Instead of leaving the hypothesis “unexplained,” it found entry in the printed version as a given—but without any further discussion or elaboration: “This gives some support to the hypothesis that high-scoring men are faced with a more serious submission problem than high-scoring women.” (TAP: 350)

Finally, Merton explicitly stressed the disciplinary rift between psychology and sociology:

What you as a psychologist take as a datum – ‘they received more love’ – I as a sociologist take as problematical – ‘why did these people and not the others receive more love?’ If you reply that it was simply (i.e. exclusively) a matter of individual differences among parents, then you are legislating sociology out of existence. If you reply that you don’t know and don’t care, then you assume the role of a psychologist who admits the existence of sociology but disclaims any concern with it. If you reply, let’s find out, why, i.e. let’s try to identify the groups which carry ‘love toward children’ as an integral part of their family culture pattern, then you are a sociologically oriented psychologist. Are you ready to vote?

To round out the picture, it should be noted that while, overall, the reprimands outweighed the praise, Merton did find some formulations appropriate. “Status-concern,” “status-relaxation,” and “types of dependence” got the approval of the sociological theorist, who was enjoying his first peak of academic acclaim in around 1950.

“Status concern” is the title of part 4 of chapter X (TAP: 382-384) but in the two pages, there is not a single reference to Merton’s culture-pattern argument. And EFB uses the same concept elsewhere but, again, without further discussion: “In the same record there are signs of the subject’s relaxation about the status of his own family and that of his father.” (TAP: 364) The contrast between the dependence on things versus that on love is discussed twice in TAP but in both instances, there is no echo of the culture-pattern approach outlined by Merton in his remarks.

At the very end of the typed comments, Merton suggests that “we use these few comments as a basis for our discussion.”

We do not know when and where this meeting might have taken place, but what we can recognize is that in the printed version of TAP, the authors persist in their devotion to a pure individualistic view on the problem of prejudices.

## MERTON PROBLEMATIZES PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES

This private correspondence and presumed in-person debate were not the only instances where Merton elaborated his mode of research. In several instances of his work from the 1930s and 1940s he presented his own explanatory models. Already his PhD thesis had been concerned with an analysis of the religious and, therefore, cultural background variables of the members of the Royal Society in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England. What later on became known as the “Merton thesis” was outlined in the revised published version (Merton 1938). At the heart of his study was the question of how to explain the shifts in focus in the research of early English scientists. Merton argued that particular religious orientations could be identified as the causes for it. Removed from all historical specificities, Merton attempted to explain overt behavior (i.e. shifting foci of scientists) by pointing to particular patterns of beliefs, sentiments, attitudes, and mental forces as causes (Merton 1938; on its reception see: Cohen 1990).

The aforementioned elaboration of the anomie theory, published in 1938, the very same year as his thesis appeared, expanded this approach by differentiating between patterns of cultural orientation distributed unevenly in a society. Less well known are two more attempts by Merton to develop what, at that time, he termed paradigms of social analysis.<sup>7</sup> Earlier on he had proposed such paradigms for the sociology of knowledge, functional analysis, and anomie. In 1948, so early enough for the Berkeley group to have seen it,<sup>8</sup> he published a paper on the triad of creed—attitude—action. In this paper, he discussed the question of why some people discriminate and others do not. The historical background was the ongoing debate about discrimination against ethnic minorities in the United States. Merton challenged Gunnar Myrdal’s thesis, expounded in his voluminous study (Myrdal [1944] 1962), according to which a gulf between creed and conduct created the “dilemma.” Merton objected. In a similar vein to the anomie paper from 1938, in 1948 he starts with what he calls the “American Creed”: “a set of values and precepts embedded in American culture to which Americans are expected to conform” (Merton 1976: 190). This creed, as with any other faith, is neither historically fixed nor

<sup>7</sup> In the later re-publication of Merton’s 1948 work, he added some sentences on his attempt to make “paradigm” a “logical design for analysis” (Merton 1976: 211) and admits that Thomas S. Kuhn has been more successful with his version of paradigm.

<sup>8</sup> The Else Frenkel-Brunswik Papers at the Archiv für die Geschichte der Soziologie in Österreich (AGSÖ) in Graz contain only of a small part of her records. We therefore do not know whether Merton handed copies of his recent publications to Frenkel-Brunswik.

shared unanimously by all Americans. In some corners of the country, in some strata of society, binding to the creed will have been stronger, in others weaker. Since not all individuals are tied in to the same extent, evasion can happen. “The evasions themselves become institutionalized, giving rise to what I have described as the ‘institutionalized evasion of institutional norms’.” (Merton 1976: 190) To get a handle on this, it is necessary to go beyond the simple opposition of “high cultural principles and low social conduct” (Merton 1976: 191). What is needed is to enlarge the picture from a two-variable model to one which encompasses three variables. Differing from the cultural creed are the beliefs and attitudes of individuals; and the actual practices of individuals are not always in accord with the creed or their attitudes.

Merton cross tabulated these insights in a way that strongly resembles the older essay on social structure and anomie. Conformity to the creed or deviation from it can be found both under “Attitude” and under “Behavior,” where prejudice or non-prejudice refers to the first, discrimination or non-discrimination to the second. Merton names the resulting four types in the following way:

Unprejudiced non-discriminator or All-Wheater Liberal,  
unprejudiced discriminator or Fair-Wheater Liberal,  
prejudiced non-discriminator or Fair-Wheater Illiberal and  
prejudiced discriminator or All-Wheater Illiberal. (Merton 1976: 193-198)

In an astonishingly outspoken ‘activist’s’ style, Merton then discusses at some length the conditions under which the two types exhibit or hide their attitudes under cross-pressure.<sup>9</sup> Central to his presentation is the concept of expediency, which in one situation demands one kind of conformity but supports the opposite behavior in other circumstances. There is no need to elaborate further on Merton’s arguments and insights on prejudice and discrimination. What should be highlighted, however, is that his paper displays exactly those thoughts on successfully combatting prejudice which the American Jewish Committee expected from the social sciences when its officers hired Horkheimer and his collaborators for the Studies in Prejudice project.

It is surprising to note the complete lack of references to this paper by Merton in TAP. But given this, it comes as less of a surprise to see that another relevant contribution from the very same sociologist had been ignored by the authors of TAP. In 1940, Merton published a paper on the problems of measuring attitudes. Besides technical criticism directed towards L. L. Thurstone, the inventor of this kind of research, Merton did not side with those who belittled opinions and favored analyses directed towards overt behavior.

A further mooted point [...] is the relation of opinion to overt behavior. [...] In some situations, it may be discovered that overt behavior is a more reliable basis for drawing inferences about future behavior (overt or verbal). In other situations, it may be found that verbal responses are a tolerably accurate guide to future behavior (overt or verbal). It should not be forgotten that overt actions may deceive; that they [...] may be deliberately designed to disguise or to conceal private attitudes. The question of the relative ‘significance’ of verbal and overt responses must as yet be solved anew for each class of problems. The apriori assumption that verbal responses are simply epiphenomenal is to be accorded no greater weight than the assumption that words do not deceive nor actions lie. (Merton 1976, 260)

<sup>9</sup> Merton did not make use of this Lazarsfeldian concept explicitly but followed the line of argumentation first presented in Lazarsfeld et al. ([1944] 2021).

Merton's argument might have been merely a theorist's deliberations back in the 1940s; it has since become cutting edge in psychological attitude research (Guyer & Fabrigar 2015), although it has yet to conquer all corners of sociology. Back in the late 1940s, neither the psychologists from the Berkeley Public Opinion Research Group nor the social theorists assembled around Horkheimer and Adorno approached the level of sophisticated thought exhibited by Merton in his two contributions.

## SOCIOLOGISTS' REACTIONS TO TAP

Let me finish by taking a brief glance at the reception of TAP by contemporary sociologists. Merton himself paid tribute to this study only once. In the second edition of his seminal *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Merton 1968), Merton inserted a chapter on "Continuities in the Theory of Social Structure and Anomie" that refers to EFB's concept of "intolerance of ambiguity," which she had elaborated in separate publications (Frenkel-Brunswik 1949, 1954). His praise for her insights is highly qualified:

What these studies lack by way of systematic incorporation of variables and dynamics of social structure is largely compensated by their detailed characterization of the components which presumably enter into ritualist responses to patterned situations and not only into the structure of the rigid personality. [...] The concept of intolerance of ambiguity refers to 'an excess' of designated kinds of perception, attitudes and behavior (as indicated by such terms as 'undue preference', 'over-simplified', 'unqualified', 'over-emphasis', and the like). The norms in terms of which these are judged to be 'excessive', however, need not be confined to the statistical norms observed in an aggregate of personalities under observation or to norms of 'functional appropriateness' established by considering individuals *seriatim* in abstraction from their social environments. The norms can also be derived from the standardized normative expectations which obtain in various groups so that behavior which, by the first set of standards, may be regarded as 'psychological over-rigidity' can, on occasion, be regarded by the second set of standards, as adaptive social conformity. This is only to say that although there is probably a linkage between the concept of overly-rigid personalities and the concept of socially induced ritualistic behavior, the two are far from being identical. (Merton 1968: 241)

This detailed rejection of the psychology approach was the last comment Merton elaborated on TAP. He was, however, not alone in his reservations towards this study and its rigidly individualistic approach. TAP was reviewed immediately after it appeared in print in 1950 but the early reviews published in sociological journals raised several reservations:

- "the concept of the nonethnocentric personality is utopian" (Jurczak 1950)
- "Professor Horkheimer unfortunately uses the same dichotomous approach here against which his students and collaborators warn" (Bunzel 1950)
- "Critical readers will wonder at the absence of any reference to the scaling approaches of Guttman and Lazarsfeld during the entire discussion of scale construction" (Bredemeier 1950)
- "the reader may wish that middle scorers (probably more representative of the population as a whole) received as much intensive study as the high and low scorers" (Schermerhorn 1951)
- "The authoritarian type is the one most closely approximating the 'perfect' politician in the sense of one whose primary goal value is power, whose preferred base value is also



power (threat or use of extreme deprivations in any sphere), and whose basic expectations are that the most important human relations are matters of power. By contrast, the democratic character is not centered on power but upon multiple values.” (Lasswell 1951);

- “Thus, personality, as selective sensitivity and orientations toward categories, is important. But attitudes and action are not simply the unfolding of character structure. The demands of other participants in a collective transaction, especially the shared expectations of what each person is to do, are also of crucial importance.” (Shibutani 1952)

The more or less critical reception of TAP by sociologists in the early 1950s then culminated in a book-length evaluation of the study by a group of experts. Under the editorship of Marie Jahoda and Richard Christie, both at that time affiliated with the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University, the collection of essays appeared in a series titled *Continuities in Social Research*. EFB was the only author of the study under investigation who contributed a chapter of her own, in which she developed some of her perspectives further but did not react to several of what were, overall, very critical contributions by others. Horkheimer and his circle never responded in public to any of the severe criticisms raised by the contributors to the edited volume of evaluation. Instead they invested considerable effort in sidelining Adorno’s co-authors and presenting him as the mastermind behind the study.

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ARTICLE

# How the Fascist and Non-Fascist Self May Develop:

Else Frenkel-Brunswik's qualitative analyses in *The Authoritarian Personality* and their comparison to studies on resisters

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## Abstract

In the context of several authoritarian regimes around the world, there is growing interest in explaining these processes of change. This article follows the tradition of the social sciences in striving to understand the social mechanisms of motivational structures of the self in interaction with societal contexts. The author draws on the qualitative contributions to the studies on fascism by the Berkeley University Group, published in 1950 as 'The Authoritarian Personality' by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford (1950). This article analyses the qualitative sections of the Study presented by Else Frenkel-Brunswik and compares these with the results of selected studies on resisters. Based on this analysis, the article discusses the results of the comparison and the relevance of Frenkel-Brunswik's contribution, as well as the implications for further research.

## Keywords

*The Authoritarian Personality*, authoritarian personality structure, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, qualitative study, psychoanalysis, (rescue) resisters

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## INTRODUCTION

This article<sup>1</sup> follows the tradition of the social sciences in striving to understand the social mechanisms of motivational structures of the self in interaction in societal contexts (Darowska 2012). This explanatory approach recognises the crucial contribution made by Else Frenkel-Brunswik to the understanding of the authoritarian personality and the conditions of its development as prerequisites

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of fascism. Furthermore, it shows the possible lines of continuation of these attempts by combining them with other research fields. In an exploratory study I relate some central findings of the qualitative part of the Authoritarian Personality Study (AP Study) by Else Frenkel-Brunswik to selected research on resisters. To date there has been a lack of this kind of study (cf. Fahrenberg and Fahrenberg 2021). The article is structured as follows: Firstly, I reconstruct some aspects of the qualitative analysis by Frenkel-Brunswik in the AP Study. In the second section, her findings are related to certain dimensions of the research on resisters to the Nazi regime. References to other relevant researchers in the field of psychoanalysis and individual psychology, above all Erich Fromm and Alfred Adler, are included. Finally, I draw conclusions and reflect on the theoretical and methodological findings.

The research interest behind the AP Study can be expressed in general terms through the question: Is there an authoritarian and fascist personality,<sup>2</sup> and what are its constitutive elements? The general concern refers to the societal and individual origins of fascism.<sup>3</sup> Several aspects were relevant here, among others antisemitic and racial attitudes, the manifestation of antidemocratic tendencies, and the readiness to be obedient.

In the meantime, a broad spectrum of research has been carried out on perpetrators of National Socialism that takes a variety of approaches. These include the following key phases and areas: *intentionalism*, functional *structuralism*, and research referring to the ‘normalisation’ thesis<sup>4</sup> (e.g. Pohl 2011; Gross 2012; Wiedemann 2019; Browning 1992; Welzer 2007), as well as several biographical studies and publications of archive material containing considerable quantities of narratives by emigrants, NSDAP members, speeches and conversations (for a thorough overview see Fahrenberg and Fahrenberg 2021). Although not propagated as such, the underlying assumption of the AP Study was that the fascist personality can be captured not only in Germany (or Italy) but in the United States as well, a society in which fascism did not emerge to the extent of forming a significant political party.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the contribution of the society—in its supportive function as a basic constitutive factor of fascism and as the basis for recruitment for the regime function holders—was considered significant. Through her reporting from the Eichmann trial in 1961, Hannah Arendt is probably the most well-known author to bring the ‘normalisation’ thesis into public discourse. The thesis, famous for its keyword the ‘banality of the evil’ (‘Banalität des Bösen’, Arendt 1986), represents a decisive contribution to the perspective on the perpetrators as ordinary men and women, anchored in the broad social strata, who under certain conditions turn into mass murderers or their supporters. Arendt realised that Adolf Eichmann, who was the organiser of the extermination of the Jews, appeared

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<sup>2</sup> Erich Fromm made an essential contribution to the thesis on the authoritarian personality with his concept of the ‘social character’ and his works ‘Escape from freedom’ as well as ‘Die Arbeiter und Angestellte am Vorabend des Dritten Reiches’ (2019 [1980]) (‘The workers and employees on the eve of the Third Reich’) (cf. Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The article follows the approach of the AP Study and does not have its own definition of fascism. However, it refers to National Socialism as the context experienced by the authors of the AP Study: Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Theodor W. Adorno, Maria Hertz Levinson, and Max Horkheimer (who wrote the preface).

<sup>4</sup> Several other approaches were also developed, for example ‘malignant narcissism’ (Reuleaux 2011 cited in Pohl 2011: 33ff.)—a pathologisation thesis, with a complex personality disorder (on the part of the perpetrators)—as the consequence of a trauma experienced in childhood. Another approach is the modernity thesis (Baumann 2021 [1992], in continuation of Horkheimer and Adorno 2013 [1969]).

<sup>5</sup> The aim of the AP Study was to contribute to explaining antisemitism and fascism and to strengthening democracy. The general assumption was of the multilayered structure of the individual, which could be accessed especially in the unconscious dimensions with the application of the psychoanalytical approach (Adorno et al. 2019; cf. also Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004: 6).

during the trial not as monstrous but rather as a common and unimpressive man.<sup>6</sup> Arendt also assessed Eichmann as lacking the ability to think, referring here to her philosophical and moral concept of thinking (Arendt 2020). Her thesis was understandably highly controversial since it bordered on being understood as the trivialisation of the Holocaust. Further research draws explicitly or implicitly on this understanding of perpetrators as normal people from the middle strata of society (e.g. Browning 1992; Mann 2000), while others point out certain aspects such as e.g. socialisation into violence (Mallmann and Paul 2013). Harald Welzer (2007) stresses the role of societal context as the ‘moral framing’, which changed over a short period of a few years with the emergence and consolidation of the Nazis’ power. The moral framing became the reference point for the masses who, within this ‘new’ frame of moral rules, changed their individual moral beliefs, adjusting them to the elite and then to the majority of the population. Welzer’s thesis makes a significant contribution to research on fascism, drawing on the role of collectiveness, but it does not explain the deeper mechanisms of this collective shift, also in light of the continuities (Pohl 2011). Furthermore, it does not provide any response to the question of why some people experiencing the same societal shift in moral rules resisted the Nazi regime. It might, therefore, be reasonable to ask how individuals in the same society differ with respect to adjustment to the moral shift, cooperation with the regime, and the rejection of the ‘new moral’. If we assume that the general societal conditions on the macro level are the same, then where are the differences located? When viewed in this way, the analyses of the AP Study are a contribution to the theory of the mechanisms of the emergence and functioning of fascism and authoritarian regimes, in the tradition of critical sociology and (social) psychology. In its qualitative sections, the AP Study worked out the patterns of the individual personality structures of prejudiced and less prejudiced persons. Beyond this, the study also discussed subjective ideologies, including racial and antisemitic attitudes and prejudices against minorities. The theory is conceptualised as a dynamic model that reconstructs the self<sup>7</sup> in several elements and, furthermore, family interactions in the context of the society and ideological beliefs.

## **FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK’S QUALITATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY STUDY**

Frenkel-Brunswik’s contribution in the AP Study is based on psychoanalytical theory, the theory of science, a sociological approach, and quantitative and qualitative methodology. The parts of the AP Study by Frenkel-Brunswik cover the themes ‘Parents and Childhood’ (chapter X), ‘Sex, People and Self’ (chapter XI), and ‘Dynamic and Cognitive Personality Organization’ (chapter XII). Two further chapters authored by her cover introductory methodological notes and the summary of the results. The approach is based on the assumption that in addition to the quantitative results of the scales, further explanations are needed, which will be gained through the analysis of qualitative interviews. The quantitative data was used to select people who scored high or low on the applied scales.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt’s thesis was based on her observations during the trial. She did not refer to the protocols of the interrogations of Eichmann. Therefore, her impression that Eichmann was not deeply antisemitic—the image he attempted to create in the court—must be revised. Eichmann was deeply rooted in Nazi racial and antisemitic ideology (Lang 2001). However, her thesis that Nazi ideology and antisemitic attitudes were not the preserve of a few monsters but were ideologies and attitudes held by ‘normal’ people from the middle strata of society is still valid.

<sup>7</sup> The notion of ‘self’ in the sociological sense refers to the subject and its consciousness of itself.

<sup>8</sup> The AP Study contains the A-S scale (Anti-Semitism scale) and the E scale (Ethnocentrism scale) featured in chapters III and IV by Daniel J. Levinson and in chapter VI by R. Nevitt Sanford. The E scale in fact reveals racial views and attitudes (referring to Black, Japanese and German people), nationalistic ideology, anti-democratic, anti-immigrant and anti-

Frenkel-Brunswik's qualitative contribution was based on semi-structured interviews with people who scored high or low on the Anti-Semitism and Ethnocentrism (A-S and E) scales. The results<sup>9</sup> show that people who score high or low for prejudice differ in their personality structure<sup>10</sup> in relevant elements, notably 'judgement on people', 'punitiveness', 'conception of human relations' (of the societal order), 'attitude toward people' and 'attitude toward present self' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 405ff.).

The qualitative interviews and their analyses were carefully considered. That the main analysis was carried out without knowing how the interviewees were placed on the scale (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019a: 295) is of critical value in the study. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that the interviews, which lasted from one and a half to three hours (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019a: 301), were carried out by people trained in psychology for this task. A particularly innovative characteristic of the interview schedule is that it encompasses 'manifest' and 'underlying' questions. The manifest questions served as a guide for the interviewing person and were developed on the basis of the underlying questions. In turn, these were derived from social and personality theory and the explanatory interviews (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019a: 303). The—general and particular—value of the qualitative parts of the AP Study by Else Frenkel-Brunswik is the psychoanalytical approach, which was possible thanks to her profound knowledge of the field of psychoanalysis and how it is entangled with sociological factors (Frenkel-Brunswik 1996; 1996d). In the psychoanalytical approach, the personality traits formulated by Frenkel-Brunswik are manifestations of the unconscious layers of the personality (see also Frenkel-Brunswik 1996a). These do not so much display the presence or absence of e.g. aggression, weakness, faults, dependence, imagination, desire etc., but rather the mechanisms for handling them.

In the framework of these dynamics, defence mechanisms are the instruments of rejection of those tendencies which the subject is not ready to face and to incorporate. (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019d: 442)

Although the institutions, ideology and morals of 1950s society in the United States differed greatly from that in Nazi Germany after 1933, the results are remarkable.

The '*moralistic condemnation of other people*', '*extrapunitiveness*', meaning '*lack of insight into one's own shortcomings* and the *projection*<sup>11</sup> of one's weaknesses and faults onto others', '*hierar-*

foreigner attitudes, sexism, societal racism, crimino-biological and eugenic concepts, but also a hierarchy- and submission-oriented thinking (Adorno et al. 2019: 102ff.). Furthermore, the AP Study includes the F scale (the Fascism scale) presented in chapter VII by R. Nevitt Sanford, T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, and Daniel J. Levinson, and the PEC scale (the Politico-Economic Conservatism scale) presented by Daniel J. Levinson in chapter V.

<sup>9</sup> In the following I will focus on the particular aspects that are comparable with the research on *resisters*. My qualitative data for the comparison is based predominantly on historical documents and publications referring to the past. This means that some dimensions which require a deep access to the subject—such as sexual life, the image of man and woman, and attitudes towards material objects—cannot be applied, or only marginally so because they are not accessible in this data.

<sup>10</sup> 'Personality structure' and its 'elements' are not the original terms used in the AP Study. I prefer to refer to the 'authoritarian structure' of a subject as a way of indicating complexity and dynamics.

<sup>11</sup> We can assume that the mechanism of *projection*—formulated as a psychoanalytical concept by Sigmund Freud, confirmed by child developmental psychology for the age of one and a half years and older (Stern 2020, Dornes 1997, 2004), and earlier already commented on and corrected by Erich Fromm—is crucial to the research on the authoritarian personality. Frenkel-Brunswik's element of 'extrapunitiveness' within the structure of authoritarian personality is based on this psychoanalytical concept.

*chical conception of human relationships*' as well as '*dependence on people as means for advancement*' and '*self-deception*'<sup>12</sup> ('self-glorification') are elements of the authoritarian structure formulated by Frenkel-Brunswik in her qualitative research. In general, these elements are more strongly expressed among persons who scored high on the A-S scale and the E scale, which means among individuals whose attitude towards minorities—Jews, Blacks and other minorities—are considerably prejudiced, antisemitic or racist. In contrast, the low scorers are characterised more by '*permissiveness toward individuals*', '*impunitiveness*' i.e. '*the tendency to refrain from blaming altogether, be it others or oneself*', '*equalitarian mutuality*', '*love-oriented dependence*' and '*objective self-appraisal*' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 405ff.; 2019e), as well as '*principled independence*' (the opposite of submission) (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b) and '*tolerance for ambiguity*' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019d: 451f.; cf. also Frenkel-Brunswik 1996b; 1996c: 216ff.). The reconstruction of the family structure and significant childhood events reveals subjects' attitude towards their parents. Among the high-scoring persons this shows the following elements: the '*idealization of the parents*' (glorification), '*blocked affects*' and '*submission to parental authority*', ultimately also '*victimization*' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 340ff.). The reconstruction of what kind of parental discipline was used shows that high-scoring persons often report having experienced violence from their parents. However, when the pain had become internalised and was seemingly no longer a burden for the subject, narratives referring to the parents were positive, although generally more focused on convention and appearance or recognition by the environment than on references to love. In the analysis, the narratives of low-scoring people show a more consistent, differentiated and critical picture of their parents and deeper (self-)reflection. High-scoring subjects often focus more on things and do not exhibit a high level of dependence on love.

### **COMPARISON: FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK'S QUALITATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE AP STUDY AND RESEARCH ON (RESCUE)<sup>13</sup> RESISTANCE**

This article assumes that a meaningful comparison can be made between Frenkel-Brunswik's findings, particularly those referring to the low-scoring persons, and research on resisters in the German context. The argument is not self-explanatory due to the fact that the analyses by Else Frenkel-Brunswik were concerned with the structures of the personality and the family, and that they were based on the findings which classified the interviewed subjects according to their specific attitudes to others. In the case of low-scoring people, these attitudes were less prejudiced, less racist, less ethnocentric and less nationalistic. However, information about the behaviour of these subjects was missing. Thus, one may ask what kind of insights are offered by bringing together the personality and family structures of people whose *attitudes* are displayed in the AP Study (behaviour: unknown) and resisters and anti-Nazis whose *actions* are known. This is the narrow pathway pursued by the

<sup>12</sup> Some of these concepts are italicised by Frenkel-Brunswik, but not all. I use italics to mark all concepts in this and the next paragraph.

<sup>13</sup> Rescue resistance is a type of the resistance against National Socialism that was recognised very late in public discourse and research (see e.g. Lustiger 2011; Darowska 2012). In the context of this article, the discussion on the definition of resistance is not essential. Worth mentioning is, however, that for many years after the Second World War, 'resistance' was associated with political motives and an intention to overthrow the regime. It was only in the 1980s that the understanding of resistant actions was gradually enlarged and also entered into scientific discourse—help, support, rescue and other activities were recognised as forms of resistance. Whether political issues in the narrow sense are at stake or not, a certain amount of non-conformity with the political regime can be assumed by all these activities. Furthermore, it is difficult to draw the line between political and not political; it is dependent on the concept of political action applied as the basis.



research in this paper, the intention being to continue with the study of the authoritarian personality by going beyond the level of attitudes and also addressing the level of behaviour. Data in regard to behaviour is obtainable only on one side—on the side of the resisters and anti-Nazis, but not in the AP Study. Yet these two research perspectives provide us with partially comparable data on family structures and personality structures. It should be noted that resistance requires a certain political situation, which triggers a specific kind of behaviour. Furthermore, a certain kind of behaviour is not a determined causal effect of certain attitudes. These can be one of the factors which are needed to act in a certain way and not in another way. However, this is a theoretical assumption, according to which it is highly likely that a connection between personality and family structure, attitude and behaviour exists or can be found.<sup>14</sup> The AP study itself made a similar argument, albeit the other way round: the researchers mainly examined the attitudes of subjects whom they then interviewed in the second step, thereby generating data on the personality and family structures in their sample. From the subjects' attitudes they inferred the fascist personality, which, in the context of a growing fascist movement, could have the potential to result in fascist actions:

We may be able to say something about the readiness of an individual to break into violence, but we are pretty much in the dark as to the remaining necessary conditions under which an actual outbreak would occur. (Adorno et al. 2019: 972)

The authors were aware of the fact that research on action should be the next step.<sup>15</sup> Thus, I compare the data on less prejudiced subjects in the AP Study as potential anti-Nazis with the data on anti-Nazis and resisters (particularly those not rooted in nationalistic identifications).

There are various other methodological challenges. One of them is the choice of the studies for the comparison. This paper is located in the field of qualitative research; therefore the comparison method is also descriptive and, due to the length of the article, focuses on four studies, one of which is the qualitative contribution by Frenkel-Brunswik to the AP Study. The guiding principle here is to achieve a variety of approaches and methodologies. Below I comment on the specific criteria underpinning my choice of each of the additional three studies and on their methodology.

Another challenge is the use of different terminology in the studies. Thus one dimension of this comparison is to search for similarities in the meaning of the terms. Furthermore, some of the analyses in the research on resisters and on perpetrators carried out after 1950 apply—either consciously or not—the concept of the Authoritarian Personality of the AP Study or a psychoanalytical approach in general. Hence it is not surprising if the results of these studies show similarities with the results of the AP Study. However, it can be assumed that even given the impact of the theory of the authoritarian personality on the analytical perspective of the other studies, there are still other personality traits, trait constellations and attitudes to be found. Furthermore, the studies are different in design and they focus on different theoretical assumptions, which are the basis for determining fascist, non-fascist or anti-fascist attitudes. They also make assumptions about possible prerequisites for the development of the fascist and non-fascist self. The analyses of Else Frenkel-Brunswik were based on

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<sup>14</sup> Another possibility would be longitudinal studies including war, dictatorship or similar circumstances.

<sup>15</sup> 'There is, in other words, still plenty of room for action research. Actually such additional research is necessary for all practical purposes. Outbreaks into action must be considered the results of both the internal potential and a set of eliciting factors in the environment. No action research can, however, be complete without analysis of the factors within the individual, an analysis to which this volume endeavors to contribute, so that we should be enabled to anticipate who would behave in a certain way under given circumstances.' (Adorno et al. 2019: 972).

a psychoanalytical approach, which is the common basis for the studies in this paper. However, each of the research projects described below includes other additional factors that are also significant.

My research question in this section is:

How does the personality structure of low-scoring persons in the AP Study relate to the personality structures of resisters? In order to answer this question, I examine the following data:

(a) The personality structures of the low-scoring persons in the AP Study as elaborated by Frenkel-Brunswik (Adorno et al. 2019 [1950]). The categories from the study by Frenkel-Brunswik serve as a basis for and the structure of the comparison. Further categories that were not applied in Frenkel-Brunswik's analyses will be added. For the methodology of Frenkel-Brunswik's research, see section 1 of this paper.

(b) The personality and motivational structures of the resisters—non-Jewish rescuers of Jewish persons under the National Socialist regime in Nazi Germany and in occupied countries, as formulated in the analyses of in-depth psychological interviews conducted by the psychoanalyst Eva Fogelman (1995). Eva Fogelman is a psychotherapist and social psychologist (also filmmaker and author), Senior Researcher Fellow at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and co-founder of the Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers. She herself is the daughter of a rescued Jewish person—Simcha Fagelman (Fogelman 1995: 9ff.). Her research is based on more than 300 in-depth interviews with rescuers in the USA, Israel, and various Western and Eastern European countries. Fogelman's research project was supervised in Social Psychology at the Graduate Center CUNY, where she wrote her doctoral thesis. Several researchers, among others Stanley Milgram, and a vast network of supporters, supervisors and volunteers were involved in the project, which she led. The project was supported financially by the John Slawson Fund of the American Jewish Committee, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. The Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers was founded by Fogelman and Harold Schulweis in 1986 (Fogelman 1995: 17) with the aim of searching for rescuers, who were then supported by the foundation (Fogelman 1995: 299ff.). Fogelman's research questions focused on the motivation for the rescue action, and attention was paid to moral issues, altruistic motifs, common personality traits and parental discipline. Fogelman applies the term 'humanistic values' and 'altruism', although she is conscious of a certain devaluation of the meaning of this terminology in the modern age (Fogelman 1995: 17). The project assumes the presence of several factors which are required for altruistic action. Personality traits play a role alongside various situational factors. The interviews were recorded, and sometimes written reports and archive materials were provided in addition. The material was only partially anonymised if requested by the interviewee (Fogelman 1995: 16ff.). To my knowledge, commentary on the methodology of the analyses is missing, and I understand the study to be basically qualitative.

I chose this study although little information on the underlying methodology is given in the publication. However, the strength of this research lies in its sample, consisting as it does of the impressively large number of 300 interviewees who were directly involved in the consequences of the Nazi regime. A further strength is the timing of the research—the rescuers themselves were interviewed—as well as the researcher's own qualification as a psychoanalyst. The project's involvement in the process of getting recognition for the rescue-resisters, among others in Yad Vashem, and its work to raise their visibility and provide support for them is a remarkable example of combining research and action.

(c) The results of the biographical qualitative case study by Lucyna Darowska (2012) on Prague journalist Milena Jesenská, who resisted the National Socialist regime and was involved in rescue actions of Jewish and non-Jewish persons threatened by the Nazis in occupied Prague. In addition to this, Milena Jesenská was active in an underground newspaper and in rescue actions in the Ravensbrück concentration camp (Darowska 2012). The choice of this study is motivated by the depth of the analysis, which makes a single case study possible. Moreover, there is a wide variety of analytical approaches taken in the study, including among others philosophical, psychoanalytical, educational and pedagogical approaches. This study considers the biographical development of the individual under the aspect of ‘resistance’ and, furthermore, takes into account the historical, political and milieu contexts. The research question focuses on how Milena Jesenská became a resister. The question and the approach are inspired by Stephen Greenblatt’s analyses of Shakespeare’s literary greatness within the New Historicism approach.

The study of Milena Jesenská explores the subjective motivations for resistance and examines the biographical and societal factors which possibly contributed to the motivation to resist. Methodologically, on the basis of theoretical, empirical and biographical (biographies of resisters) literature, the study develops a substantial analytical tool consisting of several theoretical approaches. Attention is paid to resistance-sensitive biographical moments such as disobedience, dialogicity, hierarchy of values, courage and risk, engagement, empathy, reflection and others. Applying this tool to the analyses of the historical material and biographies on Milena Jesenská (for references to the biographies on Milena Jesenská included in the study by Darowska see Darowska 2012), attention is paid to the subject, milieu, society and political situation. Interviews with Joachim von Zedtwitz, the co-organiser of the rescue actions, and Miloš Černý, one of the husbands of Milena Jesenská’s daughter, and expert interviews with Marie Jirásková were also analysed. The study also includes archive research and an analysis of Jesenská’s journalistic works.

(d) The results of a study by David M. Levy (1948), one of few analyses undertaken immediately after the capitulation of the Nazi regime. In it, psychiatrist David M. Levy summarises 21 case studies carried out with selected persons who underwent political screening by ‘American investigators, through questioning of details submitted on official forms, checking the names against available records in police, party and civil service files, and also investigations of references and neighbors’ (Levy 1948: 125). The screening of anti-Nazi German individuals (men) for cooperation with the U.S. Military Government (MG) was thorough and consisted of several measures. The subjects were selected for the MG School in Bad Orb by means of a formal entrance procedure. They were exposed to several tests, among others an intelligence test and the Rorschach Test. Similar to my approach in this paper, Levy’s choice of the 21 interviewees for the sample was based on the principle of variety, and with the exception of gender and age, ‘educational, cultural, and vocational levels’ differ (Levy 1948: 126). Like the two other studies I have chosen for comparison and the AP Study itself, Levy’s research considers parental discipline, family relationships and communication as well as the expression of emotions in the family. These are the overlapping interests of all the studies selected here. But beyond this, it also pays attention to the incentives for self-reflection and for political development, similar to the case study by Darowska (2012). In Levy’s study, the incentives come from other people, the subject’s own experiences, sojourns abroad and access to the free press there, people of other nationalities in the family, religion or different religions of the parents, party membership and books (Levy 1948: 125).

Methodologically this—in my understanding mixed-methods—study pursues the aim of examining the subjects in the sample by looking at ‘criteria of differentiation’ between Nazis and anti-Nazis, and

it was planned as a series of psychological studies (Levy 1948: 125). The interviewees, all ‘male non-Jewish Germans’, were informed that the study was ‘research into German personalities—Nazis and others’ (Levy 1948: 126f.). The criteria of differentiation were six factors that produced ‘deviation data’, where each factor scored 1 point: paternal discipline (if the father was not “disciplinary”, ‘authoritative’ or had died) (Levy 1948: 160), ‘demonstrative maternal affection’ (Levy 1948: 160) (assumed as not typical for the German family at that time), ‘crossing’ (in regard to religious affiliation of the parents), ‘position’ (of the subject as a child in the family, e.g. favourite or only child) (Levy 1948: 162), ‘influence’ (person of influence or particular influence), ‘travel and reading’ (Levy 1948: 163). The differentiation criteria between Nazis and anti-Nazis were tested in a study in which three Nazi groups participated (respectively 13, 8 and 14 cases). For these groups, the results showed scores of 0-2 for Nazis, with the exception of one case scoring 3 (Levy 1948: 160).

The method for generating the personal data in the form of a case study was not a formalised interview. However, direct questions were put to the subjects in order to enable comparison when it came to the differentiation criteria. The data was recorded and controlled ‘chiefly to ensure the consideration of the selected topics’ (Levy 1948: 126). The “deviation data” [was] recorded at the end of each case study’ (Levy 1948: 127). The results of the comparative study show that in ‘all but 3 of the 21 cases, the number of factors, or score, is 3 or more’ (Levy 1948: 158). The three cases are discussed in the article. Here I apply the study by Levy in a broader perspective: I am interested not only in the comparison to Nazis within Levy’s study, but also in comparing the ‘criteria of differentiation’ and other relevant factors visible in the narratives with the studies I have selected.

The methodology of comparing the four studies:

My analytical tool consists of the categories that represent the elements of personality structure worked out by Else Frenkel-Brunswik in her qualitative research. Using this, in the first phase I look for similar or overlapping semantic categories in the three reference studies. At the same time, I register other elements of personality structure which Frenkel-Brunswik does not mention or which play a minor role in her findings. Thus, I follow the broad understanding of personality by Frenkel-Brunswik and, in my research, apply a broad and open conception of personality structure or the ‘self’, one that includes attitudes to self and others as well as moral norms, values and political views (for discussion see e.g. Roiser and Willig 2002). In the second phase, the passages on resisters in the three studies are examined with regard to the findings of the AP research on family structure, parental discipline, child–parent relations etc. In this context I reflect on the categories and on the biographical material in the studies, on the methodology, and comment on the historical and political context of the examined subjects. The second phase also includes a discussion of further relevant aspects in the material of the three studies but not given in or not central to the study by Frenkel-Brunswik. These are described in the following sections *Break and escape – ‘rescue of self’* and *The political influence and role of other persons or factors*.

### *Personality structure*

Eva Fogelman, who is familiar with the research on authoritarianism, characterises rescuers as persons with ‘*humanistic intrinsic values*’ who are ‘*tolerant*’ with regard to people whom they

perceive as ‘other’ (Fogelman 1995: 247). Tolerance and humanistic values<sup>16</sup> relate closely to the egalitarian conception of human relations in Frenkel-Brunswik’s analysis in the AP Study—‘equalitarian mutuality’, as well as ‘permissiveness’, ‘impunitiveness’ and ‘objective appraisal’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 405-428).

In Frenkel-Brunswik’s sample, the low-scoring subjects are significantly

permissive and tolerant towards individuals (although not necessary towards institutions). Or at least they make an attempt to understand behaviour from a common sense (if not professional) psychological or sociological point of view; and they show generally more empathy. Whenever rejection of individuals occurs, an attempt is usually made to explain or to rationalise this rejection on the basis of violation of fundamental principles and social values rather than for surface reasons.<sup>17</sup> (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 409)

In Eva Fogelman’s study, the rescuers’ attitude towards others is a dynamic concept. A tolerant (and also more egalitarian) concept is shaped by parents’ remarks and reflection on the part of the child. Fogelman stresses the incentives given by parents to reflect on their arguments (see below) in the childhood of the rescuers; thus, a sort of a ‘reflective self’<sup>18</sup> can be assumed as the result of these interactions. This seems to come close to ‘impunitiveness’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 409), or at least to an impulse to reflect on one’s own perception of others and of the self. Frenkel-Brunswik determined that low-scoring persons show more ‘objective appraisal’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 423ff.)—a more critical view of the self, which demands the ability to engage in reflection (a ‘reflective self’) and an openness to (self-)critique. Fogelman illustrates this kind stimulus for reflection given by parents, citing Floris Vos, a father who explains to his son that God created a wide variety of people. In an appeal to him he says:

If you gossip about other people, you violate God’s will and you cause them pain. [...] Do me a favour. Think about it and stop it. (Fogelman 1995: 251)

Generally, however, with regard to rescuers<sup>19</sup> it seems important to differentiate between impunitiveness on the one hand and the ability to take a decisive stand on political issues on the other, which means respect for human beings, rejection of the norm of exclusion, and a refusal to accept the crimes of the regime. The rescue actions alone indicate a strong ability to make a political statement and distance to the regime. Subsequently, Fogelman identified ‘*self-confidence*’ (Fogelman 1995: 87) as a trait of the rescuers as well as an ability for ‘independent’ judgement (Fogelman 1995: 252ff.), and Frenkel-Brunswik found that low-scoring people show more ‘*principled independence*’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 351). She reported that eight out of 15 low-scoring women (and none of the 25

<sup>16</sup> Fogelman applies the term ‘humanistic values’. The concept experienced a certain devaluation in the context of the Holocaust and reflections on the disparity between the aspirations and self-image of so-called ‘western cultures’ and the reality of violence, war and suppression, and extermination of others. In this paper, however, the concept is implemented in the sense of Eva Fogelman’s study.

<sup>17</sup> Under surface reasons or ‘external’, ‘conventional set of values’ in the AP Study are understood justifications for condemnation such as ‘absence of good manners, uncleanness, “twitching the shoulders”, saying “inappropriate” things (inappropriate, as will be seen, on a superficial level only)’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 406) or being polite, having ‘a set of rules’ or following ‘church dogma’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 408).

<sup>18</sup> The term ‘reflective self’ was coined by the author of this paper.

<sup>19</sup> Most likely there will be a difference between rescue-resisters and resisters in a more conventional sense, particularly if the latter are motivated by nationalistic and racist ideologies. However, this cannot be confirmed or refuted in the comparison with the study by David M. Levy (1948) in this paper due to the data and methodological limitations.

high-scoring women), 10 out of 20 low-scoring men (and two out of 20 high-scoring men) displayed 'principled independence' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 351). Moreover, 'tolerance for ambiguity', which is characteristic of the low-scorers in Frenkel-Brunswik's analyses (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019d: 451f.; cf. also Frenkel-Brunswik 1996b; 1996c: 216ff.), presumably requires a certain amount of self-confidence. It is quite obvious that the rescuers, as Fogelman has found out, do not comply with the (Nazi) norm (Fogelman 1995: 29)—with the 'new moral' (cf. Welzer 2007)—in at least one ideological point: attitude towards Jewish persons and their exclusion and extermination. Fogelman's research shows that this stability of the moral norm has to do with children's moral education received from their parents. In addition, 'altruism' is (almost) self-evident, i.e. altruistic attitude or an ability for altruistic action, although as Fogelman mentioned, this motivation for highly altruistic acts is often mistrusted by the public (Fogelman 1995: 37) and by research. Fogelman found that for an overwhelming majority of rescuers (89 per cent), a parent or other person acted as an altruistic role model (Fogelman 1995: 257). 'Altruism', but also 'compassion' and political thinking are central traits of the personality structure in the case study on Milena Jesenská. Moreover, a significant ability to 'reflect' can be identified, as well as 'emotionality' in relations and interactions with others and a 'close relationship to nature' (Darowska 2012). One other element in Fogelman's study, empathy, is a strong trait (Fogelman 1995: 261), whereas Frenkel-Brunswik only mentions 'empathy' in passing: 'show more empathy' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 409).

Altruistic attitude and altruistic action on the part of Milena Jesenská constitute a strong feature of her personality. She helped people in need, motivated by her political attitude but also by a particularly pronounced empathy. As far as tolerance for ambiguity is concerned, at first glance it would not appear to be one of Milena Jesenská's stronger features due to the often decisive socio-political positioning conveyed by her emotional and expressive communication style. However, looking in detail at her development, I would interpret several moments in her biography as admittance of ambivalence, with some of these resulting in her revising her position. I pinpoint three such moments. One was a change in her attitude towards her father<sup>20</sup> as a close attachment figure of her childhood and youth, who expanded her world through long walks (developing a close relationship with nature) and social contacts, through knowledge and adventure, and who offered social protection, giving her wealth, education and status. Another moment was her dramatic change of attitude towards the Communist Party and Communism. Jesenská, a woman of upper middle-class origin, developed a sensitivity to issues of social justice. The Communist movement was a suitable context for her political engagement and her development of ideological independence from her father. Although not a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, she worked hard as a (managing) editor for Communist journals. She left the political community after she realised the authoritarian and unjust practices within the Czechoslovak Communist Party and after the crimes of Stalin in form of the 1937/38 show trials (which led to the deaths of many prominent Bolsheviks from the Russian Revolution) were revealed. Similarly, she admitted the breakdown of her two marriages, although she had married for love in both instances. She separated from her partners but was ready to help in difficult circumstances (which also indicates permissiveness). The revision of her decisions in all these cases points to phases of ambivalent feelings to which she responded. Her own reflection on her ambivalence regarding the German soldiers in occupied Prague, which lacks moralistic condemnation, is courageous in the political context of the time. In her feuilleton published on March 15, 1939, she wrote the following about a soldier on Wenceslas Square who was eager to explain his situation to a young girl:

<sup>20</sup> For details of this change see *Break and escape – 'rescue of self'*.

He had a German face with a few freckles, slightly reddish hair and wore a German uniform. Apart from this he did not differ from our soldiers—he was also an ordinary man devoted to his homeland. And so they stood on opposite sides “and could do nothing about it ...”.<sup>21</sup>

Thus far, we can draw the conclusion that although the personality traits in these three studies are labelled differently, their meanings are similar and they describe overlapping phenomena. ‘Permissiveness’ and ‘impunitiveness’ correspond with ‘tolerance’; the ‘equalitarian conception of human relations’ overlaps with ‘humanistic values’ and ‘altruism’. ‘Objective appraisal’ and ‘principled independence’ have a close relation to ‘independent judgement’ and ‘self-confidence’. These elements also relate to tolerance for ambiguity. These corresponding elements can be discerned in Frenkel-Brunswik’s low-scoring persons and Fogelman’s rescuers. In the case of Milena Jesenská, ‘permissiveness’ should be understood in its interplay with decisive moralistic positioning, and ‘equalitarian conception of human relations’ is interrelated with authoritarian features. Differences are found with regard to the relevance of ‘empathy’, which is a crucial element for rescuers according to Fogelman and one of the central features of Milena Jesenská’s personality, but only a marginal aspect in the analyses by Frenkel-Brunswik.

In David M. Levy’s study, in some cases it would be more or less possible to identify ‘*permissiveness toward individuals*’, ‘*impunitiveness*’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019c: 405ff.), ‘*objective self-appraisal*’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b) and ‘*tolerance*’ (Fogelman 1995: 247). However, personality traits are not the object of research in Levy’s study. Levy focuses not so much on the personality of the interviewees as on the factors in the family structure and some other impact factors which led to passive or active resistance. ‘Altruism’ (Fogelman 1995: 37) can be claimed in some cases in which direct help to other people was practiced, such as case no. 13 (‘he helped a number of Jews’, Levy 1948: 146) or case no. 16 (‘sending money, food, and clothing to destitute workers in Germany’, Levy 1948: 152). However, these activities were embedded in general active or passive<sup>22</sup> resistance to the Nazi regime and, as in case no. 16, were done mostly within the context of engagement in the Communist Party, here specifically in the ‘Internationale Arbeiterhilfe’ (Levy 1948: 151). Empathy as a dimension of a personality structure is not focused on, but the empathy-driven protective role of the mother is a specific criterion. In individual cases we are given information about sensitivity to brutality, like in case no. 13, and while this can overlap with empathy, in general I would regard it as a separate feature. There are, however, valuable findings with regard to ‘principled independence’ (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 351), which comes close to Fogelman’s ‘self-confidence’ (Fogelman 1995: 87). The 21 subjects in Levy’s study vary in their ability to undertake independent positioning. However, their non-conformity to the Nazi regime and non-compliant behaviour proved that they all had had a high level of independence. Certainly for all those individuals who ranked in the study as active anti-Nazis, who

<sup>21</sup> ‘Er hatte ein deutsches Gesicht mit ein paar Sommersprossen, leicht rötliche Haare und steckte in der deutschen Uniform. Ansonsten unterschied er sich durch nichts von unseren Soldaten – auch er ein einfacher Mann, seiner Heimat ergeben. Und so standen sich die beiden gegenüber “und konnten nichts dafür ...”.’ (Jesenská 1996: 241; 15.3.1939; trans. by Darowska).

<sup>22</sup> This differentiation is taken from the study. Levy makes clear, however, that ‘so-called passive anti-Nazis in their noncompliance may, in special instances, show more courage and suffer severer penalties than those active anti-Nazis, whose activities were limited to sporadic outbursts of criticism in public places.’ (Levy 1948: 126). Moreover, in his theoretical framing Levy differentiates between the passive and active anti-Nazis who opposed the regime and so-called ‘non-Nazis’ who were not members of the NSDAP ‘though not opposed to Nazi-doctrine’ (Levy 1948: 126). The ‘non-Nazis’ are not included in the study. The term “passive” anti-Nazi refers to those ‘who opposed the regime by resistance in the form of refusal to join the Nazi party and general noncompliant behavior’, whereas the term “active” anti-Nazis applies to people who ‘opposed by organized or individual aggressive acts, ranging from public utterances and the spreading of leaflets, to sabotage’ (Levy 1948: 126).

undertook resistance actions with the consequence of being imprisoned, sent to a concentration or other camp and tortured, they had enough self-confidence to demonstrate their independence from the regime's ideology, even at the risk of their own life. Surely, independent judgement is always socially embedded and the term does not assume an autonomous individual. Rather, it is the ability to defend minority moral norms where these do not comply with the powerful regime. These moral norms can be identified as the 'equalitarian conception of human relations' and as 'humanistic values'. Eight of the 21 persons in the study exercised an active response to a regime that propagated an extremely hierarchical racial ideology. The activities of these eight people were embedded in the collective (though minority) political rejection of the entire ideology of the regime.

### *An 'assimilable', 'non-egodestructive' type of discipline*

Whereas three of these selected studies analyse the structural elements of the personality, all four studies refer to the question of the origins of this inner structure. Discipline 'is of particular importance' for the 'general theory concerning the genesis of the prejudiced personality' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372). Frenkel-Brunswik's research in the AP Study and Fogelman's study show similarity in how they perceive the relevance of the different types of discipline, and they seem to share a theoretical basis. Again this is expressed differently in each study but both seem to imply a non-violent, non-threatening type of discipline. The rescuers in the Fogelman study<sup>23</sup> report having had 'understandable rules' of parental discipline, even when that discipline was strict. Furthermore, they recall not having been exposed to corporal punishment (Fogelman 1995: 249). 'Understandable rules' seems to correspond to what Frenkel-Brunswik terms 'rules', or having a kind of moral reference, in contrast to her understanding of 'principles' practiced for adjustment to conventions (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372). The absence of corporal punishment reported in Fogelman's study elicits scepticism (see below), meaning I would prefer to use Frenkel-Brunswik's term of 'assimilable discipline'. The narratives of the low-scorers in the AP Study by Frenkel-Brunswik more frequently describe 'assimilable, and thus non-egodestructive discipline' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372) rather than non-assimilable discipline. The assimilable type of discipline is defined in opposition to 'threatening, traumatic, overwhelming discipline'. This differentiation is crucial to Frenkel-Brunswik; thus each of the two types has a very different effect. The latter type of discipline 'forces the child into submission and to surrender his ego, thus preventing his development'. The first type 'contributes to the growth of the ego' and seems important for the 'establishment of an internalized superego' and 'crucial for the development of an unprejudiced personality' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372). The analyses by Frenkel-Brunswik show that 13 of 20 high scoring men experienced the "threatening" and 'none the "assimilable", type of discipline'<sup>24</sup> (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372). None of the high-scoring men had been exposed to assimilable discipline. The assimilable type of discipline was experienced by (at least) nine of the 20 low-scoring men (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372).

Both studies, i.e. by Fogelman and Frenkel-Brunswik, differ however in the consequences of the loss of the mother or the reference person. Seven of the 20 high-scoring men recounted having lost their mother (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 382). But a dramatic biographical experience often reported by the rescuers in Fogelman's study was the loss of someone close to them, their own severe illness or

<sup>23</sup> However, Eva Fogelman also includes studies by Eli Sagan (1988), David M. Levy (1948) and Frances G. Grossman (1984), which enlarge her own study but at the same time blur the boundaries between her own findings and those of the others.

<sup>24</sup> Seven 'received a neutral rating due to lack of data' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 372).



the severe illness of other people close to them,<sup>25</sup> which induced an intensive sense of empathy (Fogelman 1995: 261, 247). In the case of the Prague journalist Milena Jesenská, it is highly likely that the severe illness and the loss of her mother resulted in an enhancement of her ability to experience empathic feelings. 'Empathy', in addition to her particular ability for reflection, seems to have played a crucial role in the development of Jesenská's social sensibilities and in her rescue activities (Darowska 2012).

The study by David M. Levy confirms the significance of the assimilative, non-egodestructive type of discipline exercised by parents or other reference persons. It shows, moreover, that the father's absence most likely resulted in the lenient discipline of the mother<sup>26</sup> and more freedom and independence for the subject, as in case no. 19. Here the father died of tuberculosis when the subject was five years old and the mother, although strict and not allowing him to 'talk back', did not use corporal punishment. The subject 'thinks of his childhood as a happy time'. '[A]s a boy [he] would advise her when to buy coal, how much to pay, and so on' (Levy 1948: 155). Levy also considers the possible protective role played by the mother with regard to harsh or corporal punishment by the father. This occurs only a few times because the mothers administered corporal punishment themselves. In case no. 21 (active resistance), the subject was exposed to corporal punishment from his father. However, the mitigating factors were that he was, as the oldest of three children, the favourite child of both parents and always felt 'sure of his mother's love' (Levy 1948: 157). The mother often prevented the father from carrying out corporal punishment and she explained her intervention very convincingly: 'You must not punish a child too much. You will put hate into him. He will grow up to hate you.' (Levy 1948: 157).

However, the study also revealed how 'normal' corporal punishment was; it was commonly used as discipline in average families.<sup>27</sup> In fact, 10 out of 21 families of the resisters interviewed in Levy's study used corporal punishment as a form of parental discipline. At the same time, the study shows that corporal punishment was not generally a factor that excluded the possibility of resistance, since all the men in the Levy study were resistant to the Nazi regime. Importantly, considering the findings of Levy's study, Frenkel-Brunswik's term 'assimilable' discipline seems more substantial. In the biographical material produced by Levy's study, the absence of corporal punishment and a loving or demonstratively loving<sup>28</sup> mother, father or other reference person were factors that enabled subjects to develop self-confidence and 'greater individuality' (Levy 1948: 165). The feeling of being loved or protected by the mother, father or grandparents, or feeling free, or having had a happy childhood is

<sup>25</sup> Such a dramatic biographical event appears, however, in many narratives of that time. Put simply, this was due firstly to the much greater danger posed by infectious and other serious diseases than nowadays and, secondly, to a larger number of children in the average family.

<sup>26</sup> However, there are cases in the sample (nos. 5, 8 and 20) in which the father was passive and the mother exercised the discipline, was strict and used corporal punishment. In spite of this, for this historical period it is not possible to confirm the revision called for by Christel Hopf (1990) of assumptions about the typical roles of the father and mother—assumptions made by Levy and Frenkel-Brunswik. Rather, it seems important to note the variety of family constellations. There are cases in which the father died (nos. 15, 17 and 19) or the mother died (no. 18) or the stepfather and the mother were the reference persons or the subject grew up at their grandparents' or grandfather's house (nos. 1 and 4) (Levy 1948).

<sup>27</sup> In some cases (e.g. case no. 9), the discipline is less clear than in cases where the corporal punishment is stated explicitly. The analysis in this study is based on the interview material and as such relies on the statements of the interviewees and their memory. We must take into account that the narratives are subjective reminiscences. In those cases where the father died in early childhood, the information is limited or not available.

<sup>28</sup> The study differentiates between a 'loving mother' or other person of reference and 'demonstrative loving', meaning the display of love in the form of kisses and embracing in public.

reported by almost all (18) of the 21 resisters in Levy's study.<sup>29</sup> The low-scorers and the rescuers refer to their parents' love (Fogelman 1995: 248) or to their mothers as 'similar to "warm, sociable, lovable"' persons (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 367). This can also be confirmed for the biographical case study by Darowska (2012: 176f.).

If the absence of corporal punishment was not a necessary criterion for resistance, it seems that not only is the question of the presence or absence of corporal punishment crucial, but also how severe the corporal punishment was, how it was integrated into the development of the personality, and how it influenced the person's understanding of justice. Overall, it is a constellation of several factors which are, however, not arbitrary, but identifiable. For example, in case no. 14 'neither parent ever used corporal punishment' but still, the father 'never said an unnecessary word' and at the table 'everybody had to be quiet. If anyone talked the father would say furiously, "Pay attention to your food"' (Levy 1948: 148). These retrospective moments indicate inhibited communication and a power relation that promotes submission. This is the opposite of the family in case no. 13, where corporal punishment was used but '[a]t the dinner table it was always like a holiday. There were many jokes. The children laughed.' The subject's mother 'was also gay. She sang often' (Levy 1948: 147). Of the 21 case studies in Levy's material, there were eight anti-Nazi subjects who were (probably) not exposed to corporal punishment from either one or both parents. In one of these cases (no. 15), '[t]he children revered the father, had confidence in him and talked to him freely', the mother was loving, demonstrative and she was "too good"' (Levy 1948: 149). It seems, however, that the feeling of a 'happy childhood', the feeling of freedom, the possibility to make one's own decisions, and being loved and protected are decisive for 'principled independence' and depend on the type of discipline, which in turn consists of several factors, (genuine) parental love and situational factors.

### Disagreement and critical attitude

In the analysis by Frenkel-Brunswik, the low-scoring subjects are likely to express their disagreement with their parents 'more freely' since they do not perceive their parents as 'frightening' and do not ascribe to them more power than they have (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 346). Moreover, Frenkel-Brunswik stresses that these persons have 'the strength to follow their own way' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 346). Besides this, they are even ready to take risks and accept disadvantages, namely to experience conflict or feel guilty (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 345f). An important side effect seems to be the process of learning about a more equal relationship through rebellion as an alternative to strong hierarchical order and submission to repression (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 346).

In line with this critical attitude towards the parents, when talking about their parents and other people, the low-scoring persons in Frenkel-Brunswik's analysis show significantly greater 'dependence' on the love of the mother, parents, family members or other persons than the high-scoring people (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 353ff.). The latter show greater dependence on things, 'power' or 'material benefits' (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 355). This goes hand in hand with the articulation of genuine affect (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 346f.). The depiction of the parents—the sort of narrative in which it is portrayed combined with the articulation of feelings and comments on the discipline experienced—allows conclusions to be drawn about the parental love that these individuals either enjoyed or were denied as children. In Levy's (1948) sample of 21 anti-Nazi persons, he assumes that

<sup>29</sup> On the basis of the available data, it is not possible to identify glorification of the parents or of childhood.

the typical power relation in the family between the father and the mother in Germany during that time period was one in which the father was dominant, threatening and punishing. This correlates with the tendency discussed in Frenkel-Brunswik's analyses (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 370ff.). Levy shows that the anti-Nazis break this pattern (Levy 1948: 164). For Levy

it appears clear that as a group the anti-Nazis, in comparison with typical Germans, have escaped the conventional and rigid family structure. They have been brought up with more affection and less restraint. Their world is a broader one, less limited in terms of religious, social, and intellectual boundaries. They have attained a more critical attitude. They are freer from conventional, stereotyped thinking. (Levy 1948: 164)

However, the sample shows the heterogeneity and complexity of family relations, as well as ambivalences in the quality of attachment to the reference persons and in the feelings of freedom and independence.

#### Break and escape – 'rescue of self'

This complexity is displayed in the biographical material on Milena Jesenská. We can assume that Jesenská (in the case study by Darowska 2012) was not free from authoritarian personality elements. But, in connection with a high level of reflection, she developed a feeling of being forced into submission, a sensitivity to being hurt and strove for her own individual emancipation from her authoritarian family and social structures. These two elements seem to constitute a sort of 'reflective self' (cf. Darowska 2012), which does not reproduce a typical authoritarian pattern (cf. also Fromm 1995: 64ff.). According to Frenkel-Brunswik's analysis, the authoritarianism of the parents might go hand in hand with the child's acceptance of their violent and cruel punishment, which results in an idealistic image of the parents (see also Hopf 1992). The prominent example by Frenkel-Brunswik is M58, a high-scoring subject who recounts:

Well, my father was a very strict man. [...] His word was law, and whenever he was disobeyed, there was punishment. When I was 12, my father beat me practically every day for getting into the tool chest in the back yard, and not putting everything away. (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 374)

The same person also appears in Adorno's part as M352<sup>30</sup>:

But, you know, I never hold that against my father—I had it coming. He laid the law down, and if I broke it, there was punishment, but never in uncontrolled anger. My father was a good man—no doubt about that. Always interested in boys' activities. (Adorno 2019: 761)

On the basis of empirical data, Frenkel-Brunswik describes this kind of inner conflict between the experience of massive violence and a seemingly positive attitude towards the parent: 'the prejudiced subjects show little evidence of genuine love toward their parents' and are more likely to show 'stereotyped, rigid glorification' of them, occasionally complemented by 'feelings of victimization'.

The underlying hostility has to be kept ego-alien for several reasons: it is too strong to be fully admitted; and it interferes with the desire to be taken care of by the parents. This conflict

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<sup>30</sup> Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno refer to the same interview but they use different numeration.

leads to a submission to parental authority on the surface and a resentment underneath which, although not admitted, is the more active under the guise of mechanisms of *displacement*.<sup>31</sup> (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b: 357)

It might be surprising that the subjects mentioned above refer to clear, understandable rules, which Fogelman identified among the parents of the rescuers. However, the rescuers in Fogelman's study recounted being disciplined but not physically or emotionally punished or hurt. Some were even subjected to strong discipline, particularly under the impact of religious and patriarchal structures, without any possibility of contradicting the parents. Fogelman found that the rescuers suffered under such subordination and, as young people, they seized the opportunity to 'flee' (e.g. to another city or country in order to study). In this way they were able to free themselves (Fogelman 1995: 25f.). In his study, David M. Levy concludes

[...] that the stronger the emotional bond to the child the less likely is the mother to yield to the harsh discipline exacted by the father. Revolt against the father, especially in the adolescent period will be theoretically a more likely occurrence among the anti-Nazis. (Levy 1948: 165)

Although there is little information about Milena Jesenská's relationship with her parents, one citation by Margarete Buber-Neumann indicates that Jesenská was hurt physically by her father (Buber-Neumann 1996: 30; Darowska 2012: 176). However, the reference is vague. On the other hand, we know that Jesenská was loved and protected by her father, although considerable tension occurred in the relationship in her youth. At the latest she was profoundly hurt when her wish to marry a Jewish person was not accepted by her father and she was forced into psychiatric care by her father (a dentist) for breaking norms and resisting her father's will. She rebelled and was able to enter into the marriage on condition that she move away from Prague to Vienna. The relationship between Jesenská and her father was, however, destroyed (Darowska 2012). Compared to M58 (or M352), she suffered pain on the emotional and mental level and realised, on the cognitive level, that there is no need to accept all the norms imposed by adults and that some are simply not justified. This realisation seems to have been the beginning or reinforcement of her emancipation towards 'independent' judgement. Other people (e.g. one of her teachers) and milieus (literary and philosophical 'café discourses') played a significant role in this emancipation (as is relevant in the approaches of Fromm and Adler). Her ability for 'independent' judgement is manifest not only in her personal life but also in her attitude towards the Nazi occupation and, at the same time, in her break with Communism. In the consequences she drew from this—distancing herself from her father (for years)—there appears to be a central difference to the acceptance of the justification of being hurt. Thus, in contrast to the case of M58 (M352) in which priority is given to the rule as set down by the authority, for Jesenská there are other cognitive and emotional criteria such as '*being hurt*' (feeling) and '*reflection of the justification of the rule*' ('reflective self'). These made it possible to take the risk of renouncing paternal love and thereby gain greater independence.

Similarly, the subject in case no. 14 in Levy's study left the parental home immediately after he finished school. Although his parents never used corporal punishment, still 'he could make no decisions of his own. As soon as he was through, he could be his own boss'. In another town he 'made his own

<sup>31</sup> Italics added here for emphasis.

plans' and 'had his independence'; he was very happy. Although his parents 'wanted him to come home [...] he stayed away until he was 22' (Levy 1948: 148).

### The political influence and role of other persons or factors

The strength of Levy's analyses in the context of the AP Study is the inclusion of factors that expand the psychoanalytical perspective, going beyond the impact of the family on the individuals. It is noticeable that in eight cases, the father, grandfather or another close person was politically active as a member of the SPD (Social Democrat Party of Germany), in one case the Zentrum (German Centre Party), and in two cases the BVP (Bavarian People's Party). Furthermore, it is noticeable that even when the father was not a member of a political party but was anti-militaristic or when the grandmother propagated a democratic attitude, the interview subject was against the war. There is a certain contradiction between 'principled independence' and adopting the father's political attitudes, which could be interpreted as an inability to position oneself independently. However, in the case of resistance to the Nazi regime, from the ethical perspective the consequences (not joining the NSDAP or HJ) of this paternal influence are to be wished for. They imply an independent attitude towards the majority Nazi norm. But this consequence points to the general dependence of the individual on paternal or family attitudes. The opposite case would be that if a subject grew up in a fascist family, he would adopt fascist views. This shows a great deal of dependence on the political attitudes of the family and is something that should be considered in further research. One point is that the SPD or KPD (Communist Party of Germany) was the ideological background needed for opposition to the regime. But how independent was this standpoint in the context of the paternal attitude? The subject in case no. 12 expresses this paternal influence in the following way: 'All in all his father had a tremendous influence on him, brought him up with anti-Nazi and anti-militaristic ideas. He "brought him up in the [Socialist] party"' (Levy 1948: 145). Similarly, in case no. 9, the subject recalls: 'When it came to joining the Nazi party, his stepfather wouldn't let him join. His stepfather also prevented him from signing up for twelve years with the Wehrmacht' (Levy 1948: 141f.). In case of Milena Jesenská, it can also be seen that her political consciousness with regard to Czechoslovakia as an independent nation was raised by her father. Insofar she was influenced by her father in her political standpoint. However, Milena Jesenská rejected her father's antisemitic attitudes and struggled to find her own viewpoint (Darowska 2012).

More evidence for 'principled independence' demonstrates the subjects' development during their younger years under the influence of other persons or experiences. According to Levy, such factors include contacts with Jews or people of another nationality, religion, mixed marriages with regard to religion or nationality, reading books (e.g. Marxist literature), longer stays in another country (e.g. Holland, Switzerland), and having access to foreign newspapers and anti-Nazi discussions. The subject in case no. 2 was astonished to see the democratic practices followed at schools in Switzerland when he was working there between the ages of 26 and 28: "Why, the school teachers were all friends of the children!" (Levy 1948: 132) The subject in case no. 16 felt really free attending the Free Waldorf School (Levy 1948: 151), and the subject in case no. 14 experienced a 'real "training in politics"' as a 25-year-old from his landlord, Mr. D., learning about freedom, SPD activities and news in foreign newspapers (Levy 1948: 148). Presumably, such influences are more consciously chosen and show more independence in their adoption. However, the openness to role models, opportunities to learn new ways of doing things, certain interpretations of events and the feelings experienced are

also interlaced, to a certain degree, with parental influence as regards discipline and political attitudes, as well as positioning in the society. In case no. 3, the subject ‘witnessed “brutalities” at the age of 17—‘Jews being mishandled, their homes robbed’. However, in this case too, the parental value of ‘respect for people’ plays a crucial role in the empathy experienced. ‘He always had respect for people. That’s the way he was brought up’, he says (Levy 1948: 133). The subject in case no. 15, who had an anti-militaristic attitude, was asked by his father—who ‘disciplined “only with kind words”’—to ‘put away a cork gun he received as a present from his aunt’, with the comment ‘it was not a toy, but a weapon’ (Levy 1948: 149).

With regard to the question of independence, the relationship to the KPD can be relevant. In most cases, the fathers or grandfathers of the interviewees were either members of the SPD, or propagated SPD ideas. Some sporadically adhered to the ideas of the Zentrum or BVP parties. Four of the interviewees, however, became members of the Communist Party. Three of them explain their motivation in joining the KPD: it was their critique of SPD politics, its passive role and the contrasting solution-oriented programme of the KPD and the party’s active role against fascism. An interesting point in this study is that three of the four are, at the time of the interview, distancing themselves from Communism in the same way as Milena Jesenská had already done in the 1930s, with one (in case no. 17) of the interviewees leaving the KPD after one year. For the subject in case no. 11, the reason for rejecting the KPD was the hierarchical and anti-democratic way of running the party:

Now he feels differently, he says. The Communist Party became too intolerant. He thinks the dictatorship of the proletariat and the demands of uncritical obedience are mistaken ideas. (Levy 1948: 144)

The subject in case no. 17, who has an SPD background, comments on his membership and withdrawal from the KPD after one year in the following way:

Fascism was getting stronger, and the Communist Party was the only one really doing something against it. [...] Once in the Party, though, he was never active. He had to work with people whose ideas he couldn’t take. They were always brawling about everything. (Levy 1948: 153)

## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS – A NON-FASCIST PERSONALITY IN A FAMILY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT**

This examination of studies shows that personality elements and the type of parental discipline were both considered and both played a role in the explanation of the non-fascist attitude and resistance to the Nazi regime. The comparison of personality structures allows the conclusion that low-prejudiced persons or persons resisting the regime are more ‘permissive’, more ‘tolerant’, less blaming (‘impunitive’) and more equal in their attitude towards other people. These individuals are possibly more ‘self-confident’ and show more ‘principled independence’. At the same time they also show ‘tolerance for ambiguity’, even if they may also display authoritarian elements in their personality, and they take a clear position against the regime (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019a-e; 1949; Fogelman 1995; Darowska 2012). Some of them must fight for their freedom and independence (Levy 1948; Fogelman 1995; Darowska 2012). A crucial aspect, however, seems to be a desire for independence, which is not compensated by power over other people (Adler; see e.g. Hannich 2018), but is rather manifested as efficacy in the form of help and resistance (Darowska 2012; Levy 1948; Fogelman 1995).

As far as parental discipline is concerned, a loving parent or other reference person seems fundamental (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b; Fogelman 1995; Levy 1948; Darowska 2012; Fromm 1995). Punishment was practiced in many families, including corporal punishment. Decisive in these cases is how it was embedded within the family situation on the whole. Love, the mitigating role of (clear) rules, moral rules rather than constraints for adjustment to convention, the harshness of the punishment, a feeling of justice or a feeling of injustice followed by the rejection of submission—these appear constitutive here (Levy 1948; Fogelman 1995; Darowska 2012). ‘Assimilable’, ‘non-egodestructive’ discipline seems an appropriate term for the more favourable constellation (Frenkel-Brunswik 2019b).

Not only did affective attitude and discipline play a role, but the social, political and religious views and moral norms of the family or the reference person seem very important for (rescue) resistance. In the cases of (several) resisters and many rescuers, the political attitude (Levy 1948) and moral norms (Fogelman 1995), respectively, of the parents are adopted. But the political views and norms can be also transcended or rejected (Levy 1948; Darowska 2012). Other people in their lives, e.g. grandparents or stepparents, and more generally the immediate milieu can have a great influence in this regard. Travel, reading, and distinctive experiences are further factors (Levy 1948; Darowska 2012). Generally speaking, a reflective self, empathy and a feeling of injustice (with regard to self or others) appear central (Darowska 2012; Levy 1948; Fogelman 1995).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive research project on the Authoritarian Personality contributed a great deal to the understanding of fascism and authoritarian regimes. The quantitative survey laid the foundation for the qualitative in-depth analyses. The qualitative analyses by Frenkel-Brunswik reported in the AP Study are, in many regards, relevant from the perspective of (current) studies on resisters. Her contributions followed a differentiated design and were well reflected in terms of methodology. The concepts of *‘moralistic condemnation of other people’* versus *‘permissiveness toward individuals’*, *extra- or impunitiveness*, the *hierarchical or more equal conceptions of human relations*, *submission versus principled independence and tolerance for ambiguity*, the *glorification of the self and the parents* versus *objective appraisal*, the *focus on conventions and things* or on *love*, and *surface adjustment* versus *deeper reflection* are all key categories. When compared to the research on resisters acting against the National Socialist regime the findings are, for the most part, comparable or they intersect. Some of the findings by Frenkel-Brunswik are more likely to be found in one study on resisters, some in a different study. Not all findings could be applied due to the limited data of each study arising from its design. The three studies referred to in relation to Frenkel-Brunswik’s research emphasize the significance of her psychoanalytic approach. Drawing on research by Erich Fromm, Frenkel-Brunswik thereby laid the foundations for a psychoanalytical approach to the explanation of fascism and authoritarian regimes. Current research on child development confirms the relevance of the parent–child interaction and the loving attitude of the parent (or close person) for the psycho-emotional and cognitive development of the individual (Stern 2020; Dornes 2004). The three studies referred to in this paper confirm the significance of the role of the parents or other reference persons, their interactions with the child and their discipline methods. Several findings in these studies overlap with the personality structures and the reconstruction of parental discipline by the low-scoring persons in the AP Study. In that sense, they confirm the unique importance of the work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik. Assimilable parental discipline and (genuine) parental love are of particular significance for principled independence.

However, several open questions remain which should be the object of further research. A thorough investigation of the relation between, on the one hand, the factors that can be approached through psychoanalysis and, on the other, the influence of (unconscious and chosen) role models and further life experiences within social structures (as indicated in the theoretical approaches by Fromm and Adler and biographical research on resisters) is needed. Acquisition of political knowledge in the family through reading, education and travel and the ability to reflect on this are crucial and must be investigated in relation to other factors as well. Seipel et al. (1995: 74) show that the (already) developed authoritarian personality is a prerequisite for right-wing political attitudes. However, the study by Levy (1948) underlines that young people's first political leanings are tied up with familial influence and remain quite stable. The studies carried out by Darowska (2012) and Levy (1948) indicate, furthermore, that political orientation can radicalise or change under the impact of the milieu and the situation.

When we talk about a subject's orientation to a role model, we must first refer to Bob Altemeyer's (1981, 1988) quantitative research (applying Albert Bandura's theoretical approach 1977, 1986). Fogelman's findings confirm the significance of the role model, particularly with regard to altruism. However, Altemeyer's research discards the deep psychoanalytical insights into personality structures that make Frenkel-Brunswik's research so insightful. As quantitative RWA (Right-Wing-Authoritarianism) scale-based research,<sup>32</sup> Altemeyer's work does not try to investigate these learning processes empirically in order to determine the relationship between an authoritarian or democratic family structure, personality and the influence of certain other persons or experiences. Altemeyer (1981) cited several follow-up studies to demonstrate that the main thesis by Frenkel-Brunswik—locating the origin of the authoritarianism in childhood and the family structure—is not well-founded in scientific terms. Yet these cited studies are (small) quantitative scale-based studies, with the majority of them carried out in the 1950s and 1960s. The controversial discussions on the methodological issues of Altemeyer's study and other relevant studies and their underlying theoretical constructs—predominantly authoritarianism, prejudice, dogmatism (Rokeach 1960), and right- and left-wing authoritarianism (Eysenck 1956)—reveal many theoretical and methodological problems without providing satisfactory answers or solutions. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that Altemeyer's decision to dispense with this part of the theory is scientifically well-founded. From the perspective of child development research—including both (classical) attachment theories (Bowlby and Ainsworth 2005) as well as current research (Stern 2020, Dornes 1997, 2004)—there are strong indications that social character and learning processes are considerably influenced by parent-child interactions in early childhood. This research supports the psychoanalytical approach and indeed, Christel Hopf (1990) points out the limitations of quantitative data and calls for further qualitative research integrating the research on authoritarianism with theoretical approaches in socialisation and child development research. Hopf makes links to the important study by Nathan W. Ackerman

<sup>32</sup> Altemeyer reduced the original AP Study F-scale to the three constructs 'authoritarian submission', 'authoritarian aggression' and 'conventionalism'. He responded to the early critiques of the AP scales by using both the negative and positive items in his scale. Altemeyer (1981) sharply criticised the F-scale and other scales in the AP Study. One of the several major points of criticism about the quantitative part was the unclear stimuli in the items. In my opinion, however, we can unfortunately observe the same problem in the Altemeyer RWA scale, e.g. the item 'It's always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people's mind' interuses trust in democratically elected authority (government) with faith-based religious authorities. Moreover, it does not make clear who the 'noisy rabble-rousers' are, so we might ask whether these are e.g. conspiracy preachers, as has been the case recently with the anti-coronavirus protest movement. Could it be that the first and third part of the item measure trust in democracy, the second measures authoritarian submission or conventionalism, and the third measures trust in democracy or authoritarian aggression? (see also Lederer 1995: 38).



and Marie Jahoda (1950) 'Antisemitism and emotional disorder', which Altemeyer does not mention. The solution is not the renouncing of the psychoanalytical approach, but theoretical integration and a mix of methodologies.

A further question is the development of 'principled independence'—one of the central elements of the less authoritarian personality structure in Frenkel-Brunswik's study, which is confirmed in this exploratory research by the personality structure of the resisters. However, critical investigations are still needed to determine to what extent a 'reflective self' or 'principled independence' enables the subject to develop 'humanistic' values (reflected in their inconsistencies and dilemmas) and to distinguish between science-based (or plausible) information and ideology-based knowledge and, moreover, to act according to these insights. In this regard, the relation between parental and others' influences in particular should be discussed further. The 'Dogmatism scale' by Rokeach (1960) is an interesting step in this direction, as it allows the measurement of the intensity of (principled) ideological dependence. Shearman and Levine (2006) make a significant contribution to the improvement of Rokeach's scale. However, a 'reflective self' is broader than open-mindedness. This personality structure element certainly presupposes a mind open to new knowledge, observation and reflecting on experience. But beyond this, the 'reflective self' assumes the ability to make moral judgments and subsequently transform these into action, even under conditions of social isolation (resisters and anti-Nazis in my study).

'Principled independence' and 'reflective self' as the opposite of the authoritarian and dogmatic self could be investigated in further research through qualitative observation and narrative interviews and tested via quantitative measurement on the basis of a scale. This would require the continuation of research on left-wing authoritarianism despite the critical discourse following the controversy around the study by Eysenck (1956) (see e.g. discussion in Roiser and Willig 2002: 87). In this regard too, Altemeyer's position of maintaining there is no left-wing authoritarianism is based on research that is methodologically problematic. If the scales cannot separate the constructs exploring racism, prejudices, ethnocentrism, sexism etc. from authoritarianism (and dogmatism), they are not adequate instruments for measuring left-wing authoritarianism. Scores referring to these constructs will always be lower. Conway et al. (2018) developed an approach which they call the 'parallel' approach, replacing the wording in the item that refers to right-wing ideology with references adapted to left-wing ideology. Although the idea is a step forward, it is not enough to replace the words in the item wording. So here too, qualitative research is needed to comprehensively develop the structure of left-wing authoritarianism. From the historical perspective we can assume that in general, left-wing attitudes do not provide much support for the fascist ideology of inequality as regards race, gender, social class, religion etc. Instead social hierarchy derives from the conviction of possessing the 'right awareness' and 'moralistic condemnation of other people'. The justification of violence of the authoritarian communist regimes under the slogan of social justice, an incoherent attitude to the state as a repressive body and, at the same time, as the paternalistic addressee of all political claims are only three hypothetical components to be investigated. Frenkel-Brunswik's categories of the authoritarian personality structure offer researchers more suitable instruments for approaching these questions.

The studies by David M. Levy, Eva Fogelman and Lucyna Darowska show the importance of including all potentially significant factors and of attempting to clarify how they interact in various constellations. One conceivable next step would be to compare Frenkel-Brunswik's psychoanalytical findings with the research on perpetrators, and to analyse this in relation to the findings in this paper.

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## Appendices

**Table 1: Personality Structure of Low-Scoring Persons and Resisters That Occur or Can be Interpreted in the Four Examined Studies**

<b>Frenkel-Brunswik (1950)</b>	<b>Fogelman (1995)</b>	<b>Levy (1948)</b>	<b>Darowska (2012)</b>
Qualitative analysis on low-scoring subjects in the AP Study	Qualitative study on rescue-resisters	Mixed-methods study on anti-Nazis	Qualitative case study on resister Milena Jesenská
<i>permissiveness towards individuals</i>	<i>humanistic intrinsic values</i>	<i>humanistic intrinsic values</i>	<i>humanistic intrinsic values</i>
<i>impunitiveness</i>	<i>altruism</i>		<i>altruism</i>
<i>equalitarian mutuality</i>	<i>rejection of racial hierarchy</i>	<i>rejection of racial hierarchy</i>	<i>impunitiveness (to a certain extent)</i>
<i>tolerance towards individuals</i>	<i>rejection of racial hierarchy</i>	<i>rejection of racial hierarchy</i>	<i>rejection of racial hierarchy</i>
<i>tolerance towards individuals</i>	<i>tolerance towards 'others', not in relation to the regime</i>	<i>respect, tolerance towards 'others', not in relation to the regime</i>	<i>tolerance towards 'others', not in relation to the regime</i>
<i>objective self-appraisal</i>	<i>objective self-appraisal</i>	<i>objective self-appraisal</i>	<i>objective self-appraisal</i>
<i>principled independence</i>	<i>principled independence</i>	<i>principled independence, -rejection of the majority's exclusive norm</i>	<i>principled independence, -rejection of the majority's exclusive norm</i>
<i>deeper reflection</i>	<i>-rejection of the majority's exclusive norm</i>	<i>reflective self</i>	<i>reflective self</i>
	<i>reflective self</i>	<i>reflective self</i>	<i>reflective self</i>
	<i>striving for independence/emancipation from submissive family structures</i>	<i>striving for independence/emancipation from submissive family structures</i>	<i>striving for independence/emancipation from submissive family structures</i>
<i>tolerance for ambiguity</i>	<i>tolerance</i>		<i>openness for ambiguity</i>
	<i>self-confidence, particularly in political issues</i>	<i>self-confidence, particularly in political issues</i>	<i>self-confidence, particularly in political issues</i>
<i>empathy (to a certain extent)</i>	<i>empathy as a central element</i>	<i>empathy/sensitivity to brutality</i>	<i>empathy as a central element</i>
<i>focus on love, not things</i>			<i>focus on love, not things</i>
	<i>awareness of injustice and harmful actions</i>	<i>awareness of injustice and harmful actions</i>	<i>awareness of injustice and harmful actions</i>
	<i>political interest, ability to take political action and overcome fear</i>	<i>political interest, ability to take political action and overcome fear</i>	<i>political interest, ability to take political action and overcome fear</i>
			<i>compassion</i>
			<i>close relationship to nature</i>

**Table 2: Family Structure, Parental Discipline and Parent-Child Relation of the Low-Scoring Persons, (Rescue-)Resisters and Anti-Nazis in the Four Examined Studies/Integration of Other Factors**

<b>Frenkel-Brunswik (1950)</b>	<b>Fogelman (1995)</b>	<b>Levy (1948)</b>	<b>Darowska (2012)</b>
Qualitative analysis on low-scoring subjects in the AP Study	Qualitative study on rescue-resisters	Mixed-methods study on anti-Nazis	Qualitative case study on resister Milena Jesenská
<i>assimilable non-egodestructive discipline</i> <i>-more affection, less restraint</i> <i>-discipline based on rules</i>	<i>assimilable non-egodestructive discipline</i> <i>-more affection, less restraint</i> <i>-incentives for justice, moral norms and reflection</i> <i>-discipline based on rules, no corporal punishment</i>	<i>assimilable non-egodestructive discipline</i> <i>-more affection, less restraint</i> <i>-less limitation in religious, social and intellectual terms</i> <i>-discipline with or without corporal punishment</i>	<i>assimilable non-egodestructive discipline</i> <i>-more affection, less restraint,</i> <i>incentives for justice, moral norms and reflection, intellectual incentives</i> <i>-discipline without corporal punishment</i>
<i>love-oriented dependence</i>	<i>love-oriented dependence</i>	<i>love-oriented dependence</i>	<i>love-oriented dependence</i>
<i>warm, sociable mother</i>	<i>love of the parents/feeling of being loved and protected</i>	<i>love of the/one of the parents, grandparents/feeling of being loved/having a happy childhood</i>	<i>love of the parents/feeling of being loved and protected</i>
<i>disagreement possible/critical attitude</i>	<i>disagreement possible/critical attitude</i> <i>-if not possible - escape</i>	<i>disagreement possible/critical attitude</i> <i>-if independence not possible - escape</i>	<i>disagreement possible/critical attitude</i> <i>-if not possible – escape, negotiation, break off the relationship</i>
	<i>loss of a parent or other close person or severe illness – as enhancer for empathy, resilience and efficacy</i>	<i>loss of a father – more freedom, fewer restrictions</i>	<i>loss of a parent and severe illness – as enhancer for empathy, resilience and efficacy</i>
	<i>altruistic parent</i>		
		<i>political, democratic or anti-militaristic influence of father or grandparents</i>	<i>political influence of father</i>
	<i>influence of others</i>	<i>(political) influence of others</i>	<i>(political) influence of others</i>
		<i>reading, travelling, longer stays abroad</i>	<i>reading, (humanistic) education</i>

ARTICLE

# Logical Positivism or Critical Theory as the Methodological Foundation of *The Authoritarian Personality?*

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## Abstract

In this paper, the central research question discusses to what extent logical positivism or critical theory forms the methodological core of the seminal work on the authoritarian personality. A central thesis is that due to her background in psychology, logical positivism and psychoanalysis and her neglected but central role in the authoritarian personality study, Else Frenkel-Brunswik has had a much more lasting and productive influence on authoritarianism research than Adorno as the representative of critical theory. This was certainly not reflected in the public discourse or in intellectual discussions, at least in Europe. This article shows how the original F-Scale was changed in subsequent research and how the application of psychometric techniques improved. However, by employing Lakatos' concept of the research programme, I analyse how authoritarianism research developed in a degenerative way by reducing the number of factors from nine to three and giving up the psychoanalytic explanation of the underlying mechanisms, a systematic test of sociological and contextual factors, and the original mixed method approach of combining surveys and qualitative interviews. Finally, the issue of the effects of idealisation of parents on the measurement of the items and the use of typologies were not tackled in later research. Employing data from the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS), I describe how some of Frenkel-Brunswik's central methodological and theoretical ideas have been tested using confirmatory factor analyses and structural equation models. Finally I summarise the way in which the research programme can be developed more fruitfully by integrating developmental psychology, sociology, political science, psychoanalysis and statistical generalised latent variable models.

## Keywords

Critical theory, logical positivism, F-scale, ethnocentrism, research programme, mixed methods, latent variables, cluster analysis, typologies, confirmatory factor analysis



## INTRODUCTION

The topic of this paper<sup>1</sup> are the contributions by Else Frenkel-Brunswik to the content and to the methodology of the seminal book *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950), contributions that have largely been repressed and forgotten. As a consequence, especially in Germany and Austria but also in Europe more generally, *The Authoritarian Personality*—including the F-Scale—was almost exclusively attributed to T. W. Adorno. Furthermore, I want to demonstrate that her methodological background—in contrast to the methodology of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory—was based on logical positivism and corresponded more closely to later quantitative modelling of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism and antisemitism within political psychology, social psychology, political science and sociology. The basic motive behind the view of Adorno as one major representative of the Frankfurt School seemed to be his negative attitude towards empirical social, differential and developmental psychology and quantitative methods (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004: 12), although he stressed correctly the neglect of context and situational factors in psychology. However, both competency in and knowledge of all these subdisciplines are necessary prerequisites for research in this area (see Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).

The study of the origins of dictatorships and autocratic regimes, including fascist movements, represents one of the central research questions investigated in several academic fields in the social sciences, including political science, social psychology, sociology and history. Published more than 70 years ago, *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) has been the most influential and most discussed contribution to date; Google Scholar lists over 20,000 citations (on 2 May 2022 the number of hits was 22,407). Its appearance sparked critical discussions that focused in particular on the methods used in TAP (Samelson 1986; Sanford 1986). This discussion gave rise to a book edited by Christie and Jahoda (1954) and an ongoing debate followed (cf. Stone et al. 1993). For a long time no innovative or new studies on authoritarianism were undertaken until the reformulation of the concept of authoritarianism and the development of the corresponding RWA Scale by Altemeyer (1981; 1998) gave the research new impetus, as did Feldman and Stenner's (1997) reformulation.

Despite international recognition, in Germany, as Heintz (1957) has remarked, the reception of TAP was more or less non-existent. One of the Frankfurt School's—and Adorno's—major accomplishments was to bring TAP into scientific and public discourse (Jay 1973; Wiggershaus 2010) after the remigration of Adorno and Horkheimer to Germany in 1950. However, the German reception was very one-sided and biased. First, the earlier contributions of Reich (1933) and later Fromm (1936) were mentioned neither in Adorno et al.'s (1950) publication nor at any later time. In addition, the publishing house Suhrkamp only had the parts of the publication authored by Adorno translated into German (Adorno 1995; 2019). Over the years there has been only one follow-up study conducted in Germany by Freyhold (1971), which originated within the Frankfurt School. Another issue has been the ignorance and initially subtle but later intense devaluation of critical rationalism and psychology (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004) and of the empirical and logical positivism approach taken by all the other authors of TAP (Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford) and by representatives of the Cologne school of empirical social research such as Roghmann (1966). This cumulated in the most important scientific controversy within sociology in post-war Germany, known as the *Positivismusstreit* [Positivism Dispute] (Adorno et al. 1972), which also attracted international attention.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers, the editors Andreas Kranebitter and Christoph Reinprecht, as well as Lucyna Darowska, Aylene Heller, and Aribert Heyder for their valuable comments. I would also like to thank Lisa Trierweiler for her proofreading, Joanna White for her copyediting and Oliver Platt for the production of the tables and figures.

Unfortunately, in academia this dispute led to a mutual process of misunderstanding and devaluation. The representatives of the Frankfurt School no longer focused their empirical research on authoritarianism and instead concentrated more on philosophical issues. Furthermore, the School's adherents did not follow up with the development of modern developmental psychology, social psychology or the psychometric latent variable models used to empirically test social science theories (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the contributions made by Adorno's co-authors—Frenkel-Brunswik, Sanford and Levinson—were never given their due respect either by academic researchers or in broader public discourse in Germany or Europe in general (for the American context see Samelson 1986; Sanford 1986). The specific achievements of Frenkel-Brunswik have been dealt with in recent times only by Hopf (2015). Beside her general achievement of being a member of the team of authors of the complete study in 1950, she was the sole author of five chapters and co-author of the chapter on the development of the F-Scale. Adorno, like Frenkel-Brunswik, was co-author and not leading author of the chapter on the F-Scale, and sole author of an additional introduction and four chapters on the qualitative study of ideology. Looking at Frenkel-Brunswik, the following topics have been especially remarkable (see Adorno et al. 1950; 2019): Firstly her co-authorship of chapter 7 on the development of the F-Scale (F denoting Fascism). Secondly her focus on the analysis of qualitative interviews (chapters 9-13; see also Darowska in this special issue) and its connection to quantitative interviews. Thirdly her chapter on the issue of the idealisation of parents during the socialisation process by persons with high authoritarianism and the impact of this on the validity of the quantitative measurements (chapter 10). And finally, her extensive knowledge and application of the covering law model of Hempel and Oppenheim (1948) and Hempel's (1952) concept of two languages and its application in her explication of psychoanalytic explanations (chapter 12).

To evaluate and follow up on the intellectual contribution made by Frenkel-Brunswik, especially to authoritarianism research, I want to employ Lakatos' (1970) concept of a research programme. Specifically, this implies that there are three different components of a research programme: (1) Meta-physical assumptions, which cannot be tested empirically but are set; (2) theoretical hypotheses employing theoretical constructs called core theory; and (3) measurement theory, often denoted as operationalisation connecting latent variables with observed indicators (Hempel 1952; 1973). Lakatos (1970) argues that a research programme develops well if it can explain more observable phenomena in comparison with the existing state. However, if there is no progress in explaining phenomena, the programme is regarded as stagnant. In the worst case, a research programme becomes degenerative, that is, it explains less over time than at the beginning. In the case of authoritarianism research and the role of Frenkel-Brunswik, I concentrate on the development of the core theory and the measurement theory and on the underlying assumptions of the research.

In the following sections, I begin with a brief discussion of Frenkel-Brunswik's academic development in Vienna, focusing on her training and experience with psychoanalysis, developmental psychology and the Vienna Circle of logical positivism (*Wiener Kreis des logischen Positivismus*), since this was very important for her further intellectual development. Then, in the next section, I discuss how the underlying measurement model of authoritarianism has been developed. While following

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<sup>2</sup> The most likely motive for this deficit emerges from Adorno's disdain for empirical social psychology and differential psychology. Both of these fields of expertise, however, are indispensable for this research. This scientific-historical review therefore contributes to the understanding of why innovative and large-scale investigations of the authoritarian personality did not take place in post-war Germany.

on from her contributions in essence (Frenkel-Brunswik 1947; 1996), a reduction took place from the original nine to three constructs, and there has been no systematic integration of qualitative studies on authoritarianism with later surveys on authoritarianism by other researchers. Although both changes represent a degenerative development over time, I must point out that a great deal of progress was made in developing reliable and valid scales for the reduced number of (only) three constructs. Nonetheless, this development has been degenerative because the six omitted scales could have been used to explain other phenomena outside the three remaining constructs, or could have had different impacts on the same dependent variable. Furthermore, by leaving out the qualitative interviews and not following a mixed-methods approach, the validity of the scales was reduced.

Concerning the theoretical core of the theory and in contrast to the measurement theory, it is important to point out that no explicitly formulated hypotheses containing contextual or individual determinants of authoritarianism were postulated in the study on authoritarianism (Adorno 1950; 2019). Continuing the work of Frenkel-Brunswik on intervening constructs (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954; 1996), I show how modern methods of latent variable analysis allow me to formalise and test these concepts. Further, I demonstrate how her ideas of integrating psychological and sociological as well as individual political and contextual variables (Frenkel-Brunswik 1952; 1996) can be formalised and tested by employing structural data models on data from the German General Social Survey (*Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften*, ALLBUS). This is followed by a discussion of how her ideas about the idealisation of parents (Frenkel-Brunswik 1948; 1996) were formalised and tested using cluster analysis. Finally, I present a summary of my main findings.

## **FROM VIENNA TO BERKELEY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHODOLOGICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH OF FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK**

In Vienna in 1926, Frenkel-Brunswik began to study mathematics and physics. However, in the course of her studies she became more and more interested in psychology. After two semesters she switched her major to psychology and began her close cooperation with Charlotte Bühler and her work on child and developmental psychology. Furthermore, she became interested in the biographical approach to studying human development. Particularly her qualitative approach in TAP and the idealisation hypothesis concerning perception of the parents were influenced by these earlier academic experiences. Her experiences and connections with psychoanalysts in Vienna and the intensive contact she had at this time with the Böhlers and their experimental approach led to an ambivalent relationship to psychoanalysis during her years in Vienna (Paier 1996). However, after her emigration to the United States, she defended psychoanalysis and argued that psychoanalytic theories should be reconstructed in accordance with logical positivism and as part of the Unity of Science movement, which was propagated in particular by Neurath (1940; 1954; 1983).

Even during her studies in Vienna she began to communicate with members of the Vienna Circle and was in frequent contact with Moritz Schlick and Rudolf Carnap and, later, especially with Otto Neurath (Paier 1996). This had a lasting effect on her methodological orientation. I now turn to the differences in methodological positions between Frenkel-Brunswik and Adorno as well as Horkheimer. In his seminal paper, Max Horkheimer (1937) differentiated between traditional theory and critical theory. Traditional theory as a label meant the empirical sciences setting up explicit hypotheses and then testing these using data. He did not mention the publications of the Vienna Circle but referred only to the contributions of Descartes and Poincaré (for details see Keuth 1993: 7ff.). A detailed criticism of the Frankfurt School's programme from the point of view of critical rationalism

has been outlined by Keuth (1993). Specifically, Keuth argues that Horkheimer was not sufficiently knowledgeable in areas relating formal logic in the empirical sciences (Keuth 1993: 23).

In contrast to the concept of traditional theory, the concept of critical theory contains not only empirically tested theories but also value judgements and political activities (Horkheimer 1937; Keuth 1993). The use of this distinction demonstrates that Frenkel-Brunswik must be seen as a representative of traditional theory in Horkheimer's sense of the term (1937), as I will illustrate below.

Frenkel-Brunswik maintained her personal contacts with the members of the Vienna Circle until 1938, particularly with Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, and Rudolf Carnap (Paier 1996: 31). From 1939 onwards she had continuing contact with those members who had emigrated to the United States, mainly Gustav Bergmann, Rudolf Carnap, Herbert Feigl, Carl Gustav Hempel, and Hans Reichenbach (Paier 1996: 57).

Six major aspects of the transfer of the Vienna Circle's concepts (Stadler 2015) and their later development—especially by Hempel (1952; 1965; 1973)—appear to be especially important to her work (Frenkel-Brunswik 1940; 1954; 1996a; 1996d).

- (1) The use of a deductive approach for theory construction that formulates falsifiable hypotheses, also in psychoanalytic theories and explanations as developed in Hempel and Oppenheim's (1948) deductive-nomological model (D-N model) of scientific explanation (Frenkel-Brunswik 1954; 1996d: 123–127)—according to Frenkel-Brunswik, the Henkel-Oppenheim model can be applied to the explanation of general concepts and individual acts (Frenkel-Brunswik 1940; 1996a: 79).
- (2) Employing dispositional terms (Carnap 1936) or theoretical constructs (Hempel 1952) and intervening constructs (MacCorquodale and Meehl 1948; Frenkel-Brunswik 1940; 1996e: 117–122) instead of pure operationalism or empiricism with propositions employing only observational terms.
- (3) The necessity of correspondence rules or even correspondence hypotheses (Hempel 1973; Frenkel-Brunswik 1996d: 123–127) to connect observational terms with theoretical terms—this implies the formulation of hypotheses connecting latent and observed variables and making theory-driven decisions on the causal direction.
- (4) The conceptualisation of psychoanalytical concepts (e.g., unconscious or desire) as latent constructs and not viewed in the tradition of hermeneutics: postulated relationships are deductive hypotheses (Frenkel-Brunswik 1940; 1996a: 79ff.)—explanation of general concepts and of individual acts takes place by applying the deductive nomological approach, and this was later elaborated on especially by Grünbaum (1988).
- (5) For complex theories (like psychoanalysis), higher-order factors and intervening, not directly measurable constructs are needed (MacCorquodale and Meehl 1948), which should, however, have an indirect connection to observed variables (Frenkel-Brunswik 1996d: 117–122). This was formalised later on by the concept of phantom variables in latent variable models (Rindskopf 1984).
- (6) Following the ideals of the Unity of Science movement (Carnap 1938; Neurath et al. 1938; Seymons et al. 2011; Frenkel-Brunswik 1996d: 142–147)—it is assumed that the principles of theory, construction, testing, and applications are equal for all disciplines of science including psychoanalysis and the humanities. Furthermore, most practical problems need transdisciplinary research for their solution and, therefore, Frenkel-Brunswik (1952; 1996c) stressed that there should be no border thinking between the disciplines.

In the following section I focus firstly on her approaches to the third element of her research programme, that is, the underlying measurement theory and then on the second element, that is, the core theory. Before this I turn a discussion of how she made use of the concepts of analytical philosophy. To elaborate on this, I begin by discussing the formalisation of hypotheses and operationalisations via latent variables models and the discriminant and convergent validity of concepts such as authoritarianism, antisemitism and anti-foreigner sentiments and higher-order confirmatory factor analysis. Furthermore, we will address the topic of model specification for intervening constructs using phantom variables and multiple indicator and multiple causes (MIMIC) models (Muthén 2002).

### THE MEASUREMENT MODEL OF TAP

I will now look at the relationship between latent variable models (Jöreskog 1973) and the liberalised two-language theory (Hempel 1973), on the assumption that—in science—we have to differentiate between statements with observable variables and statements with theoretical constructs. This allows a connection (Schmidt 1977) between modern psychometrics and the follow-up of positivism labelled the liberalised version of Hempel's (1965; 1973) two-language theory.

In the framework of the TAP study, Frenkel-Brunswik, Sanford, and Levinson, as the trained psychologists within the team, used exploratory factor analysis to test the measurement theory—the available method at the time when this study was carried out—in order to construct the Fascism (F) Scale, the Ethnocentrism (E) Scale and the Antisemitism (AS) Scale. The F (Fascism) Scale itself (Sanford, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik and Levinson 1950) consisted of 38 items in its first version (Form 78) and was characterised by being indirect but formulated in the manner typical of opinion polls. This form was administered to four different social groups to increase external validity and calculate the reliability of the scale. Next, the authors performed an item analysis using the discriminatory power as the criterion and revised the scale (Sanford et al. 1950: 144). Based on these results they developed the next version, Form 60, and again computed the reliability and performed an item analysis. Employing this Form 60, the new versions (Form 45 and Form 408) were developed. The items of these new forms had good discriminatory power and sufficient reliability. For the question wording see the Appendix and for the underlying measurement model of the items, see Figure 1. However, the samples used were not representative samples of the American population but 14 heterogeneous groups, which included prisoners, students and service club members. For the validation, Sanford et al. (1950; 2019) used case studies of the F-Scale, AS-Scale, and E-Scale, and for the discriminant validation they performed a simultaneous exploratory factor analysis of the Fascism Scale, Antisemitism Scale and the Ethnocentrism Scale. The factor correlations indicated that discrimination of the three constructs was possible. The correlation between antisemitism and authoritarianism was, for example, .53 (Sanford et al. 1950: 263). Although Frenkel-Brunswik formulated a priori the measurement model with some precision, including the relations to the two other scales, the relationship between the nine postulated constructs and the factors in the exploratory factor analysis was not clear.

Now I want to discuss the relation between latent variable models (Jöreskog 1973) and the liberalised two-language theory (Hempel 1973). The latter was used also by Frenkel-Brunswik assuming that in science we have to differentiate between statements with observable variables and statements with theoretical constructs. There is a close connection (Schmidt 1977) between modern psychometrics

and the follow-up of positivism labelled the liberalised version of the two-language theory (Hempel 1965; 1973).

However, through the development of confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) (Jöreskog 1973), a generalization of regression analysis taking into account random and non-random measurement errors (Goldberger 1971), even more sophisticated methods to model the substantive ideas and methodological viewpoints of Frenkel-Brunswik became available later on. Whereas in the discussion between Carnap (1956), Hempel (1965) and Popper (1965) the calculus of predicate logic was used and no connection to the development of exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis or regression analysis was established, it is possible to establish a one-to-one connection between the liberalized version of the two-language theory and latent variable models in statistics. This was initially done by Tuomela (1973) and Schmidt and Graff (1975). Table 1 shows how the concept of the liberalised version of Hempel’s (1973) theory of two languages has been formalised within the structural equation approach and forms its theoretical background.<sup>3</sup>

	Structural equation models (Jöreskog 1973)	Liberalised version of the theory of two languages (Hempel 1973)
1. Variables	Indicator, measured variable $Y = (y_1, \dots, y_p)$ $X = (x_1, \dots, x_q)$ Theoretical variables a) Exogenous theoretical variables $\xi = (\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n)$ a) Endogenous theoretical variables $\eta = (\eta_1, \dots, \eta_m)$	Observation variable  Theoretical construct
2. Statements	‘structural relations’ ( $\eta = B\eta + \Gamma\xi + \zeta$ )  ‘expected relations’ ( $\Sigma$ )  Measurement/correspondence hypotheses $(y = \Lambda\eta + \varepsilon)$ $(x = \Lambda\xi + \delta)$	Theoretical postulate (theoretical core)  Empirical laws  Correspondence rules or correspondence hypotheses (measurement theory)

Table 1: Latent Variable Models (SEM) (Jöreskog 1973) and Liberalised Version of the Two-Languages Approach (Hempel 1973). Legend:  $Y$  = Vector of indicators of endogenous latent variables;  $X$  = Vector of indicators of exogenous latent variables;  $\xi$  = Vector of exogenous latent variables;  $\eta$  = Vector of endogenous latent variables;  $\Gamma$  = Matrix of effects of exogenous on endogenous latent variables;  $B$  = Matrix of the effects of endogenous latent variables on each other;  $\zeta$  = Vector of errors of endogenous latent variables;  $\Sigma$  = Matrix of expected covariances;  $\Lambda$  = Matrix of effects of latent variables on their respective indicators;  $\varepsilon$  = Vector of random measurement errors of  $y$  indicators;  $\delta$  = Vector of random measurement errors of  $x$  indicators. However, this kind of correspondence table was challenged and it gave rise to a longer critical discussion (Marraun and Gabriel 2013) about the relation between latent variables and factors on the one hand, and constructs in substantive theories on the other. Therefore, one cannot assume an isomorphic (one-to-one) relationship between the formalisation in the SEM model and the concepts and verbal propositions formulated in the tradition of the theory of two languages.

<sup>3</sup> A connection to the non-statement view developed later on has yet to be established (Sneed 1979; Westmeyer 1992; Balzer 2009).

However, this problem is rarely discussed in empirical applications of exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis. The model has been generalised to model higher-order latent variables (phantom variables) and any type of causal directions (Graff and Schmidt 1982; McArdle 2005). This generalisation also allows modelling of intervening constructs without indicators, mentioned by Frenkel-Brunswik in her discussion of intervening constructs and psychoanalytical concepts, given that the identification problem is solved.

However, the existence of this correspondence was challenged and a longer critical discussion (Maraun and Gabriel 2013) took place about the relationship between latent variables and factors on the one hand and constructs in substantive theories on the other. Therefore, one cannot assume an isomorphic (one-to-one) relation between the formalisation in the SEM model and the concepts formulated in the tradition of the theory of two languages. In other words, it is not always clear whether in a factor analysis of the F-Scale using these items, a factor such as authoritarian aggression is identical to the theoretical concept itself, which is—in most cases—even more general. The generalisation by Schmidt and Graff (1975) also allows the modelling of intervening constructs without indicators, something mentioned by Frenkel-Brunswik (1954; 1996) in her discussion of intervening constructs and psychoanalytical concepts. In light of this, the identification problem is solved, implying that all unknowns in the equations can be solved unanimously (Brown 2015; Jöreskog 1973).

Frenkel-Brunswik (1940; 1996a; 1996d) used a deductive process model of the underlying social mechanism to explain the origins of authoritarianism in children and young adults. Fathers of authoritarian persons were regarded as cold and distant. In cases of children's resistance, fathers reacted with harsher punishments. As a consequence, the children developed repressive behaviour towards the father. In such cases, hostility is suppressed and replaced with superficial affection, with love on the one hand and submission on the other hand. One outcome of this process is that the repressed hostility is projected onto minorities, which are regarded as hostile and dangerous. Therefore, the perception and rationalisation of aggression towards minority groups is merely a substitute for the hatred of authority figures including, ultimately, the father, since he is superior and the child has no possibility of escaping his exercise of power. This leads, therefore, to aggression directed at weaker objects. As this process model can only be tested quantitatively and qualitatively through longitudinal studies beginning in early childhood and by measuring at least some of the intervening constructs, Frenkel-Brunswik also used retrospective approaches like biography research and, in the TAP project, intensive interviews for measuring the origins of authoritarianism.

The F-Scale, the E-scale, and the AS-Scale thus have to be regarded as outcome variables of this developmental process. From this point of view, the explanation of authoritarianism using psychoanalytical terms within a process model employs personality traits. However, the scales themselves might be regarded as measures of attitudes towards different objects and the underlying mechanism, which uses psychoanalytical terms, is not directly or indirectly tested.

The explication of the original measurement model of the F-Scale is represented in the path diagram illustrated in Figure 1. The F-Scale consisted of the following nine subdimensions (Sanford et al. 1950: 249):

- n1 = Conventionalism (4 items)
- n2 = Authoritarian submissiveness (7 items)
- n3 = Authoritarian aggression (8 items)
- n4 = Anti-Intracception (4 items)
- n5 = Superstitions and stereotypes (6 items)

- n6 = Power and robustness (7 items)
- n7 = Destructiveness and cynicism (2 items)
- n8 = Projectivity (5 items)
- n9 = Sexuality (3 items)

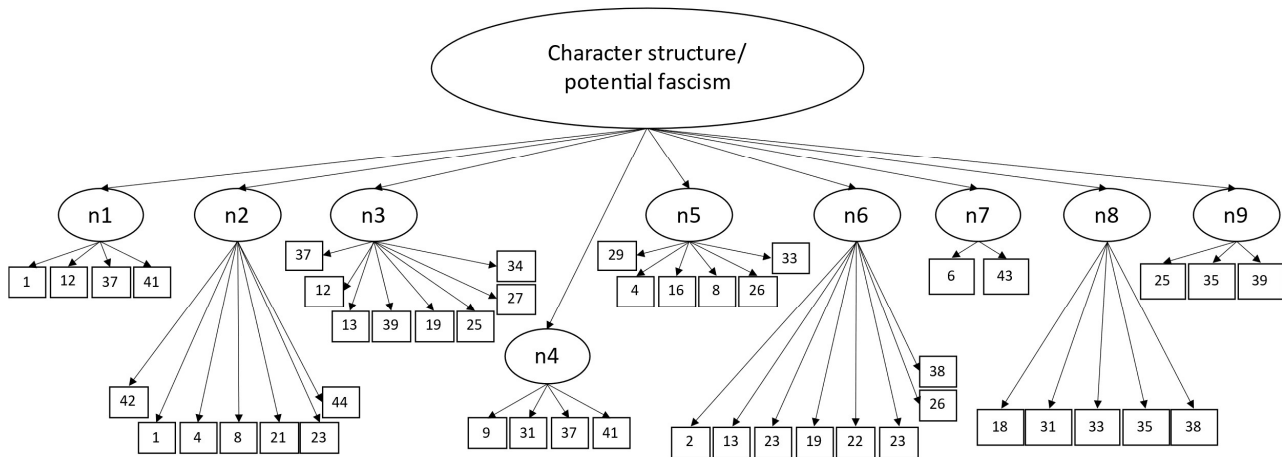


Figure 1: Original Measurement Model F-Scale (Path Diagram)

As the path diagram in Figure 1 demonstrates, some items (Items 1, 12, 37, 41, 31, 35, 4, 8, 23, 13, 39, 19, 25, 31, 26, 33, 38) were connected to more than one factor. In Appendix 1, the exact item wording and the original numbers given in Form 45 and 40 (Adorno et al. 1950: 224–260) are listed. Apart from reliability analysis, no further simultaneous factor analysis was performed by the authors. However, the relationship between the F-Scale and the AS-Scale and E-Scale was significant and positive as expected. Although, implicitly, a second-order factor model (Brown 2015) was postulated, this was neither tested empirically nor subjected to an alternative, person-centred procedure approach such as cluster analysis or latent class analysis, even though the authors repeatedly used the terms personality type or syndrome in different parts of the study (e.g. syndrome was used as a general term on pages 228, 261f., 279, 811, 971ff., authoritarian syndrome on page 759ff., conventionalism on page 256ff., and types was used in general on pages 744ff. and 972 and specifically for ethnocentric individuals on page 751ff). Such typological hypotheses have a different form than correspondence rules or hypotheses (Hempel and Oppenheim 1936; Hempel 1965), and they could have been tested by cluster analysis or the latent class analysis developed by P. F. Lazarsfeld, who cooperated with both Adorno and Frenkel-Brunswik (Paier 1996).

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL OF TAP

Most of the ensuing discussions concentrated on the F-Scale itself and its explanatory value for explaining fascism and right-wing authoritarianism. Although the scale received extensive methodological criticism (Christie and Jahoda 1954; Stone et al. 1993), it was never fully replicated (Meloan 1993) with all these items. Further developments with subsets of items are found in the works of Kagitcibasi (1970), Lederer (1982; 1983), Lederer and Kindervater (1995), Lederer and Schmidt (1995), Oesterreich (1993), Feldman and Stenner (1997), Funke (2005), Rippl and Seipel (2000),



Stellmacher and Petzel (2005), Stenner (2010), Duckitt and Bizumic (2013) and Beierlein et al. (2014). As Duckitt (2015: 256-257) stated, the reconceptualisation of the F-Scale as dogmatism by Rokeach (1954) and as conservatism by Wilson (1973) did not succeed in measuring a unitary construct and they still had a high level of correlation with the F-Scale. The concept itself later regained prominence when it was revived in the work of Altemeyer (1981; 1988; 1991; 1998), who used a subset of three dimensions and 21 items (1991). He conceptualised them either as personality attributes or as attitudes, but substituted the explanatory psychoanalytic paradigm for rather general statements concerning the use of cognitive learning theory (Rotter 1966; Bandura 1977). However, his basic achievement was the refinement and reduction of the measurement model of the F-Scale.

As a basis for his work, Altemeyer (1988; 1998) used nominal definition D1 to define the general construct of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) as follows:

D1: Right-wing authoritarianism = subordination of individual freedom and autonomy to the collective and its authority.

The three subdimensions (D2–D4) were defined as follows:

D2: Authoritarian Aggression defined as a tough attitude towards violations of social rules, norms and laws.

D3: Conservatism defined as obedient and respectful support for societal authorities.

D4: Traditionalism defined as favouring traditional, religious social norms and values.

Altemeyer dismissed psychoanalysis as an explanatory theory but, in a cursory way, he incorporated cognitive learning theory in the tradition of Rotter (1954) and Bandura (1977). According to Altemeyer (1981: 257), authoritarianism should be regarded as the covariation of three attitudes conceptualised as subdimensions representing RWA. However, he did not clarify whether the relations between RWA and the three subdimensions were definitional relations or whether RWA was a reflective or formative construct (Brown 2015) connected to the three subdimensions via empirical relations. These attitudes and RWA itself are—according to Altemeyer—acquired during childhood and even changed during adulthood by imitation or learning from models or direct experience of rewards and punishment. This can be experienced by means of personal experience with the objects that are the subject of the attitudes (direct learning). The determinants of attitude learning are the extent to which individuals are rewarded for learning the attitude. The rewards can be symbolic rewards (such as imitation) or tangible (like recognition) or monetary or intrinsic ones.

In the meantime, researchers have developed different versions of this scale. Duckitt and Bizumic (2013) first developed a revised instrument with a smaller number of items for the three factors and, later on, Bizumic et al. (2018) developed a scale with only six items (2018). Beierlein et al. (2014) developed a slightly different German instrument comprising three items per factor to control for every form of random and non-random measurement error. They tested a confirmatory second-order factor model with RWA as a reflective second-order factor. The three factors were labelled authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, and conventionalism. Based on this scale, Heller (2020) developed an ultrashort scale with only three items especially suited to large multi-topic surveys. A recent study (Heller et al. 2022) confirmed Beierlein et al.'s (2014) model structure by comparing two successive time points (repeated cross-sections). The aim of the Heller et al. (2022) study was to validate the short scale for authoritarianism (*Kurzskala Autoritarismus*; KSA-3) by investigating its measurement invariance on two levels (three first-order factors and one second-order fac-

tor) using two German representative samples (N = 4.905). Specifically, the authors looked at differences in a specific societal threat before and during/after the first national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (2017 vs. 2020). While measurement invariance held on both levels in all conditions, a decrease in latent means in 2020 was found, contrary to expectations. Table 2 presents the original German items of Beierlein et al.'s (2014) KSA-3 scale and the English translations of these items used in Heller et al.'s (2022) study.

Looking at the other results, as expected latent means were higher in the former East German states than in the former West German states, in older age groups than in younger age groups, in the less educated compared to those with higher formal education, and in men compared to women.

Item 1 Authoritarian Aggression	Outsiders and under- performers in society should be severely punished	Gegen Außenseiter und Nichtstuer sollte in der Gesellschaft mit aller Härte vorgegangen werden.
Item 2 Authoritarian Aggression	Troublemakers should clearly feel the effects of the fact that they are unwanted in society.	Unruhestifter sollten deutlich zu spüren bekommen, dass sie in der Gesellschaft unerwünscht sind.
Item 3 Authoritarian Aggression	Social rules should be enforced without compassion.	Gesellschaftliche Regeln sollten ohne Mitleid durchgesetzt werden.
Item 4 Authoritarian Submission	We need strong leaders in order to live safely in society.	Wir brauchen starke Führungspersonen, damit wir in der Gesellschaft sicher leben können.
Item 5 Authoritarian Submission	People should leave important decisions to those in charge/the leaders.	Menschen sollten wichtige Entscheidungen in der Gesellschaft Führungspersonen überlassen.
Item 6 Authoritarian Submission	We should be grateful for leaders who tell us exactly what we should do.	Wir sollten dankbar sein für führende Köpfe, die uns genau sagen, was wir tun können.
Item 7 Conventionalism	Traditions should absolutely be cultivated and maintained.	Traditionen sollten unbedingt gepflegt und aufrechterhalten werden.
Item 8 Conventionalism	Established procedures should not be questioned.	Bewährte Verhaltensweisen sollten nicht in Frage gestellt werden.
Item 9 Conventionalism	It is always best to do things in the usual way.	Es ist immer das Beste, Dinge in der üblichen Art und Weise zu machen.

Table 2: Original KSA-3 Items in Beierlein et al. (2015) and Their English Translation in Heller et al. (2020)

This model was empirically confirmed (Beierlein et al. 2014), and the factor loadings on the first-order factors and their regression coefficients on the second-order factor were all higher than .5. The corresponding path diagram can be found in Figure 2.

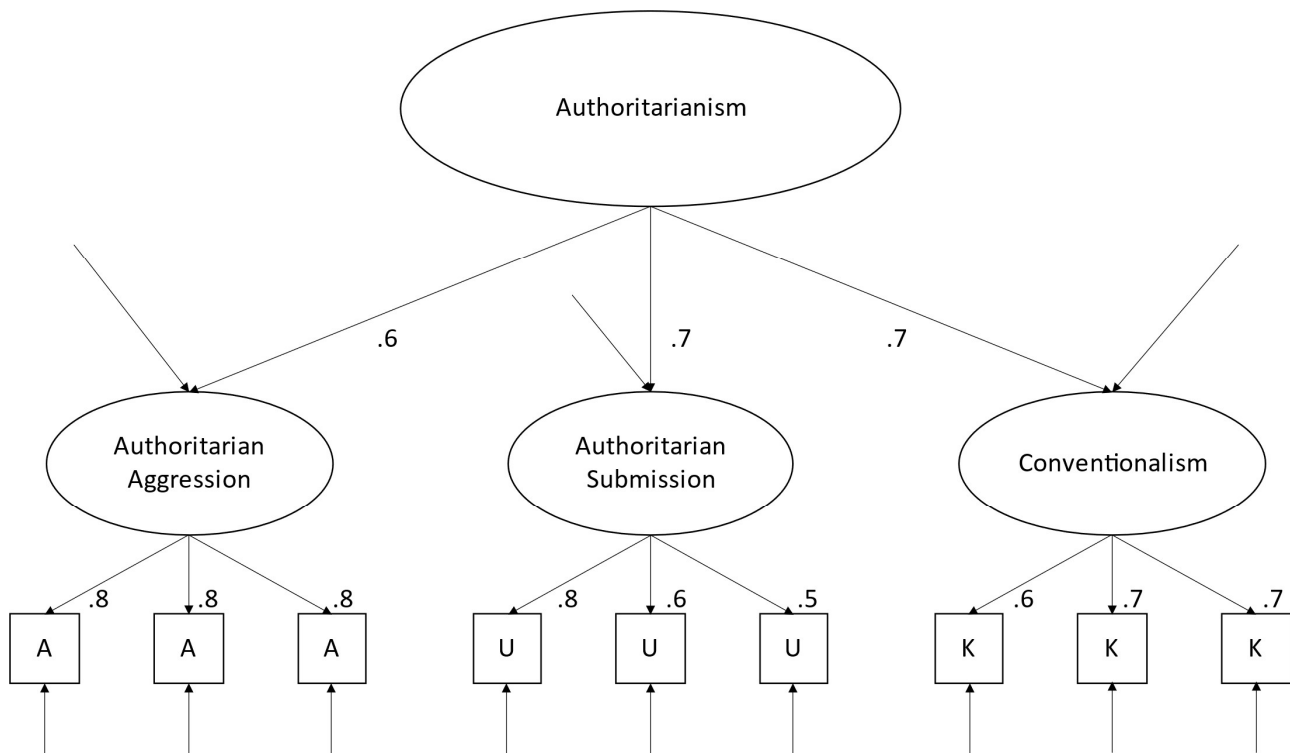


Figure 2: Short-Version of Altemeyer RWA Scale of Authoritarianism: Second Order Factor Model

The most frequently researched development of authoritarianism has been what is known as the Dual Process Model (DPM) of ideology and prejudice (Duckitt and Sibley 2017). It implies that RWA and social dominance orientation (SDO) are expressions of motivational goal dimensions, which become salient due to people's personalities and beliefs. SDO itself is seen as an attitudinal expression of the values of power, dominance and superiority over others. Finally, the motivated cognition theory of ideology by Jost and colleagues (2003) views RWA and SDO as two components of a higher-order factor they term conservatism.

### MODEL SPECIFICATIONS FOR AUTHORITARIANISM, ANTISEMITISM AND ETHNOCENTRISM AS SECOND-ORDER CONFIRMATORY FACTOR MODELS

I now turn to a discussion of the relation of the F Scale to the other two scales, which measure anti-semitism and ethnocentrism. Even in the late 1940s, before publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Frenkel-Brunswik et al. (1947) reported in detail on the development of all three scales: authoritarianism, antisemitism and ethnocentrism.

The original AS-Scale included five subscales containing 52 statements, and the E-Scale included three subscales and 12 items. The items in this scale focused on various minorities, with the exception of Jews, who were the focus of the AS-Scale. The first subscale of the E-Scale dealt only with African Americans. The second subscale dealt with other minorities. This refers to the idea of a generalised outgroup attitude, which was later discussed in detail by Allport (1954), who stated that those individuals who hate Jews also hate Catholics, African Americans and homosexuals. The third subscale

dealt with nationalism, that is, the idealisation of one's own group. Antisemitism and ethnocentrism were all framed as ideology whereas authoritarianism was conceptualised as a personality variable.

Whereas in both Sanford et al. (1950) and Altemeyer (1988; 1998) authoritarianism was treated as an independent scale to antisemitism (AS-scale; Levinson 1950a) or ethnocentrism (E-Scale; Levinson 1950b), the final ethnocentrism scale also contains the antisemitism scale. Furthermore, Frenkel-Brunswik (1947; 1996) argued that both ethnocentrism and authoritarianism are part of an antidemocratic personality, which implicitly implies a second-order factor model. Heyder and Schmidt (2000; 2003) formalised the underlying theoretical ideas by specifying a multiple indicator multiple causes (MIMIC) model based on the original conception by Sumner (1906). In their formalisation, ethnocentrism was a latent phantom variable explained by authoritarianism. Ethnocentrism itself was conceptualised using the two components of outgroup rejection and ingroup idealisation.

Following Lakatos (1970), this was a step taken not only to test the measurement theory for authoritarianism but also to test empirically hypotheses of the core theory, which argued that authoritarianism was influencing outgroup rejection and ingroup idealisation. Instead of testing three correlated scales as in TAP (F-Scale, E-Scale and AS-Scale), they proposed employing the theory of ethnocentrism as initially framed by Gumpłowicz (Bizumic 2014) but broadly disseminated by Sumner (1906). As a determinant of authoritarianism, as it developed in the adult population through certain educational practices in youth, ethnocentrism was seen as a second-order factor with two first-order factors of outgroup rejection (attitude towards foreigners and antisemitism) and one first-order factor of ingroup idealisation (proud to be a German) (see Figure 3).

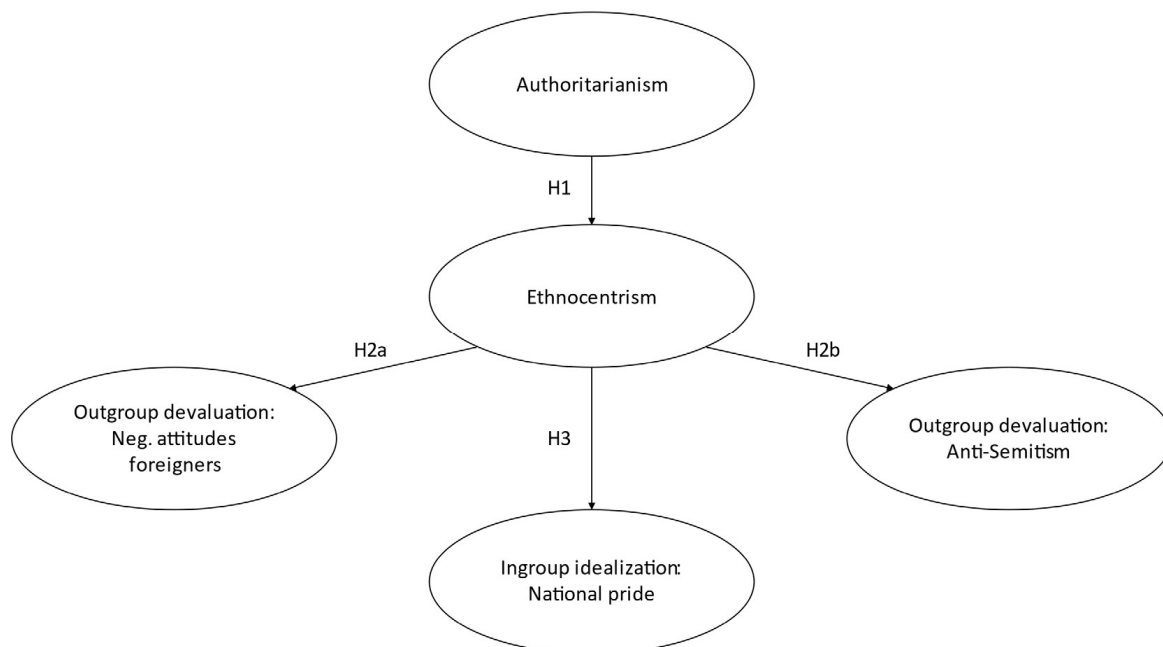


Figure 3: Path Diagram of Authoritarianism, Ethnocentrism, Outgroup Devaluation and Ingroup Idealisation

This second-order factor, ethnocentrism, can be regarded as an intervening construct in the sense of Frenkel-Brunswik (1954; 1996d: 121). See Figure 4 for the corresponding path diagram.

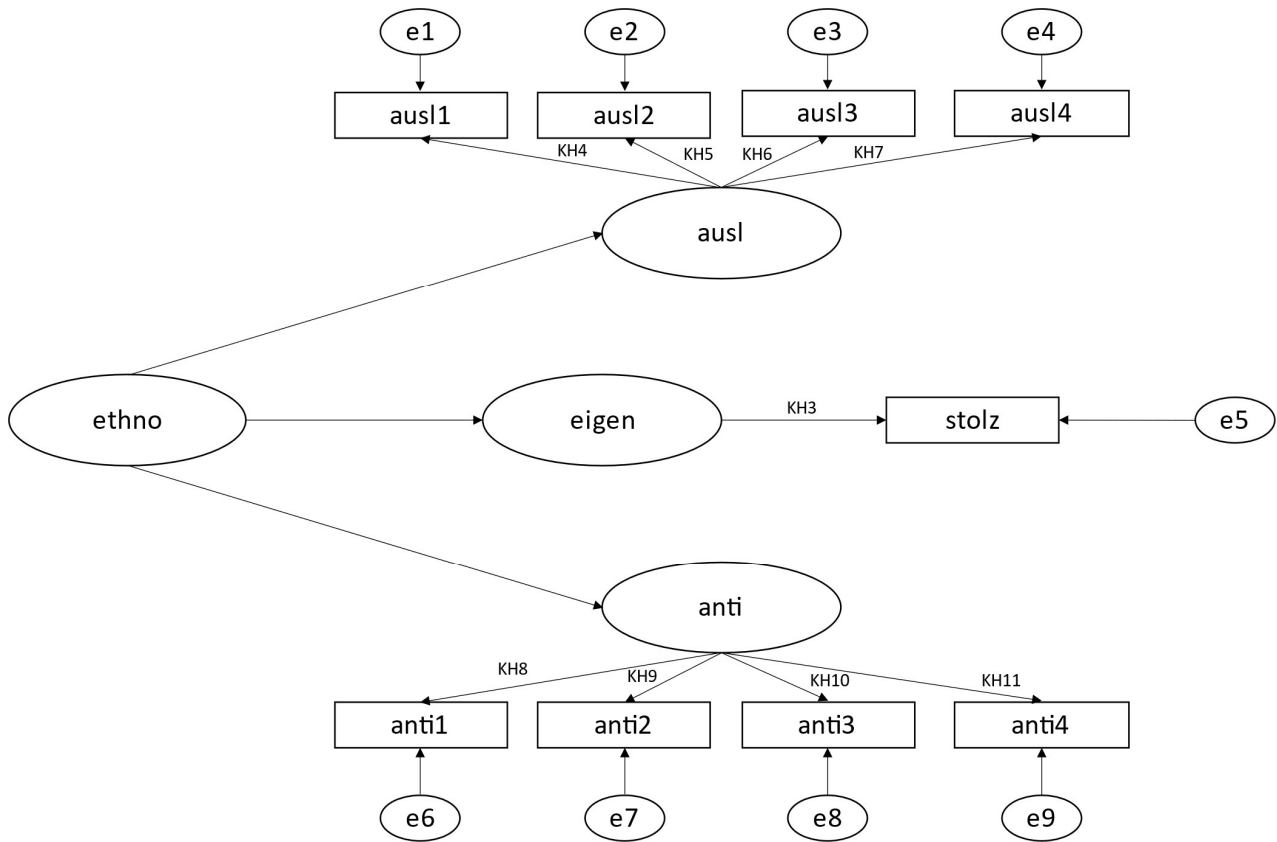


Figure 4: Ethnocentrism as a Second-Order Factor. Note: Ethno = ethnocentrism, eigen = ingroup favouritism, ausl = anti-foreigner sentiment, anti = antisemitism, stolz = proud to be a German; KH= correspondence hypothesis of the measurement model, and H = Hypothesis of the structural model.

### SPECIFICATION AND TEST OF STRUCTURAL RELATIONS: STRUCTURAL EQUATION AND MIMIC MODELS

In the TAP study, only correlations between authoritarianism and antisemitism or attitudes towards other minorities and groups were discussed. However, in her 1952 paper in the *American Political Science Review*, Frenkel-Brunswik discusses the interaction between psychological and sociological factors in political behaviour in more detail.

Using data from the 1996 German General Social Survey, Heyder, and Schmidt (2003) took up this idea and combined it with Sumner's (1906) concept of ethnocentrism. The items that were used are reported in Table 3.

<b>Authoritarianism</b>
1) We should be grateful for leaders who tell us exactly what to do and how to do it.
2) It usually helps children in later years if they are forced to conform to their parent's ideas.
<b>Negative attitudes towards foreigners</b>
1) The foreigners living in Germany should adapt their lifestyle a little bit more to that of the Germans.
2) If workplaces become scarce, foreigners living in Germany should be sent back to their home countries.
3) All foreigners living in Germany should be forbidden from engaging in any political activity.
4) The foreigners living in Germany should marry within their own ethnicity.
<b>Antisemitism</b>
1) Jews have too much influence in the world.
2) I'm ashamed that Germans have carried out so many atrocities against the Jewish people.
3) Today, many Jews try to take advantage of past National Socialism and let the Germans pay for it.
4) Because of their behaviour, Jews are not innocent of their persecution.
<b>Ingroup idealisation</b>
1) Are you proud to be a German?

Table 3: Item Formulations

Table 4 gives an overview of the models tested.

Model 1	Second-order confirmatory factor model ethnocentrism in Figure 3
Model 2	Full SEM model with authoritarianism as exogenous variable and ethnocentrism as intervening phantom variable in Figure 4 (theoretical model) and Figure 5 (tested model with standardised coefficients)
Model 3	MIMIC model 1996 and 2006 with East and West Germany as contextual determinants representing socialisation in different political systems and age and education as control variables (Table 5, 1996 and Table 6, 2006).

Table 4: Sequence of Models Summarised

The postulated model is depicted in Figure 3 (Schmidt and Heyder 2000: 454). To concentrate on the core theory, however, the measurement model is not included here.

The empirical results are given in Figure 5.

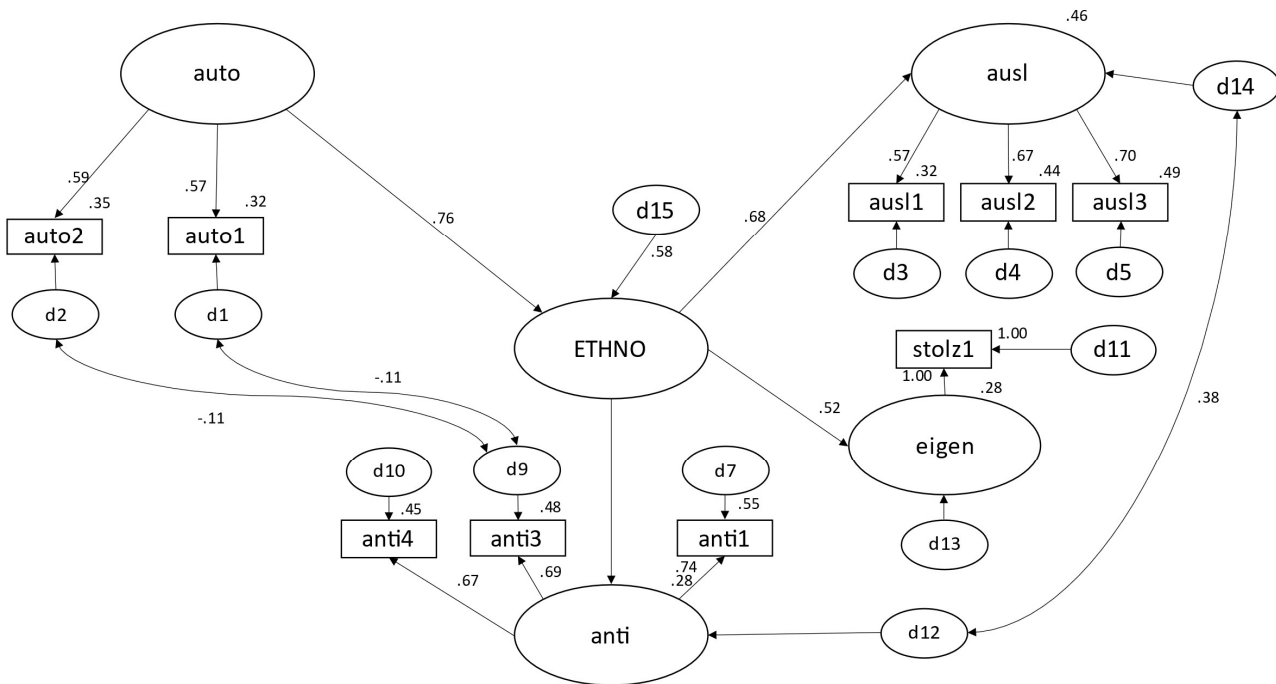


Figure 5: Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism: ALLBUS DATA Germany 1996, Based on a Structural Equation Model. Note: Auto = authoritarianism, ethno = ethnocentrism, eigen = ingroup favouritism, ausl = anti-foreigner sentiment, anti = antisemitism, stolz = proud to be a German; d1 – d15 = Numbers beneath the paths are standardized factor loadings or standardized regression coefficients. Measurement errors and errors of the latent endogenous variables. The numbers above the rectangles representing items are explained variances of these items, e.g. .74 % of the variance of item anti 1 is explained, whereas regarding the latent variable Antisemitism 28 % of the variance is explained. Double arrowed paths represent error correlations.

All relations (standardised regression coefficients) are positive, strong and significant. Two additional steps tested demographic and contextual factors as determinants of authoritarianism and ethnocentrism. Although this topic was discussed in Adorno (1950b), the authors did not explicate specific hypotheses or conduct any empirical testing of such relationships. A later theory-driven attempt was made by Scheepers et al. (1990), in which they analysed the hypotheses of TAP from their point of view. They set up a model using sociodemographic predictors such as objective class to explain outgroup rejection, ingroup idealisation and authoritarianism. Employing the model depicted in Figure 5 that relates authoritarianism, outgroup rejection and ingroup idealisation, Heyder and Schmidt (2003) expanded the model specification of Scheepers et al. (1990) by introducing, as a contextual variable, East versus West German place of residence as proxy for having lived in a more authoritarian state (GDR; German Democratic Republic, i.e., former East Germany) or a less authoritarian state (FRG; Federal Republic of Germany, i.e., former West Germany), in addition to age and education. This model was again implemented by using a longitudinal perspective in a structural equation model using data from two waves (repeated cross-sections) of the ALLBUS, 1996 and 2006. A contextual variable, East versus West Germany, was used to represent the effect of two different political systems from 1945 to 1991. The analyses revealed two remarkable differences in East and West Germany in 1996 (seven years after reunification of the FRG and GDR). Employing a multi-group structural equation model, they found that the relationship between authoritarianism and ethnocentrism and the relation between ethnocentrism and anti-foreigner sentiments was much lower in East Germany. The replication with data from 2006 showed further remarkable differences (Heyder et al. 2012). The effect of authoritarianism on ethnocentrism decreased significantly in former East and

West Germany, although the relationship was still significantly higher in West Germany. The effect of ethnocentrism on antisemitism became much stronger, with the values from East Germany approaching those of West Germany. Finally, the effect of ethnocentrism on anti-foreigner sentiment weakened significantly in West Germany, and the differences between East and West Germany were no longer significant.

The empirical results, based on a structural equation model, are depicted in Tables 5 and 6.

	Autho- Ethno	Ethno- Foreign	Ethno-Anti	Ethno- Ingroup	Anti- Foreign
East	.38	<i>1.16</i>	<i>.86</i>	<i>.68</i>	<i>.20</i>
West	.54	<i>1.16</i>	<i>.86</i>	<i>.68</i>	<i>.41</i>

Table 5: Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism in East and West Germany 1996

East Germany, n=1,110

West Germany, n=21,885

Note: Equal relations between East and West Germany are in italics. Auth=Authoritarianism; Ethno= Ethnocentrism; Foreign=Negative attitudes towards foreigners; Anti=Antisemitism; Ingroup=Ingroup idealisation. The relation between Antisemitism and negative attitudes towards foreigners is a covariance, other relations are unstandardized regression coefficients.

	Autho- Ethno	Ethno- Foreign	Ethno-Anti	Ethno- Ingroup	Anti- Foreign
East	.13	<i>.61</i>	<i>1.63</i>	<i>.77</i>	<i>.16</i>
West	.22	<i>.61</i>	<i>1.63</i>	<i>.77</i>	<i>.16</i>

Table 6: Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism in East and West Germany 2006

East Germany, n=1,098

West Germany, n=2,044

Note: Equal relations between East and West Germany are in italics. For variable names, see Table 5.

## IDEALISATION OF PARENTS AS A CHALLENGE FOR MEASUREMENT

An additional methodological challenge in TAP has been the topic of glorification in the perception of family structure (Frenkel-Brunswik 1948; 1996b: 172.). This implies that, due to authoritarianism, respondents will tend to glorify when asked retrospective questions concerning the extent of their parents' cold and punitive behaviour. This issue has been underlined in particular by Christel Hopf (1987; 1992; 1997; 2000), who has carried out several studies on this topic. Initially, Lederer and Kindervater (1995) employed scales developed by Lederer (1983) and Seipel et al. (1995) and performed confirmatory factor analysis of general authoritarianism and the perception of family structure in Germany, Austria, United States, and Japan. The four items of Lederer and Kindervater's (1995) glorification family structure measure are presented in Table 7.

A child should feel deeply committed to fulfilling the expectations of his parents.
Children should always stand by their parents.
Children should not do anything without the consent of their parents
Everyone should feel deep love, gratitude, and respect for their parents.

Table 7: Glorification: Family Structure Items (Lederer and Kindervater 1995)



The correlations of the composite scores between this scale, measuring authoritarian family structure, and the scales assessing core authoritarianism, non-specified authority, and state authoritarianism ranged from .31 to .45 in West Germany in 1991 (Rippl et al. 1995: 130). Schmidt et al.'s (1984) international comparison, which employed multi-group confirmatory factor analysis, uncovered similar relationships (see Table 8).

	Germany	Austria	United States	Japan
Covariance	.46	.41	.60	.44
Correlation	.72	.70	.75	.88

\* All covariances are significant at a 5% level

Table 8: Glorification: Comparison Authoritarianism and Respect for Parental Authority (Schmidt 1986)

This raised the question of the extent to which respondents' accounts of their parents' behaviour were being idealised due to idealisation processes in addition to the underlying social mechanisms. Cold and distant fathers were found more frequently among individuals with high authoritarianism. In addition, it was assumed that the father was dominating a submissive, long-suffering but morally restricted mother. Discipline was used by the parents as a tool to apply conventionally accepted rules instead of general values that took into account the needs of the child (Frenkel-Brunswick 1948; 1996b: 171). However, in most research on authoritarianism, this explanatory sketch was not measured nor discussed intensively. In addition, Altemeyer (1988) und Oesterreich (1993) found only very weak empirical relationships between authoritarianism and the parenting style of the parents. Hopf (1992) argued that one reason might be that the use of quantitative methods would not sufficiently take into account the idealisation of parents as discussed by Frenkel-Brunswick (1950, Part 2, Chapter X) in the TAP study. She found that persons scoring high on ethnocentrism had a strong tendency to conventional idealisation in contrast to low scorers, who had a much more critical and objective view of the parental style of their parents. Therefore, to study this in more detail, she performed several qualitative studies in which she also incorporated attachment theory and found, in contrast, very strong relations and that the roles of mothers were stronger than postulated in TAP (Hopf 1992: 142 ff.). However, all of Altemeyer's (1988) and Oesterreich's (1993) analyses were variable-centred (and not person-centred) approaches, which do not take sample heterogeneity for granted but test whether it exists (Muthén 2002). To test the perception of parental style by authoritarians, Berger and Schmidt (1995) used a person-centred method and performed a cluster analysis of the perception of family structure and parenting styles in Germany, based on a representative youth survey. Their analyses revealed eight interpretable clusters, thus indicating that this relationship is much more complex than originally conceptualised. Three of the eight clusters were different types of authoritarians. The highest values of authoritarianism in their study were found in Cluster 2. This cluster is characterised as follows:

- Ideal fathers are not supposed to be demanding in contrast to the mother
- Controlling characteristic plays an important role
- Inner rejection of parents is perceived more strongly
- Problems tend to be kept quiet in these families

Taking these findings into consideration, I can summarise that Frenkel-Brunswik's results are still very relevant but unfortunately have been grossly neglected in most authoritarian research on this topic.

## SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

Especially in Europe, but also beyond its borders, the role of Frenkel-Brunswik in designing, executing and publishing the TAP study has been both neglected and underestimated for a very long time. Her underlying philosophy of science, which was rooted in the Vienna Circle, and its further development by Hempel and Popper has been almost completely ignored by most researchers. This is especially the case in Germany and Austria, where the conceptions of critical theory—and not traditional theory—were seen as the basis for TAP. The representatives of the Frankfurt School devalued differential, social and developmental psychology, as well as quantitative empirical studies and their underlying methodology. This led to an end of the activities of the Frankfurt School in authoritarianism research. The only and last empirical study was carried out by Freyhold (1971). The book *The Authoritarian Personality* was never published in German and was only available as an illegal copy. The part authored by Adorno was published in German by Suhrkamp (11th edition), which also resulted in the impression within the academic world that TAP was mainly the work of Adorno, although Sanford was the lead author of the F-Scale and Frenkel-Brunswik one of the co-authors. Altemeyer's (1981, 1998) rejection of psychoanalytical explanations, such as those provided by Frenkel-Brunswik, was made without carrying out systematic comparison of psychoanalytic theory and developmental and social psychological theories or empirical testing of theoretical explanations based on these theories against each other. This led to a degenerative change in the research programme on the authoritarian personality, concentrating only on scale development without developing the theoretical background. An exception here has been the work of Feldman and Stenner (1997) and Stenner (2010). However, they also continued to ignore the psychoanalytic explanations.

The development and refinement of the authoritarianism scale has been successful in terms of classical psychometric approaches. However, the overall result has been a loss of the original scales beneath Altemeyer's selection of three scales. Those left out by Altemeyer, which have become particularly relevant in recent years in various forms, were the scales assessing projection and conspiracy theory.

To date, empirical evidence of the underlying theoretical approach (learning theory and psychoanalytic explanation) have been assumed but not explicitly tested.

Another factor to take into account are the perceptual distortions often found in retrospective measurement, especially in emotionally significant areas—as postulated by the glorification hypothesis.

Frenkel-Brunswik's proposal of combining knowledge from political science, sociology and psychology in order to explain authoritarianism has been taken up in the form of dual-process theories. It is also stressed by Pettigrew (2021) in his call for a contextualisation of social psychology and his call to bring together authoritarianism, fraternal and relative deprivation and intergroup contact theory in one model to explain prejudice and outgroup rejection (Pettigrew 2016). This combination of individual level factors and contextual factors can be well accounted for by multi-group structural equation models and multi-level analyses.

As the later studies on authoritarianism did not apply a multi-method approach like that taken in TAP through its combination of surveys with intensive interviews, this also shows a degenerative development of the research programme.

To take the legacy of Frenkel-Brunswik seriously would imply stopping the degenerative development of the research programme and directing it back to a more progressive development path.

Mixed method designs integrating intensive qualitative studies like those carried out by Frenkel-Brunswik have not been utilised; rather, quantitative scales were almost always used exclusively to measure authoritarianism in the years following the publication of the TAP study.

As a consequence of all these arguments, the following conclusion is clear: Frenkel-Brunswik's substantive and methodological legacy has unfortunately been neglected for more than seven decades. However, upon reflection it is very clear that her ideas are in fact very fruitful—not only is her work compatible with modern psychometrics, philosophy of science and mixed-methods approaches, it is also highly influential in current authoritarianism research (e.g., Decker, Kiess, and Brähler 2022; Heitmeyer 2018).

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## Author biography

**Peter Schmidt** is Professor emeritus at the Department of Political Science and member of the Centre for International Development and Environmental Research at the University of Giessen and Research fellow at the Department of Psychosomatic Medicine at the University of Mainz. His research is focussed on latent variable models, cross-cultural methods, values, ethnocentrism, and the reasoned action approach.

## Appendices

### Items of the KSA Scale in German

<b>Autoritäre Aggression</b>
1. Gegen Außenseiter und Nichtstuer sollte in der Gesellschaft mit aller Härte vorgegangen werden.
2. Unruhestifter sollten deutlich zu spüren bekommen, dass sie in der Gesellschaft unerwünscht sind.
3. Gesellschaftliche Regeln sollten ohne Mitleid durchgesetzt werden. (A3)
<b>Autoritäre Unterwürfigkeit</b>
1. Wir brauchen starke Führungspersonen damit wir in der Gesellschaft sicher leben können.
2. Menschen sollten wichtige Entscheidungen in der Gesellschaft Führungspersonen überlassen.
3. Wir sollten dankbar sein für führende Köpfe, die uns genau sagen, was wir tun können. (U3)
<b>Konventionalismus</b>
1. Traditionen sollten unbedingt gepflegt und aufrechterhalten werden.
2. Bewährte Verhaltensweisen sollten nicht in Frage gestellt werden.
3. Es ist immer das Beste, Dinge in der üblichen Art und Weise zu machen.
<b>Autoritarismus (Gesamtskala)</b>

Die Befragungspersonen geben ihre Antwort auf einer 5-stufigen Antwortskala mit den folgenden Antwortkategorien an: (1) stimme ganz und gar nicht zu, (2) stimme wenig zu, (3) stimme etwas zu, (4) stimme ziemlich zu, (5) stimme voll und ganz zu

### Items of the KSA-3 scale in English

<b>Authoritarian aggression</b>
1. We should take strong action against misfits and slackers in society.
2. Troublemakers should be made to feel that they are not welcome in society.
3. Rules in society should be enforced without pity.
4. We need strong leaders so that we can live safely in society.
<b>Authoritarian submissiveness</b>
1. People should leave important decisions in society to their leaders.
2. We should be grateful for leaders telling us exactly what to do.
<b>Conventionalism</b>
1. Traditions should definitely be carried on and kept alive.
2. Well-established behaviour should not be questioned.
3. It's always best to do things in the usual way.
<b>authoritarianism Scale (total score)</b>

Items are answered using a fully labelled 5-point rating scale: (1) do not agree at all, (2) hardly agree, (3) somewhat agree, (4) mostly agree, (5) completely agree.

### Items of the F-Scale in German

<b>Konventionalismus</b>
Die moderne Kirche, mit ihren vielen Vorschriften und ihrer Scheinheiligkeit, spricht den tiefreligiösen Menschen nicht an; sie wirkt hauptsächlich auf den naiven, unsicheren und unkritischen Menschen.
Man sollte in der Öffentlichkeit Dinge vermeiden, die anderen falsch erscheinen, auch wenn man weiß, daß sie in Wirklichkeit in Ordnung sind.
In den Colleges wird den intellektuellen und theoretischen Themen zuviel und den praktischen Dingen und schlichten Tugenden des Lebens zu wenig Wert beigemessen
Muße ist zwar eine feine Sache, aber gute harte Arbeit macht das Leben erst interessant und der Mühe wert.
Was ein Mensch macht ist nicht so wichtig, solange er es gut macht.
Welche der folgenden Eigenschaften sind für den Menschen am wichtigsten? Bezeichnen sie die drei wichtigsten mit X. (künstlerische Veranlagung und Sensibilität; Beliebtheit, gute Wesensart Energie, Entschluß- und Willenskraft; großzügige, menschlich soziale Einstellung; Gepflegtheit und gute Manieren Feingefühl und Verständnis; Leistungsfähigkeit, praktische Veranlagung und Sparsamkeit Verstandeskraft und Ernsthaftigkeit emotionale Ausdruckskraft, Wärme, Kontaktfreudigkeit; Freundlichkeit und Nächstenliebe)
<b>Autoritäre Unterwürfigkeit</b>
Der besondere Wert der fortschrittlichen Erziehung liegt in der großen Freiheit, die sie dem Kind gewährt, um jene natürlichen Impulse und Wünsche auszudrücken, die der konventionelle Mittelstand so oft mit Mißfallen betrachtet.
Wirklich verächtlich ist, wer seinen Eltern nicht unaufhörliche Dankbarkeit und Achtung entgegenbringt.
Um zu lernen und nützliche Arbeit zu leisten, ist es wichtig, daß unsere Lehrer und Vorgesetzten im einzelnen auseinanderlegen, was zu tun ist.
Jeder Mensch sollte einen festen Glauben an eine übernatürliche Macht haben, die über ihm steht, der er gänzlich untertan ist, und deren Entscheidungen er nicht in Frage stellt.
Wissenschaften wie Chemie, Physik und Medizin haben die Menschheit sehr weit gebracht, aber es gibt viele bedeutsame Dinge, die der menschliche Geistwahrscheinlich niemals verstehen kann.
Gehorsam und Respekt gegenüber der Autorität sind die wichtigsten Tugenden, die Kinder lernen sollten.
Was dieses Land braucht, sind weniger Gesetze und Ämter, als mehr mutige, unermüdliche, selbstlose Führer, denen das Volk vertrauen kann.
Kein gesunder, normaler, anständiger Mensch könnte jemals daran denken, einen guten Freund oder Verwandten zu kränken.
<b>Autoritäre Aggression</b>
Es ist nur natürlich und rechtens, daß Frauen in gewissen Dingen Beschränkung auferlegt wird, in denen Männer mehr Freiheit haben.
Wirklich verächtlich ist, wer seinen Eltern nicht unaufhörliche Liebe, Dankbarkeit und Achtung entgegenbringt.
Homosexualität ist eine besonders verderbte Art von Vergehen und sollte streng bestraft werden.
Wer unsere Ehre kränkt, sollte nicht ungestraft bleiben.
Sittlichkeitsverbrechen wie Vergewaltigung und Notzucht an Kindern verdienen mehr als bloße Gefängnisstrafe; solche Verbrecher sollten öffentlich ausgepeitscht werden.
<b>Anti-Intrazeption</b>
Romane oder Geschichten, die vom Denken und Fühlen der Menschen erzählen, sind interessanter als solche, die hauptsächlich Handlungen, Liebesgeschichten oder Abenteuer zum Inhalt haben.
In den Colleges wird den intellektuellen und theoretischen Themen zuviel und den praktischen Dingen und schlichten Tugenden des Lebens zu wenig Wert beigemessen.
Es gibt Dinge, die zu intim oder zu persönlich sind, als daß man sie selbst mit den engsten Freunden besprechen könnte.
Muße ist zwar eine feine Sache, aber gute harte Arbeit macht das Leben erst interessant und der Mühe wert.
Was ein Mensch macht, ist nicht so wichtig, solange er es gut macht.
Bücher und Filme sollten sich nicht so sehr mit der schmutzigen und unerfreulichen Seite des Lebens befassen, sondern sich auf unterhaltende und erbauende Themen konzentrieren.
<b>Aberglaube und Stereotypie</b>
Mögen auch viele Leute spotten, es kann sich immer noch zeigen, daß die Astrologie vieles zu erklären vermag.
Es ist mehr als ein bemerkenswerter Zufall, daß Japan am Tage von Pearl Harbor, am 7. Dezember 1944, ein Erdbeben erlebte.
Jeder Mensch sollte einen festen Glauben an eine übernatürliche Macht haben, die über ihm steht, der er gänzlich untertan ist, und deren Entscheidungen er nicht in Frage stellt.

Wissenschaften wie Chemie, Physik und Medizin haben die Menschheit sehr weit gebracht, aber es gibt viele bedeutsame Dinge, die der menschliche Geist wahrscheinlich niemals verstehen kann.
Es ist durchaus möglich, daß diese Serie von Kriegen und Konflikten ein für allemal durch ein Erdbeben, eine Überschwemmung oder sonstige Katastrophe beendet wird, welche die Welt vernichtet.
<b>Machtdenken und ‚Robustheit‘</b>
Zu viele Menschen führen heute ein unnatürliches, verweichlichtes Leben; wir sollten zu unseren alten Grundlagen, zu einer vitaleren, aktiveren Lebensweise zurückkehren.
Es sind einige so krass unamerikanische Dinge im Gange, daß, falls die verantwortlichen Stellen nichts unternehmen, der wachsame Bürger das Gesetz in die eigene Hand nehmen muß.
Wer unsere Ehre kränkt, sollte nicht ungestraft bleiben.
Viel stärker als die meisten Menschen erkennen, wird unser Leben durch Verschwörungen bestimmt, welche die Politiker insgeheim aushecken.
Was dieses Land braucht, sind weniger Gesetze und Ämter, als mehr mutige, unermüdliche, selbstlose Führer, denen das Volk vertrauen kann.
<b>Destruktivität und ‚Zynismus‘</b>
Amerika entfernt sich so weit vom echten American way of life, daß er vielleicht nur noch mit Zwang wiederherzustellen ist.
Zu viele Menschen führen heute ein unnatürliches, verweichlichtes Leben, wir sollten zu unseren alten Grundlagen, zu einer vitaleren, aktiveren Lebensweise zurückkehren.
Wenn wir die Deutschen und die Japaner erledigt haben, sollten wir uns auf andere Feinde der menschlichen Rasse konzentrieren, wie etwa Ratten, Schlangen und Ungeziefer.
Vertraulichkeit erzeugt Geringschätzung.
Heute herrscht überall Unsicherheit; wir müssen auf eine Periode ständigen Wechsels, ständiger Konflikte und Umwälzungen gefaßt sein.
Berichte über Greuelthaten in Europa sind zu Propagandazwecken stark übertrieben worden.
Es sind einige so krass unamerikanische Dinge im Gange, daß, falls die verantwortlichen Stellen nichts unternehmen, der wachsame Bürger das Gesetz in die eigene Hand nehmen muß.
Ganz gleich, wie sie nach außen hin handeln, die Männer sind an den Frauen nur aus einem Grund interessiert.
Nach dem Krieg müssen wir mit einer Welle von Verbrechen rechnen; die Kontrolle von Gangstern und Raufbolden wird eins der größten gesellschaftlichen Probleme werden.
Es wird immer Kriege und Konflikte geben, die Menschen sind nun einmal so.
Wenn man es genau betrachtet, liegt es in der menschlichen Natur, bei allem, was man tut, auch auf den eigenen Vorteil zu schauen.
<b>Projektivität</b>
Die sexuellen Ausschweifungen der Griechen und Römer sind Kindergartengeschichten im Vergleich zu dem, was heute bei uns zuweilen getrieben wird, selbst in Kreisen, wo man es am wenigsten erwarten würde.
Nach dem Krieg müssen wir mit einer Welle von Verbrechen rechnen; die Kontrolle von Gangstern und Raufbolden wird eins der größten gesellschaftlichen Probleme werden.
Es ist durchaus möglich, daß diese Serie von Kriegen und Konflikten ein für allemal durch ein Erdbeben, eine Überschwemmung oder sonstige Katastrophe beendet wird, welche die Welt vernichtet
Viel stärker als die meisten Menschen erkennen, wird unser Leben durch Verschwörungen bestimmt, welche die Politiker insgeheim aushecken.
Heutzutage, wo so viele verschiedene Menschen ständig unterwegs sind und sich untereinander so frei bewegen, muß man sich besonders sorgfältig gegen Infektionen und Krankheiten schützen.
<b>Sexualität</b>
Homosexualität ist eine besonders verderbte Art von Vergehen und sollte streng bestraft werden.
Ganz gleich, wie sie nach außen hin handeln, die Männer sind an den Frauen nur aus einem Grund interessiert.
Die sexuellen Ausschweifungen der Griechen und Römer sind Kindergartengeschichten im Vergleich zu dem, was heute bei uns zuweilen getrieben wird, selbst in Kreisen, wo man es am wenigsten erwarten würde.
Sittlichkeitsverbrechen wie Vergewaltigung und Notzucht an Kindern verdienen mehr als bloße Gefängnisstrafe; solche Verbrecher sollten öffentlich ausgepeitscht werden.

Die Befragungspersonen geben ihre Antwort auf einer 5-stufigen Antwortskala mit den folgenden Antwortkategorien an: (+3) volle Übereinstimmung, (+2) Übereinstimmung in wesentlichen Teilen, (+1) geringe Übereinstimmung, (-1) geringe Ablehnung, (-2) Ablehnung in wesentlichen Teilen, (-3) volle Ablehnung.



**Items of the F-Scale in English**

<b>Conventionalism</b>
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.
If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.
The business man and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist and the professor.
<b>Authoritarian submission</b>
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never possibly be understood by the human mind.
Every person should have complete faith in some supernatural power whose decisions he obeys without question.
Young people sometimes get rebellious ideas, but as they grow up they ought to get over them and settle down.
What this country needs most, more than laws and political programs, is a few courageous, tireless, devoted leaders in whom the people can put their faith.
No sane, normal, decent person could ever think of hurting a close friend or relative.
Nobody ever learned anything really important except through suffering.
<b>Authoritarian aggression</b>
A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.
What the youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for family and country.
An insult to our honour should always be punished.
Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.
There is hardly anything lower than a person who does not feel a great love, gratitude, and respect for his parents.
Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked, and feeble-minded people.
If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.
Homosexuals are hardly better than criminals and ought to be severely punished.
<b>Anti-intracception</b>
When a person has a problem or worry, it is best for him not to think about it, but to keep busy with more cheerful things.
Nowadays more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private.
If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.
The businessman and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist and the professor.
<b>Superstitions and stereotypes</b>
Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never possibly be understood by the human mind.
Every person should have complete faith in some supernatural power whose decisions he obeys without question.
Some people are born with an urge to jump from high places.
People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong.
Someday it will probably be shown that astrology can explain a lot of things.
Wars and social troubles may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.
<b>Power and 'toughness'</b>
No weakness or difficulty can hold us back if we have enough willpower.
What the youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for family and country.
An insult to our honour should always be punished.
It is best to use some pre-war authorities in Germany to keep order and prevent chaos.
What this country needs most, more than laws and political programmes, is a few courageous, tireless, devoted leaders in whom the people can put their faith.
People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong.



Most people don't realise how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
Destructivity and 'cynicism'
Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict.
Familiarity breeds contempt.
Projectivity
Nowadays when so many different kinds of people move around and mix together so much, a person has to protect himself especially carefully against catching an infection or disease from them.
Nowadays more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private.
Wars and social troubles may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.
The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the goings-on in this country, even in places where people might least expect it.
Most people don't realise how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
Sexuality
Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.
The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the goings-on in this country, even in places where people might least expect it.
Homosexuals are hardly better than criminals and ought to be severely punished.

Items are answered using a fully labelled 6-point rating scale.

ARTICLE

# Thriving in Ambiguity – A Dispositive of Self-Optimisation

## On the Frenkel-Brunswik Theorem in Current Human Resource Development

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### Abstract

This paper explores a discrepancy between research and application in the operationalisation of ambiguity tolerance. Observational results from the practice of human resource development raised the question: How does the umbrella term *ambiguity tolerance* relate to the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem, and has this possibly become a dispositive of self-optimisation? Methodologically, the article follows a literature-based approach. Tracing three shifts in the reception of the term, the trend around tolerance of ambiguity is linked to its theoretical construct. While by no means exhaustive, by recontextualising the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem in this way and bringing it into focus, the article aims to open up further discussion.

### Keywords

authoritarian personality, entrepreneurial self, Frenkel-Brunswik-Theorem, tolerance of ambiguity, VUCA paradigm

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### INTRODUCTION

There is more than management jargon behind the currently fashionable term *tolerance of ambiguity*. As a phenomenon, it can be a promising avenue for research; as a competence, it has direct practical applications with far-reaching consequences. But to what extent is the operationalisation of ambiguity tolerance problematic?

Management and leadership trends are rooted in everyday working life. The zeitgeist coins them while storytelling shapes them. It requires an immense effort of translation for these approaches to work in practice while, at the same time, incorporating empirical research and theoretical assumptions. Therefore, it can become problematic when leadership and management trends rely on theoretical concepts. One such problem is illustrated by the use of the concept of ambiguity tolerance in what is known as VUCA discourse. The acronym VUCA stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity,



and ambiguity, and it attempts to describe the consequences of the changed world of work in the 21st century.

Ambiguity tolerance varies in different people. And this variance is relevant for organisational practice. Programmes and practices for dealing with ambiguity must consider the different individual expressions of ambiguity tolerance. For organisations, this means communication practices that trigger and resolve ambiguity, and equipping teams with appropriate tools for dealing with ambiguity.

A discourse currently dominating the field of management approaches identifies increasing, where possible, the ambiguity tolerance of employees as an entrepreneurial challenge, especially in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD). While the desired effect is focused on the individual and aims at self-optimisation, organisational needs also reveal information about social conditions. The current discourse in management consultancy, executive training and People & Culture development seems to be part of a dispositive of self-optimisation. The demand within HRD for a higher level of ambiguity tolerance might be read as an individual psychological response to a social and entrepreneurial challenge. Here we are reminded of the entrepreneurial self (Bröckling 2016). But how does current HRD discourse refer to the theoretical construct, and could blind spots be responsible for the dispositive?

The paper identifies three differences in the current reception of the work compared to the original reading. It assigns them to the micro, meso and macro levels and poses further questions for discussion. What insights does the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem provide today? The article presents selected results of a review of current literature and discusses working hypotheses from a diachronic conceptual analysis. The literature corpus includes prescriptive literature from the broader field of HRD. This covers practice-oriented management manuals and consulting materials as well as publications on political and vocational education, all of which deal with the concept of tolerance of ambiguity as a competence. By analysing this literature, this article makes a contribution to the problematisation of the appropriation of the concept of ambiguity tolerance. At the same time, the origins of the concept are used to reflect critically on current HRD discourse. Finally, a plea is made for a critical re-reading of Frenkel-Brunswik.

## PERSONALITY TRAIT AND KEY COMPETENCE

Ambiguity is an invitation to enter the space of possibility shaped by multi-valued logic, in which the “both/and” and the “either/or” coexist in a complementary way. Individuals react to this invitation with very different levels of acceptance and it is the construct of ambiguity tolerance that can provide us with reasons for this. Ambiguity tolerance is the ability “to take note of ambiguity and uncertainty and to be able to tolerate them” (Dorsch 2004: 33).<sup>1</sup> According to Furnham and Ribchester (1995), ambiguity tolerance refers to the way an individual, or even a group, perceives and processes information about ambiguous situations or stimuli in the face of unfamiliar, complex, or incongruent cues.

The construct denotes the response to ambiguity and refers to the mode of dealing with the operationalisation of ambiguity. It was introduced to research as the personality trait *Ambiguity Intolerance* by the social psychologist Else Frenkel-Brunswik at the end of the 1940s. She began to explore

<sup>1</sup> This and all following quotations were translated by the author of this article.

tolerance of ambiguity from the psychoanalytical concept of ambivalence. Within the broader framework of multi-layered and reflexive research on antisemitism, she pursued research questions on rigidity and specific references to reality that are both dependent on differently elaborated drive patterns. Frenkel-Brunswik conceptualised denial of emotional ambivalence and intolerance of cognitive ambiguity as different aspects of one and the same coherent personality trait. Her experiments revealed that this personality trait also manifests itself in different perceptual styles, among other things. Based on experimental perceptual psychology and the psychoanalytic understanding of ambivalence, she developed methodologically complex research designs that combined descriptive approaches with projective tests. Trained in psychoanalysis and aware of the dynamic dimension of psychological processes, she used the methodological tools of psychoanalysis in her research and data analysis.

Frenkel-Brunswik characterises ambiguity intolerance as a problem-solving behaviour that reveals a specific approach to and handling of reality. The central aspects of that trait are described on the basis of observable behaviour. These include the tendency towards unrestricted black-and-white and either/or solutions, over-simplified dichotomisations, and stereotyping. Furthermore, Frenkel-Brunswik emphasises stimulus-boundedness and rigidity in her explanations. The personality trait of ambiguity intolerance manifests in tendencies such as the rigid repetition of thoughts and attitudes, but also the breaking off or interruption of actions. The preferred regularity and unambiguity can be achieved through diffuse globality or an overemphasis on details. The need for security is taken into account by focusing on familiarity, avoiding new experiences, and absolutising what is worth preserving (Frenkel-Brunswik 1996: 218).

The construct of ambiguity intolerance is the result of her research, and it is a theoretical construct with which Frenkel-Brunswik succeeds in overcoming rigid categorisation and typologisation. The ambiguity of her research object—the complexity of psychodynamically and socially shaped personality traits—is taken up in a reflexive way, so to speak.

The Frenkel-Brunswik theorem of ambiguity tolerance as a personality trait was developed by using the trait approach within personality psychology. This assumes that ambiguity tolerance, as a temporally stable and enduring personality trait, determines behaviour and thus contributes to consistent reactions in different situations (Budner 1962).<sup>2</sup> The majority of studies consider tolerance of ambiguity as a fixed personality trait, i.e., the tolerance trait remains stable across tasks and situations with varying degrees of uniqueness (Furnham and Marks 2013). Humans have individual and context-dependent limits that determine how they shape or endure ambiguity.

But here practical applications seem to conflict with these theoretical findings. Where ambiguity tolerance is negotiated in practice, it is often on the basis of an empirically unresearched concept of competence. This invokes the basic assumption formulated by McClelland: it would be difficult or impossible to find a personality trait that cannot be changed through practice or experience (cf. McClelland 1973, quoted in Gelhard 2012: 61). Leadership trends seem to rely on what is needed at each moment rather than on empiricism. A psychotechnical concept of competence is applied, which

<sup>2</sup> As a trait, ambiguity tolerance is situation-dependent and measurable. Reis developed an inventory to measure ambiguity tolerance, IMA (Reis 1996). A detailed research review is provided by Furnham and Marks (2013), who also concur with the more ready critique that research overall is characterised by a lack of construct development (Herman et al. 2010; Furnham and Marks 2013; Merrotsy 2020) and weaknesses in operationalisation (Grenier et al. 2005; McLain et al. 2015). A preponderance of correlational studies and a lack of experimental design are thought to characterise research in the field (Furnham and Marks 2013). The research literature is considered “scattered and diffuse” (Furnham and Ribchester 1995: 179).

forcibly mandates learnability. Hofert, a prominent consultant, is “not of the opinion that tolerance of ambiguity is a personality trait, because that would mean it is rather predisposed”. The author is “rather convinced that it can be developed and is an evolved element of personality” (Hofert 2020: 276).

The interplay between the description of a state and the ideological demand that Gelhard diagnosed for the psychotechnics of the knowledge community is also found in the VUCA/ambiguity paradigm (Gelhard 2012: 41). This starts to resemble a classic hen-and-egg constellation. Powerful discourses interweave their own conditions so strongly that their causes and consequences are difficult to differentiate. This recalls Foucault’s concept of the dispositive (Foucault 1980) as a complex of those conditions that make the imperative of self-optimisation plausible. This includes rules, statements and practices that work on the individual to render them generally acceptable. This collective process of influence is achieved through knowledge generated in certain discourses. What is known as a dispositive promotes these discourses and controls a cycle of power relations. Not insignificant for our context is the strategic function that Foucault ascribes to the dispositive. He assumes that at a certain point in time there was a need that made the dispositive possible. The heterogeneous totality has a strategic function and is involved in power relations (Agamben 2008).<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the dispositive—as a complex ensemble of socio-cultural products and forms of practice on the micro level—forms the background to an individual’s relationship with the world and is the indissoluble connection between social power relations and the constitution of subjects. The dispositive of self-optimisation appears as a precondition for the phenomenon itself and enables the introduction of tolerance of ambiguity as an umbrella term.

The origins of the concept of tolerance of ambiguity offer perspectives that can be brought into the kind of current HRD discourse shaped by the VUCA paradigm. Gläser locates the origin of the VUCA paradigm for HRD/organisation theory in the publication by Bennis and Nanus (1997), in which the unfolding of the self is named as one of the four key principles of management (cf. Gläser 2021). In the context of an assumption of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in the world of work, there has been a powerful development of HRD discourse in a hegemonic direction.

In essence, the VUCA paradigm seeks to describe a social phenomenon that represents a social challenge and a change for organisations. Generally speaking, the paradigm combines heterogeneous elements into a chain of equivalence (Laclau and Mouffe 2012) that subsumes underdetermined concepts into a paradigmatic stream of meaning. It is worth noting that the term never became established where it was founded; either in the military or in the field of security policy (Alamir 2020).

The VUCA paradigm brought about a shift in the parameters of organisational behaviour, which is now characterised by the management approach of agility in many areas. Agility in organisational theory and practice influences both organisational structure and work processes, as well as the behaviours and attitudes of the acting and interacting individuals. In its normative character—its founding document is titled a manifesto—it conveys implicit expectations and standardises messages.

In the search for the lowest common denominator in optimising ways of working in software development, American IT professionals formulated the *Agile Manifesto* in 2001. The concept cites twelve

<sup>3</sup> Within this paper it is not possible to pursue the question of the specific function or possible historical necessity of the dispositive. It is clear that the dispositive of self-optimisation was able to establish itself in society at a certain point in time and appears to offer a problem-solving instrument.

principles and four fundamental values. These prioritise central aspects of management: “Individuals and interactions over processes and tools; Working software over comprehensive documentation; Customer collaboration over contract negotiation; Responding to change over following a plan”.<sup>4</sup> This particular management concept was a value system that was not new even twenty years ago because many developers were already using it. However, it unleashed an enormous dynamic of change in management and catalysed a paradigm shift towards agile organisational management. The message of the *Agile Manifesto* has long since moved on from the field of IT and found its way into all economic sectors. The trend of agilisation has been unleashed. Agility appears to be the solution to the challenges of a VUCA paradigm.

First and foremost, the VUCA paradigm is a problem for organisations. As mentioned, critical consideration of the zeitgeist may reveal chains of equivalence (Laclau and Mouffe 2012) in the hegemonic discourse of VUCA. These chains of equivalence construct a reality that is led by the demand for self-optimisation. There is an assumption that the need for agilisation arises from the challenge of dealing with ambiguity. Agility, so runs the conclusion, enables people to better cope with multiple meanings. In other words, ambiguity is to be met with ambiguity tolerance. This means that the individual adapts to accepted social and economic phenomena.

The VUCA paradigm aims at agilisation in all value creation processes, which are shifted to the level of human resources, i.e. the individual. In the course of the digitalisation process in the private sphere, an even more comprehensive “economisation of the social” (Bröckling 2016) has set in. This phenomenon sanctions behavioural expectations that hover over “the gap between unbounded aspiration and its consistently limited realisation” (ibid: 11). In the agile mindset, the solution to an organisational problem is individualised and socially sanctioned:

New habits become entrenched when they are rewarded permanently or when it becomes apparent that the new habit of agility produces a vision of success and social recognition in the community. This social recognition in the group is to be emphasised, as the discontinuation of old habits and the learning of new ones is a phase of uncertainty and is associated with fear. ... Intensive ambiguity tolerance training can stabilise this bridge from an old to a new attitude. Uncertainty must lose its anxiety-producing character and be experienced as a challenge to be overcome. (Parker and List 2021: 11)

Agility requires the whole person. In agile organisations, tolerance of ambiguity is expected alongside flexibility and creativity. The boundary between professional and private behaviour becomes blurred (cf. Baecker 2021: 179). What was a personality trait is becoming a key competence. The concept which, in its origin, described the socio-pathological finding of intolerance of ambiguity has now become the success factor of the new world of work. If intolerance of ambiguity made people aware of the limits and distortions of reality processing, an apparently identical term in today’s application aims to transgress (or negate) the limits and makes this the task of the individual. The subjectification of economic social relations transforms the individual’s ability to deal with ambiguity in a meaningful and productive way into a general norm. A norm that in the world of self-organised “New

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved February 19, 2022, from [www.agilemanifesto.org](http://www.agilemanifesto.org).

Work” has the quality of individual freedom in the sense of self-selection:

The figure of the entrepreneurial self unifies both a normative model of the human and a multitude of contemporary social and self-technologies, whose common aim is to organize life around the entrepreneurial model of behaviour. (Bröckling 2018b: 26)

This entrepreneurial self denotes

a way of addressing individuals, of altering them and causing them to alter themselves in a particular way. ... It is a highly effective process that is sustained by continual modification and self-modification of subjects through mobilisation of their desire to keep up and their fear of not being in touch with the social order that is held together by market mechanisms.” (ibid)

Support is promised by human resource development and training, which makes ambiguity tolerance a training goal. A possible risk could be that this leads to training programmes that are blind to people’s individual possibilities and limits in dealing with ambiguity, as well as to the complex interconnectedness of society. In accordance with the figure of the entrepreneurial self, the umbrella term ambiguity tolerance is incorporated into the dispositive of self-optimisation as a competence. There it loses its descriptive character. Individual dispositions and inter-individual differences disappear in the turn towards perpetual maximisation.

## PROXIMITY OF EXTREMES

The previous section explained how a social paradigm is applied at the level of the individual without considering inter-individual differences and diversity. What does it mean when, in the course of this process, the descriptive and analytical construct becomes a prescriptive training tool? In the dispositive of self-optimisation, the qualitative dimension of individually differentiated perceptions of ambiguity is lost. The demand for maximising tolerance becomes intolerance towards differences in levels of tolerance.

In the quantitative dimension of extremes, tolerance of ambiguity itself is lost. Frenkel-Brunswik already described the phenomenon of opposites leaning towards each other, similar in their extremity. In the mantra-like repetition of the importance of increasing tolerance of ambiguity, a fixation appears that is reminiscent of the stimulus-boundedness described by Frenkel-Brunswik:

I have discussed in another passage the “closeness of opposites” as an essential characteristic of authoritarian personality organisations. ... A closer look at intolerance of ambiguity revealed that the two extremes—excess or lack of distance from culture, parents, or other stimulus configurations—are more closely related than either extreme is to the so-called “middle distance” from the environment. (Frenkel-Brunswik 1996: 220)<sup>5</sup>

Frenkel-Brunswik’s illustration of the proximity of the extreme positions simultaneously points to the space between the extremes where different meanings are perceived. Inconsistencies in all their nuances become visible where the dialectic of ambiguity and disambiguation is allowed to be. And

<sup>5</sup> Translation CH. Originally published as “Environmental controls and the impoverishment of thought” in Carl J. Friedrich (Ed.) (1954) *Totalitarianism*, 171–202. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

where this creates a space in which the interplay between triggering and dissolving meanings is consciously shaped.

The horizon is the conceptualisation of nuances and an encouragement “to think in shades” (Hofert 2020: 276). The practice-oriented literature on ambiguity tolerance rarely cites such approaches, which see the resolution of ambiguity as a task for organisations rather than individuals. Such approaches might conclude that “closing options has become the critical success factor in change processes” (Volk 2019: 58) yet even in post-agile discourse, they are still the exception. At the same time, practice-oriented organisational research can develop action-based strategies for ambiguous constellations if they take ambiguity and disambiguation into account (Metzger 2021).

Tolerance of ambiguity also appears among the list of benefits for diversity management because it has the effect of promoting the organisational goal of agility (cf. Klaffke 2021: 9). Klaffke highlights the lack of empirical findings on diversity management in general and this also applies to training concepts for ambiguity tolerance. It is possible that a diverse range of didactical approaches and, in particular, differentiated methodologies might be suitable for simulating ambiguity scenarios. The training literature draws on well-known didactics such as experiential learning, learning by example, and mindfulness training. Considerations from an arts perspective take up an approach that Bauer (2018) sets out in his cultural historical treatise on ambiguity in our society. There is a need for research here because tolerance of ambiguity, especially as a competence, becomes part of a bundle of behaviours that are difficult to specify and operationalise. Training should “focus on the development of corresponding competences—e.g. tolerance of ambiguity and frustration, but also perseverance and conflict resolution skills—in educational practice with young people” (Ehnert 2021: 60). The training objective remains vague. And such vagueness can carry within it a totality of everything and nothing.

The general assumption of maximum tolerance of ambiguity entails losses. On the one hand, as has been shown, the space between the extremes narrows the space available for “shadow thinking”. The extreme positions draw closer to one another.<sup>6</sup> Tolerance resembles intolerance. What is ultimately the potential for concrete negotiation practices in ambiguous situations is lost.

Another loss relates to the goal. Maximising one’s own tolerance of ambiguity is synonymous with the demand on the entrepreneurial self to continually dissolve boundaries. Herein lies a problem because the goal is not clear. Bröckling speaks of a categorical comparative (Bröckling 2018b) as the guiding norm for the entrepreneurial self. Only our comparison with others provides us with information about our own performance. The assessment lies in the relationality.

From a diagnostic point of view, the construct of ambiguity (in)tolerance describes the subjective limits of processing ambiguity. If the diagnostic tool becomes simply an end in itself, ambiguity tolerance becomes the goal, and the question arises as to when the goal has been reached. When does a person have sufficient tolerance of ambiguity? Based on a market logic of supply and demand, the expectation would be of a range of training programmes to increase tolerance of ambiguity. However, de facto this does not exist. Rather, concrete implementation strategies get lost amidst vague targets. Clarity of purpose thus seems to be the missing link. Clarity could be achieved by reflecting on inherent ambiguity. And an instrument that might answer this question is a theoretical construct with a qualitative dimension. It would be able to describe how individuals deal with ambiguity.

<sup>6</sup> A phenomenon it is currently possible to observe in the extreme “Woke-ism” movement.

The diagnostic tool for intolerance becomes the key indicator for tolerance maximisation. An end-means reversal takes place, which initially indicates a change in the framework for action. Simultaneously, an asymptotic imperative is established; a continual approach to the ideal of maximising individual tolerance of ambiguity that never reaches that goal. As soon as ambiguity tolerance is interpreted as a key competence, it acquires the prescriptive character of an unreachable goal.

The agile mindset appears to be absolute because it contains a striking number of imperatives for expanding one's own possibilities for action. However, these do not represent concrete instructions for action. Rather they are metaphorically formulated imperatives, both in their prescriptive habitus and in their concrete linguistic form. In this respect, they provide orientation on the one hand, and invoke an imaginary authority on the other. In contrast, inscribing autonomy and maturity into the agile mindset means exploring it as a spectrum, as a space of possibility for operationalising ambiguity and recognising extremes.

### **FROM “AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY” TO “POST-HEROIC MANAGEMENT”**

The fundamental anthropological axiom of autonomy and the political philosophical axiom of maturity are part of the theoretical context for the construct of tolerance of ambiguity. At the macro level, the topos of tolerance of ambiguity is associated with a political dimension: anti-authoritarian education. But the discourse of agilisation shows itself to be far removed from a social vision of a mature self. The pressure to adapt at the level of the individual, which is entailed by the dispositive of self-optimisation, is reflected in the figure of the entrepreneurial self.

This pressure is regulated at the meso level of the social by the asymptotic imperative, which demands continual approximation to a vague maximum and narrows the space of negotiation of meanings. In the course of this, the construct loses its descriptive, diagnostic quality.

At the macro level, the figuration of the post-heroic, agile ego is marked by the dispositive of self-optimisation: “The situation of the ego is confused: post-heroic personalities discover their inner hero and go on a hero's journey with him to arm themselves for post-heroic times” (Bröckling 2018a: 31). Today, the post-agile world requires the post-post-hero. His heroic journey, for example, looks like this<sup>7</sup>:

All people can do this exercise, and everyone will be able to do something with it:

When you are sitting in your chair, sit on your right sitting bone. Hold this position and think of a time in your life when you were a victim. Put yourself in the “victim” position. Really think of that time when you were hurt internally or externally, when you may not have been able to fight back, possibly as a child or teenager. Everyone in the world can remember at least one moment when he or she was a victim.

Now shift your inner position and take on a different identity. Turn your head a little, sit on your left sitting bone. Think of a time when you succeeded at something, felt good and been

<sup>7</sup> Hofert 2020, referencing the hero-journey-method “Big Mind Process” by Genpo Roshi (Hofert 2020: 275f.). The training instructions will be reproduced here in the wording (translation CH).

successful. You don't have to have been Superman, it is quite enough if you made something good happen or helped someone. Now be a "heroine" for a second.

Now sit down comfortably on both sitting bones. Just relax in the here and now and feel joy. Connect with gratitude for something in your life and be joyful for a moment.

Now lean back a little deeper in your chair and breathe. Don't be a victim, don't be a hero, don't be anything ... Literally sit in the moment and just breathe.

In this example, it does not sound like an invitation to think in shades, if after "evil and good" comes nothingness. And it is obviously not (any longer) about the maturity or autonomy of the person.

Rather, the exercise could be understood as an appeal to the individual, with all that individual's increased tolerance of ambiguity, to endure the dissolution of the person: "The post-agile image is a post-post-heroic one: it is not about a person, but about the connection with ideas, about structures and design" (Hofert 2020: 253). Where is the self? In the post-heroic ego, the self seems dissolved and the individual a delimited projection surface. To what extent can a historical connection to the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem be reconstructed in this? The line of development runs from the post-post-heroic reality to the humanisation of the world of work to education for maturity.

(Post-)agilisation of the world of work is an approach from the organisational theory of "New Work", the core of which was the self. The New Work movement is characterised by the humanisation of the world of work. The concept emerged in the 1970s as a response to automation and mass layoffs in the automobile factories of the USA. This was also seen as an opportunity to align the world of work more closely with the wishes and ideas of the person. But these needs and ideas are not usually obvious, there is a "poverty of desire". The person needs careful nurturing to find their vocation, their intrinsic motivation, and "to do what one really really wants to do" (Bergmann 2019).

But the Bergmann-style vision of a humanisation of the world of work, with its focus on individual vocation, has been instrumentalised as a normative demand in the pop-cultural phenomenon of New Work (Georgi 2021). Instead of humanising the world of work, New Work is now seen as a strategy for coping with it without questioning it. "New Work has been gutted in terms of Bergmann's philosophy – as a result, a clear objective of New Work has been lost" (Schermuly and Koch 2019: 130). The New Work movement has become a system that demands tolerance of ambiguity but carries within it a refusal of ambiguity. The dispositive of self-optimisation has become second nature. For the construct of ambiguity tolerance this means not only that the analytical, descriptive quality of the construct of ambiguity tolerance was lost in the socio-economic discourse of self-optimisation, but that the political and emancipatory moment was also lost.

It is worth recalling here that Frenkel-Brunswik defines *intolerance of ambiguity* as a cognitive-perceptual personality trait. She assigns the extremes of tolerance and intolerance to human civilisation per se and describes them as fundamental social parameters (Frenkel-Brunswik 1949). This macro-level social dimension is also part of the construct of ambiguity tolerance as a personality trait. At present, this connection appears to find little consideration. But in terms of the history of science, it has shaped research.

From the beginning of 1943 at the latest, Frenkel-Brunswik devoted herself to researching antisemitism and worked together with Nevitt Sanford and Daniel Levinson (Korotin and Keintzel 2002). From 1944 onwards, Frenkel-Brunswik was significantly involved in the "Studies in Prejudice",



which researched the authoritarian character. Together with Theodor W. Adorno, Nevitt Sanford and Daniel J. Levinson, she led the study *The Authoritarian Personality*, published in New York in 1950 (Adorno et al. 1950). Originally focused on researching antisemitism, the study was expanded to include individual fascist inclinations. The result was the construction of a series of instruments to measure prejudice, including the F scale for fascist, pre-fascist or potentially fascist, alongside scales for antisemitism and political-economic conservatism.

In the course of this research, a personality variable emerged, almost as a side-effect: *intolerance of ambiguity*. As the “Frenkel-Brunswik theorem”, it found application in psychodiagnostics as well as in attitude and prejudice research. Methodologically, it was used in social psychology and in clinical differential psychology. Gordon Allport’s work *The Nature of Prejudice* (Allport 1954) was directly linked to Frenkel-Brunswik’s research results. He introduced the topic of prejudice research into social psychology and promoted its development from a normative level, as an emotionally focused subject, to an analytical level. According to Allport, the “benefit of prejudice” is its initial effect of enabling the individual to orientate themselves in their environment through categorisation.

The question of why people are prone to prejudice should not be supplanted by the requirements of human resource development under the guise of “ambiguity tolerance enhancement”. Perceiving, acknowledging, and living ambiguity is, socially, a condition for “the realisation of the generality in the reconciliation of differences” (Adorno 1998: 113f.). However, the “hatred of difference remains the constant in the authoritarian character” (Stögner 2020: 271f.). Especially in recent times, the socio-critical vanishing point in the historical socio-political context of the construct, namely “to think of the better condition as the one in which one could be different without fear” (Adorno 1998: 113f.), has been endangered in view of racist and antisemitic attacks. The rise of radical right-wing populist and nationalist parties and movements points to unresolved social problems. Resentment, discrimination, homophobia, and authoritarianism are the “easy” answers of a social personality type that cannot tolerate ambiguity.

These phenomena have made the origin of the construct of ambiguity tolerance in research on anti-semitism and prejudice relevant once again, and specifically its origin in the “Studies on the Authoritarian Character”. The aim of those studies was to find out why individuals support totalitarian ideologies and what social dynamics underlie this authoritarian personality type. After more than 70 years, this question remains relevant.<sup>8</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper traces the recontextualisation of ambiguity tolerance in VUCA discourse and discusses the construct’s relevance in this context. It shows that there is more than just management jargon behind the now fashionable term of ambiguity tolerance. As has been pointed out, ambiguity tolerance is to be understood as a theoretical, descriptive construct in the sense of a perceptual-cognitive personality trait. As such, it opens a promising path for research. However, understood normatively, it can be a concept with fatal consequences for human resource development and its target individuals. In the contemporary reception of the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem, three substitutions were identified that could be responsible for the discrepancy between research and application. These are the

<sup>8</sup> In 2020, a documentation and research centre for the analysis of anti-democratic and anti-human attitudes and structures, especially right-wing strategies and dynamics with authoritarian motivations, was established at the University of Leipzig and named after Else Frenkel-Brunswik. Retrieved February 19, 2022, from [www.efbi.de](http://www.efbi.de).

shifts from trait to competence, from balanced extremes to unlimited maximisation, and from social phenomenon to individual coping strategy.

Some essential perspectives that a re-reading of the Frenkel-Brunswik theorem can have for dealing with ambiguity were summarised. With the critical distance provided by tendencies in (post)-agile discourse, non-hegemonic aspects become visible and open up new research approaches: tolerance of ambiguity as a trait that can only be changed to a limited extent, the recognition of the space between the extremes as a balanced unity of ambiguity and disambiguation strategies, and an individual's limited recognition of difference as a problem induced at societal level.

The prerequisite for these new research approaches is a fundamental conceptual demarcation between the normative umbrella term and the descriptive construct of *intolerance of ambiguity*. The Frenkel-Brunswik theorem indeed offers important insights into the operationalisation of ambiguity tolerance and the handling of ambiguity.

If one of the core values of the *Agile Manifesto*—“Individuals and interactions over processes and tools”—unpacks the concept of tolerance of ambiguity for the organisational context, then one condition would be to look at the working situations in which people find themselves. How can the world (of organisations) be shaped so that everyone can “be different without fear” (Adorno 1998)?

From the entrepreneurial self, there needs to be a path to a “self of the organisation”, which takes into account the most diverse manifestations of ambiguity tolerance. One such path might be that taken by Frenkel-Brunswik from personality psychology to social psychology, which examines the socialisation conditions of the individual critically and reflects continuously on inherent ambiguity. The Frenkel-Brunswik theorem might thus return to the research field as a starting point for current questions for the philosophy of science, for the performativity of theories, and for critical reflection in management theory.

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### Author biography

**Claudia Heinrich** is research associate at the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Business Communication at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena and organizational consultant. Her research topics are the intersections of human resource and organizational development. She is doing her doctorate on the handling of ambiguity in the context of organizational development.

## INTERVIEW

# Interview with Daniel J. Levinson

## 16 November 1992, New Haven

Dietmar Paier

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## INTRODUCTION

What follows is an interview with Daniel J. Levinson, conducted by the Austrian sociologist Dietmar Paier in November 1992 in New Haven, Connecticut. The interview was taped and transcribed; the following version is an abridged version of this transcript that has been slightly edited for readability. Comments on the background to some of the stories told as well as on the contemporary figures mentioned were added by Christian Fleck and Andreas Kranebitter and have been limited to the necessary minimum for comprehension. We wish to thank Dietmar Paier and Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc., for permission to publish this interview, as well as Fabian Gruber for work on the transcript.

## INTERVIEW

*I: I would like to talk to you about your encounters with Else Frenkel-Brunswik and her role during your research for “The Authoritarian Personality.” When did you come to know her and Theodor W. Adorno?*

L: Well. I came to Berkeley in 1941, which must have been two years after or so after the Brunswiks came. I graduated from UCLA in 1940 and spent a year there. I had just covered the field of personality theory and research, which became my main interest, and my two main professors in that were Nevitt Sanford and Else Brunswik. Erik Erikson was also there at that time, and there were many others who were important to me in other ways like Egon Brunswik. I would say that she and Nevitt Sanford and Erik Erikson<sup>1</sup> were the three main psychoanalytically oriented members of the department. But Erikson was primarily a clinician and gave us theoretical ideas. Else and Nevitt were very much interested in science and in doing empirical research, from a rather positivistic, Vienna Circle point of view. But a major theme in her work was translating psychoanalytic ideas that came out of

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<sup>1</sup> Erik Homburger Erikson, born Erik Salomonsen (1902–1994), was an Austrian-American psychologist and psychoanalyst. Moving to Vienna from Frankfurt am Main in the 1920s, he underwent analysis with Anna Freud and was awarded a diploma from the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute in 1933. Fleeing to the United States that same year, Erikson held positions at Yale and Harvard universities before joining the University of California at Berkeley’s Institute of Child Welfare.

clinical work into quantitative research, I would say. Her approach had something in common with Sanford's, but was also rather different.

*I: So, how did this idea to undertake such a big study like "The Authoritarian Personality" emerge? Who had the idea?*

L: Well, as you've talked to different people, I imagine that's been one of the biggest questions. From the beginning, people have wanted to know, who was the real source of this work. Is it Else, is it Nevitt, is it Adorno? I was a graduate student who was about where you are now at that time, so... How it all began...

*I: Yes, that would be fine.*

L: Alright. We began in 1943. A man, Mr. Blumenthau, gave 500 dollars through the University for a study of antisemitism, that would end antisemitism forever.<sup>2</sup> A rather grandiose idea. He owned some theatres, he had become rich after being poor and he did various things for social research. He donated 500 dollars, and somehow it got to Nevitt Sanford. Nevitt was asked if he wanted the 500 dollars to use to carry out a project on antisemitism, and no right-thinking faculty member would turn down an offer like that—and he hired me to work on it.

*I: Did Blumenthau contact the Department of Psychology?*

L: No, the administration. And I don't know quite how it got to Nevitt, but within the Department of Psychology Nevitt was a fairly obvious choice, although there were others. And then 500 dollars seemed a good basis for starting, and I was employed on it and I probably got 50 dollars a month for a year. We began in an absolutely typical positivistic quantitative way in the culture of academic psychology of that time: we constructed a scale. And the interesting thing about it is that I found ways to formulate, you know, how these attitude scales work. We formulated items. If they were strongly antisemitic, nobody would agree with them, but if they were more moderate, we could get a wider range of responses between strongly agree and strongly disagree. So, that scale worked, it gave us a range of scores and then we had a questionnaire, and we found other things that correlated with that. Some hypotheses we had and some we were just seeing. That was associated with more politically conservative views and more traditional fundamentalist religious views. Nothing very surprising...

*I: And that was starting in 1943?*

L: Yes, in that first year, 1943 or 1944 we did that.

*I: And was Sanford more an advisor to you?*

L: Yes, I think it's fair to say that I constructed the scale. We published an article that came out in 1944. I was the senior author of the article, and I wrote the first draft and we worked on it together. I would've done various things with Sanford, and in general he was a good advisor for me, because he gave me a lot of freedom, personal support. So anyway ...

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of this beginning see Fleck 2011: 242f. According to inflation calculators, \$ 500 in 1943 would be worth roughly \$ 8,500 in 2021.

*I: Yeah, I was thinking of this kind of relationship, because that's usually the way such studies are done.*

L: Well, so my first year we completed this study and published the article. What I'm trying to think is, where Else came into it, and later where Adorno came into it. Do you remember which year Else had a Social Science Research Council Fellowship, when she went back East?

*I: In 1942. She had a Social Science Research Council Fellowship, and part of the year she was in Chicago to give courses and seminars.*

L: Ok, I'm wrong. The project began in 1942, because I began graduate work in 1941. I was a full-time graduate student in 1941/42 and then I took an unpaid position which Nevitt helped me find at a prison, San Quentin Prison, which is near Berkeley, Marin County.<sup>3</sup> At that time the department was much smaller than it is now and there probably weren't more than ten graduate students altogether who were very interested in personality, and there weren't so many faculty members, so I knew how important Nevitt and Else were to me. I didn't understand until later how important I was to them, apart from how good I was. They needed students to work with and there weren't so many. And of course the war, we got into the war in December of 1941, just a few months after I came to Berkeley, so that was another context. Anyway, my first years as a graduate student I took courses with Nevitt, I met Else, I gravitated to them as mentors. In 1942/43 I was in San Quentin, I lived there, but I came into Berkeley on weekends and maintained my connections there. I got married in the middle of that year in January 1943.<sup>4</sup> But I came on the weekends and I took a seminar, you know, did things on Mondays, so I took a weekday to be in academic contact with Nevitt. He was my advisor on the prison project, and I talked to Else about it. And also, he had a little money, so he wanted somebody to read some literature and go through that. But then I believe that he got the money for the antisemitism study early in 1943, like January or February or so, and asked me if I would do it. I was interested to do it, and then I spent two weekdays each week in Berkeley. Since I wasn't paid in San Quentin I could have my own choice ... I was in the Psychiatry Department, it was based in the Psychiatry Department, so I began coming back and working on this study. And then we completed the study, published it. That would've been in 1943. And Else was away 1942/43.

*I: Yeah, the study covered the period from early 1943 to the end of the year and the article was published in 1944.*

L: I think it was published in early 1944.

*I: Was the plan to ...*

L: We had no long-term plan, because we had no money. We didn't begin with the plan to write a monumental, four-year study of "The Authoritarian Personality." We began very modestly, this was one of several projects that Nevitt was in. He was an assistant professor in the department then, he was research associate at the institute of Child Welfare, he was involved in various things and so the antisemitism project was a rather small one that he delegated to me, also before Else went away—

<sup>3</sup> For the authoritarianism research carried out at San Quentin State Prison in California, see Kranebitter 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel J. Levinson was married to Maria Hertz. In an informal conversation at the beginning of the interview regarding gender differences in Else Frenkel-Brunswik's role as a mentor for himself and Maria, Levinson mentioned that: "Maria knew Else in Vienna a little bit. She, Maria, was a few years older than me and also left Vienna in 1939 and went to England, but she had been a student for three years at the University of Vienna, was interested in psychology, and she knew the Böhlers and Else. I remember it because Maria didn't form the same mentorship relationship with Else like I did, it's an example of the gender difference."



she must have gone off in the summer 1942. So there was a period of about six months or so in the first part of 1942 when she was around I was working on this. I discussed it with her. She probably discussed it, probably the three of us talked about it, but Nevitt spent part of his time in the department in that office on campus and part of his time at the Institute of Child Welfare, which is about three or four blocks away. She was primarily at the ICW and I would go up there sometimes. I'd meet her up there usually, but they were somewhat connected. They and Erikson, the three of them were the psychoanalytic members of the department that didn't know quite what to do with psychoanalysis. She was there largely because of Tolman<sup>5</sup> bringing Egon over, and Jean Macfarlane<sup>6</sup> of the ICW had played a big part, did you come upon her name?

*I: Yes.*

L: She was a professor in the department and she was head of this research program at the ICW. And I believe that she was instrumental in bringing Erikson and Sanford together, she and Harold Jones<sup>7</sup>, have you come across that name?

*I: Yes.*

L: Macfarlane and Jones were the two senior administrator people in the ICW. Jones was more in child development than Macfarlane, and they brought in these new people with new ideas, but they themselves were not psychoanalytic. They had a hard time, sort of. They supported Else and Nevitt, but it wasn't their thing, so that brought Else and Nevitt more together. So the three of us talked in 1942, before Else went away. In 1942/43 she visited different places, she was getting interested in social science, anthropology, sociology, etc., and also met Henry Murray<sup>8</sup> at Harvard. There was a new intellectual current in psychology and social science at that time, I mean, psychoanalysis was part of it and anthropology was getting interested in the study of culture and personality, which is on the boundary between the two fields. She was meeting with people in this field. The study of personality was just coming in, it didn't exist in American psychology before.

*I: In that year or in that period Else studied together with Alfred Kroeber<sup>9</sup> at the Department of Anthropology in Berkeley, that's right.*

L: She knew Kroeber. I would say that the three of us were forming a vision of social psychology. It was rooted in academic psychology, psychoanalysis, as well as in the social sciences, particularly anthropology. Sociology began moving that way somewhat later, there weren't so many sociologists. Sociology started more in the late 1940s and 1950s, it was a counterpart to the culture of personality.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Chace Tolman (1886–1959) was an American psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1918 to 1954. During the McCarthy era, Tolman was one of the most outspoken critics of the Berkeley campus's demand that each employee must sign the infamous loyalty oath.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Walker Macfarlane (1894–1989) was an American psychologist and professor at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1929 to 1961. Macfarlane founded Berkeley's Institute of Child Welfare in 1927.

<sup>7</sup> Harold Ellis Jones (1894–1960) was an American psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1931 to 1960. From 1935 he was the director of the Institute of Child Welfare (later renamed the Institute of Human Development).

<sup>8</sup> Henry Alexander Murray (1893–1988) was an American psychologist and professor of psychology at Harvard University, and with Christiana Morgan co-developed the "Thematic Apperception Test" (TAT), which was used extensively in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950).

<sup>9</sup> Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876–1960) was an American cultural anthropologist and the first professor appointed to the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as director of the University of California Museum of Anthropology.

But Else, Nevitt and I had a kind of a vision of a social psychology that wasn't just personality. We were interested in placing the person within the social, within society.

*I: That's the general idea of TAP.*

L: But it was new, I mean, it was new in the world, relatively new. I mean, it had begun in the 1930s but it hit the United States in the late 1930s and was really beginning to form in the early 1940s, and I would say that we represented that in Berkeley. I think what Else did mainly in her fellowship year 1942/43 was to see what was happening in the East. People like Clyde Kluckhohn<sup>10</sup> and Henry Murray at Harvard, who wasn't explicitly social, but was oriented that way and was also trying to study personality in more quantitative ways but drawing upon Freud and Jung and others. I mean that was the spirit of the times.

*I: So, the context was, there were three members to form a group and the vision was there, but there was—compared to the large study...*

L: Yes, how would that evolve? The first step was this little antisemitism project, which Else knew we discussed. But during the year from December 1942 to 1943, when she was away, we completed that study.

*I: How did the study become such an ongoing project?*

L: I'm trying to remember how it was, when she came back in the summer of 1943. She was very excited with the previous year, she had been travelling, she had been nomadic. Now she wanted to get into new work and we talked about this small project. We had no further funds at that point, but I knew that I wanted to do my doctoral dissertation on that and she wanted to do something. We just decided to continue the work together, the three of us. We established not a large project but a kind of partnership and her part in it was, I would say, crucial to the evolution, to where it led. She decided to do a case study. She interviewed a woman who was a psychiatrist and was connected in some way to the department and who—good fortune—was antisemitic [laughs], but also understood that she was antisemitic. She understood that it was a crisis, but she felt that way. I believe she came from the southern part of the United States, she had various kinds of prejudice. But anyway, she was not a typical antisemite but she had enough of that, so it seemed worth talking with her—and so Else invited her and they sat a few hours, several times, to talk about her life and her views about it and other things. Then Else wrote a case study, which she must have done in the fall of 1943, and which probably came out in 1944 or 1945. That was her contribution. She talked about it with Nevitt. I don't remember whether she was the sole author or whether she and he authored it together, but I think she was the author.

*I: What was Nevitt Sanford doing? It seems in the beginning every part was distinct? I just want to figure out the relationship between the three of you. Was it more of a loose group?*

L: That's right, it was loose, but we had a lot in common intellectually and we had a sense of... We were bending together to do a noble project in a world that allowed it, but where it was a little strange. I mean, for instance: Tolman was interested, Tolman had been studying animals, learning those rats, but he was becoming a social psychologist. Tolman was a great psychologist, I believe, and he was

<sup>10</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn (1905–1960) was an US anthropologist who wrote extensively on the Navaho in Southwest America. He taught at Harvard, where he was both a member of the Department of Social Relations and director of the Russian Research Center. In the early 1930s, Kluckhohn had studied in Vienna, where he also underwent psychoanalysis.

chair of the department, so he supported that. So there was support for it, but still, we were doing something special, and we had that sense of developing a way of thinking and a way of doing research that was unusual and was special. You have to remember that Else was still finding her own way in this country, she was then in her early thirties. It was true for both Else and Nevitt. You are working with others who are much further along and you feel indebted to them and they provide a context and some of the structure for what is done. Typically, somewhere around 30, you go out more on your own, and you are going to do business for yourself. Intellectually there's continuity with the past but also changes. And Else did that, was doing that in part with her research at the ICW— motivation, child development—and that was important. But I think she was fitting into the structure of the Institute, and I think what we were beginning was her first business of her own, although it was with others. I think this was true for Nevitt Sanford also. He had just finished graduate school, he had done his PhD and came to Berkeley I think around 1939 or 1940 and worked at the Institute, but on a large project. Now he had a chance to make his own project. So for me as a graduate student there was a wonderful opportunity to do my own work, but with people who were further along. I mean to me, at 22 or 23, they were ten years older and seemed a hundred years older. It was wonderful to have older people who were interested in me and also appreciated me.

*I: So, a scientific outcoming for all three?*

L: Yes, that's right. That's my view of that. That we each had our own very strong individual, independent reasons for being in it, but we created something that was collectively special and different from what anyone of us would have done alone. And so it was very much a collective enterprise. Else might have done some things of that sort, and would have done it in a different way because her interest was more in personality and less in ideology. I saw antisemitism as an ideology, which I wanted to relate to their ideologies—nationalism and political ideologies—and relate ideology to personality, and that was a particular theme for me. Nevitt was more focused on personality as such. I don't know that we had any money for the project. I think then I was a teaching fellow for Egon Brunswik and others in the department and I always thought Else was getting paid at the Institute.<sup>11</sup> Apparently not. So, I was heading towards my dissertation, I don't think we had any money. That was 1943/44, and now we come to Adorno and Horkheimer.

*I: Ah, so although in the years of 1943/44 there wasn't much money for this project, you continued...*

L: We were working very hard, yes, that way we became more of a triad rather than two dyads.

*I: So, we reach the second year of the study.*

L: Yes, that's right. And as I say, the big intellectual development then was Else's case study in developing more ideas about antisemitism as an aspect of personality. I think her case study then brought our work to the attention of psychoanalysts. See, what Nevitt and I did was more standard academic psychology. There were ideas about personality, but they were hardly developed. Her case study, then, was concerned with what would have been called the psychodynamics of antisemitism.

<sup>11</sup> "However, due to the so-called Anti-Nepotism Regulations that were in force at California universities at the time, and to the fact that her husband, Egon Brunswik, had obtained a regular appointment at the department when his Rockefeller fellowship was terminated, her position was only that of a research assistant." (Fleck 2011: 25).

Well, Ernst Simmel<sup>12</sup> was a psychoanalyst in Los Angeles, and he had written an essay about anti-semitism, the essay of a clinical psychoanalyst about things like the place of projection in antisemitism or so. There were very few psychoanalysts then in San Francisco and Berkeley, there were some, but not many. There were more in Los Angeles, including Simmel and Otto Fenichel.<sup>13</sup> Else probably knew some of them from Vienna. They would come up to meet with the San Francisco psychoanalysts.

*I: Well, I think that at least she had contact to the Los Angeles analysts through the San Francisco analysts: Siegfried Bernfeld,<sup>14</sup> and Hildegard and Bernhard Berliner,<sup>15</sup> and she knew them quite well.*

L: Yeah, right. That's right! And I had one connection myself. My wife Maria had an aunt in L.A. who was a psychoanalyst, Frances Deri.<sup>16</sup>

*I: Frances Deri? Hildegard Berliner mentioned this name!*

L: Right. So, we knew the Berliners and the Windholzs,<sup>17</sup> and Anna Maenchen<sup>18</sup>... There were a lot of connections, since they all mainly came from Germany and Austria. So, I think we were invited to present something...

*I: At the psychoanalytical meetings?*

L: It was not at the meetings. What we were doing was too far from clinical psychoanalysis. It was very marginal to them, they did not quite know what to do with that. Anyway, there was a contact, and then, Teddie Adorno lived in L.A.

*I: So you met Teddie Adorno in L.A.?*

L: No, there are another couple of links to it. But he lived in L.A., he knew Simmel and met with him, and he was connected with psychoanalysts there, partly as a refugee community, and he had that interest. And Max Horkheimer was in New York, and the old Institut für Sozialforschung was mainly

<sup>12</sup> Ernst Simmel (1882–1947) was a German-American neurologist and psychoanalyst. In 1944 Simmel coordinated a symposium of California-based psychoanalysts and social scientists on antisemitism, which was also attended by R. Nevitt Sanford and Else Frenkel-Brunswik. The contributions were published in 1946 (Simmel 1946) and have made an important contribution to the study of *The Authoritarian Personality*, since they connected Frenkel-Brunswik and Sanford with Horkheimer (see Fleck 2011: 238 and 250).

<sup>13</sup> Otto Fenichel (1897–1946) was an Austrian-American physician and psychoanalyst who fled Austria via Oslo and Prague to Los Angeles in 1938. He was one of the contributors to the 1944 conference on antisemitism organized by Ernst Simmel (1946). With Otto Fenichel, Bernhard Berliner, Emanuel Windholz and others (see below) he was one of the founders of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society in 1942.

<sup>14</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld (1892–1953) was an Austrian psychologist, psychoanalyst and educator. Like Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Bernfeld was born in Lemberg (today Lviv) and studied philosophy at the University of Vienna.

<sup>15</sup> Hildegard Berliner (1907–2004) was a German-American child psychologist. Her husband Bernhard Berliner (1885–1976) was a German-American psychoanalyst and is said to have been San Francisco's first émigré analyst.

<sup>16</sup> Frances Deri, née Franziska Herz (1880–1971), was an Austrian-American psychoanalyst who emigrated to the United States in 1935 and practiced as a lay psychoanalyst in Los Angeles.

<sup>17</sup> Emanuel Windholz (1903–1986) was a Czech-American physician and psychoanalyst. From 1936 to 1939 Windholz was the president of the Prague Psychoanalytic Study and emigrated to San Francisco in 1939.

<sup>18</sup> Anna Maenchen (1902–1991) was a Lithuanian-born American psychoanalyst, having studied philosophy and history at the University of Vienna in the 1920s, where she was in close contact with Siegfried Bernfeld and Anna Freud. After her escape from Vienna to the United States in 1938 she moved to Berkeley and was a training analyst at the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute.

in New York but with members in L.A. and Chicago and other places. So anyway, Horkheimer had just, by some magic, persuaded the American Jewish Committee to create a Department of Scientific Research. He got them to make it. They had a small group and mainly put out rather simple-minded propaganda against antisemitism. The AJC is one of the most politically conservative groups in the country. And this Marxist from Germany got them to start a Department of Scientific Research and to make him the director of it!

So, Horkheimer became the director of this group and he asked them for money so that they could do their own research, and they should provide funds to scientists—social scientists in universities around the country—to study antisemitism. The money was made available and then there were six or eight projects around the country. Ours was only one. The AJC in May 1944 invited a group of American scholars to a conference on religious and racial prejudice. So that was the beginnings of their attempt to develop a series of studies through the Department of Scientific Research.

It was headed first by Horkheimer, then Samuel Flowerman<sup>19</sup> followed and succeeded him as the head of it. They put out these volumes, and in each of them there's at least one member of the Institute [for Social Research]. There's our group, then there's Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz<sup>20</sup>—Bettelheim had some connections with them, I don't think he had been part of it. And Nathan Ackerman<sup>21</sup> I believe was from the Institute and Marie Jahoda<sup>22</sup> was the former wife of Paul Lazarsfeld,<sup>23</sup> and then Paul Massing<sup>24</sup> was part of it and...

<sup>19</sup> Samuel H. Flowerman (1908–1958) was a psychologist and psychotherapist who directed the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee until 1951, initially together with Max Horkheimer, after his resignation alone. Together with Horkheimer he was the editor of the five-volume *Studies in Prejudice* series.

<sup>20</sup> Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990) was an Austrian-American psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of Chicago. Having been released from the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps, Bettelheim wrote a widely read psychological study of his camp experience, "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations" (Bettelheim 1943). Morris Janowitz (1919–1988) was an American sociologist and was appointed professor of sociology at the University of Michigan in 1951 and finally at the University of Chicago. He was well known for his research on propaganda and the military. Together, Bettelheim and Janowitz wrote one of the five volumes of the AJC's *Studies in Prejudice* series, which dealt with authoritarianism among military veterans (Bettelheim/Janowitz 1950). On the tensions between Bettelheim and Janowitz on the one hand and the Institute for Social Research on the other, especially after Horkheimer's and Adorno's remigration to Germany, see the correspondence files on the republication of this study (YIVO, AJC-Archives, RG 347.17.10 GEN-10, Box 20).

<sup>21</sup> Nathan W. Ackerman (1908–1971) was a New York based American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. In 1957 he founded the *Family Mental Health Clinic* in New York, today named the *Ackerman Institute*. Together with Marie Jahoda, Ackerman published the volume "Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder" (1950) within the *Studies in Prejudice* series.

<sup>22</sup> Marie Jahoda (1907–2001) was a social psychologist. Born in Vienna, she lived in the United States from 1945 until 1958, working initially as assistant to the directors of the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee. In this capacity she regularly attended the meetings of the Berkeley Public Opinion Research group. After her resignation from the AJC she worked at the Bureau of Applied Social Research and became a professor of social psychology at New York University. From 1973 onwards she was at Sussex University in the UK. She is known as the lead author of *The Unemployed of Marienthal* (1933) and continued writing on the social-psychological consequences of work and unemployment.

<sup>23</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1901–1976) was born in Vienna and came to the United States in 1933 on a Rockefeller Fellowship. In the 1930s he collaborated with Horkheimer's Institute for Social Research and directed the Princeton Radio Research Project, where he hired Theodor W. Adorno for a music study. In 1940 he became professor of sociology at Columbia University, where he founded the Bureau of Applied Social Research. He acted on the advisory board of the *Studies in Prejudice* study.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Wilhelm Massing (1902–1979) was a German sociologist and was affiliated with the Institute for Social Research. After having been imprisoned in one of the "early" concentration camps in Nazi Germany, Massing emigrated to the United

*I: Leo Löwenthal<sup>25</sup>...*

L: Löwenthal... This is the broader context. First the Nazis and then the war, WW II, brought the conservative Jewish groups into a more liberal point of view or more readiness to look at things, and Horkheimer was the catalyst for that and the organizer. He played the administrator function, a very powerful administrator function. So he contacted us, I mean ...

*I: He did?*

L: Yeah, he was the moving force in this. He brought scholars together from all over the country. We were in that first group, but then what we were doing, people knew about it. Alright, that first article was published in 1945, but Else must have written it in 1944, and it was Frenkel-Brunswik and Sanford. And see, it wasn't called a case study, typical of those years of that culture of psychology. It was called "Some Personality Correlates of Antisemitism." The title suggests quantification, that was what she did in 1944. And then "A scale for the measurement of antisemitism." That was the first publication in 1944, that year after we finished it, and it's Levinson and Sanford.

*I: So, when exactly did Adorno join the project?*

L: I think that would be the fall of 1944.

*I: Did Horkheimer suggest Adorno?*

L: Oh no, he didn't suggest Adorno. He said if you want to do a project, we'll pay for it if Adorno is in it. So we considered Adorno as something between a gift and an imposition, because it was a condition. And it was obviously complicated by the fact that the three of us were in Berkeley and the main work would be in Berkeley but Adorno would be in L.A. So we would meet once a month or so, 8 or 10 times a year.

*I: Could one say that you accepted Adorno because it ensured that you got the money for the study?*

L: It enabled us to do it. I mean, we could do a larger project. It was not a lot of money, but we may have gotten, I don't know, 20 or 30 thousand dollars a year. So we got the project and when the project was defined, we then gave ourselves a name. We just took "The Berkeley Public Opinion Study" [BPOS], right? And the old German institute was now the Institute for Social Research, so it was a joint project between these two entities. Officially Sanford was the director of the BPOS and Adorno was co-director of this project representing the Institute for Social Research. That was the formal arrangement. We didn't know him before so it was a somewhat forced marriage, although our relationship evolved over time, which is something to talk about. But we began very far apart. We were for the Vienna Circle and logical positivism and measurement and statistical analysis—and I am emphasizing that because I feel now that we were very far toward an extreme in that. I mean, now I would be much more in the middle, but that was what we were then. We then tried to find common ground. What we had in common was an interest in psychoanalysis and in individual per-

States in 1935 with his spouse Hede Massing, who worked for the Soviet foreign intelligence service (see Massing 1951). Within the *Studies in Prejudice* series, Paul Massing published the study "Rehearsal for Destruction: A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany" (1950).

<sup>25</sup> Leo Löwenthal or Lowenthal (1900–1993) was a German sociologist and philosopher affiliated with the Institute for Social Research. Together with Norman Guterman he published "Prophets of Deceit. A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator" (1950) within the *Studies in Prejudice* series.

sonality and in society, and the relationship of the individual to society. All three of us in Berkeley considered ourselves sociologically oriented, but I think we didn't understand how limited our sociological thinking was. We were very much involved in operationalizing concepts and measurement. But Adorno couldn't care less about measurement...

*I: I've always wondered what a man like Adorno does with an approach he isn't used to at all?*

L: Well, I think there are a lot of things we did for him and a lot of things he did for us. I consider it, all in all, a marvelous collaboration.

*I: Was it?*

L: Yeah, not that it was always happy or even mostly happy, there were lots of conflicts, but I believe that the end result was different from what would have been—and much better than what would have been—if any one of us had been stranded alone or if it had just been a Berkeley project, or just been a project by the Institute... There was some kind of creative work in it.

*I: So what was his influence?*

L: Well, he helped us think more broadly and stand back a little from measurement. He was somewhat free from the concept of operationalism, which has a kind of tyrannical quality. You can't talk about something unless you say how you measure it. I can say now that's ridiculous, but I didn't believe that then. We felt we had to find ways of measurement for whatever concept. And then we tended to get involved in the measures, whereas Adorno represented sociology much more fully than any of us could. We were all interested in sociology and anthropology, I was just doing a lot of reading in personality and culture. I read Erich Fromm,<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm Reich.<sup>27</sup> I would say the way I came to think of it, implicitly if not explicitly, was that we started with the study of ideology and that anti-semitism was a form of ideology. Then we wanted to link ideology to personality, to look more deeply within the person. We also wanted to relate ideology to society, and the family as a link between society and personality, as an institution of society, part of the sociological structure of society, but also as a medium, as the context in which personality evolves. I mean that basic way of thinking was very important. Adorno was primarily a sociologist. His use of psychoanalytic ideas sometimes seemed naive to us, just as our sociological ideas must have often seemed naive to him.

*I: He wasn't very engaged with empirical research, but more in terms of enlarging the view on different related fields, research objects...*

L: Yeah, that's right.

*I: And did he help to put together the different fields in terms of an integration of the whole subjects?*

<sup>26</sup> Erich Fromm (1900–1980) was a German-born American psychoanalyst and social philosopher, originally affiliated with the Institute of Social Research. After his eventual departure of the Institute (see Wiggershaus 1988: 298–305; Wheatland 2009: 81–87), the influence of his earlier research on authoritarianism (Fromm 1936) on the study *The Authoritarian Personality* was nearly neglected by the Institute (see Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004 for details).

<sup>27</sup> Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957) was an Austrian physician and psychoanalyst. Due to mostly political conflicts, Reich was expelled from the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) in 1934. His book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) had a great impact on research on authoritarianism.

L: Well, I would say that we didn't fully integrate, as I look at it now. The book is more about ideology and personality and is not sociological. I think that reflects the limited sociology of the Berkeley group. Adorno got us to be more sociological than we were, but he couldn't take us further because he couldn't connect enough to empirical study. I'll give you a more concrete example. Adorno pushed us to develop the F-scale. I think all three of us always regretted calling it the F-scale, it's not a fascism-scale in fact. I don't know why, I mean that came from Teddie, but we didn't have to do it. I guess it's just one of those compromises we made. He made many he regretted, but we might as well have called it the "A-Scale" for authoritarianism. We weren't sure at the beginning what we would call the personality syndrome that we then came to call the "authoritarian." Teddie's idea was actually different and somewhat simpler. He just said, "Let's have items that have more indirect indicators of fascist tendencies." He didn't actually see this as a personality scale. He had a number of ideas about that. I remember one of them, the paradox that the Nazis could be extremely cruel, could kill a person or millions of people without guilt, but would be very sentimental over the death of their dog and see that as somehow tragic. He thought that a very cruel person could be sentimental in that way so he would say, "Think of statements about the death of a dog." But you can be sad about the death of your dog without being a fascist, obviously, and he had no idea about how to make an item for it, and he didn't ask himself, "What do I mean, what is it about the theory of personality...?". He pushed us to develop a scale and he was important for developing the F-scale. Then each of us tried to think of items, statements you agree with, and the agreement to the statements is a reflection of fascism or authoritarianism or whatever we were going to call it. So each of us thought of items, and I'm sure thought of a number of them, and we probably had a hundred altogether as a pool that we worked from. But we could use almost none of his items because he didn't know how to do that. It was a way of thinking that simply didn't have any meaning for him. That's an example of how we helped each other, how we made use of him even though we also didn't use what was not useful. Some kind of creative synthesis happened, and overall we were a collective enterprise with contributions from all of us. So my own interest in sociology was very much influenced by him.

*I: Could one say that Adorno's intellectual influence was bigger than his contribution in terms of empirical research?*

L: Well, anything that was quantitative. If you take the chapters he wrote, he analyzed the interviews. He analyzed the same interviews that Else Frenkel-Brunswik analyzed. If you look at the book: You see that I am the author or co-author of almost all chapters in the first section, as I was doing a lot of this quantitative work and I was mainly responsible for the development of the F-scale. We all contributed ideas for items in discussions of theory, it's very collective, but I was sort of the technical expert on the use of scales. I also did interviewing. Part two, see, is called "Personality as revealed through clinical interviews and projective material," and Else is the author of all of those chapters, as one mode of analysis of the interviews. And then there's part three, "Qualitative studies of ideology," which is another analysis of the same interviews, and Teddie is the author of those.

*I: He used Else's interviews then?*

L: Well, Teddie did no interviews, Teddie couldn't do a research interview. Someone said something interesting, he would start thinking about the meaning but then forget the push. But Else and Nevitt and I worked out the interviewing, the structure of the interviews, what we would cover with them, and the theory of the interviewing. That was done together and there were a number of interviewers. Else, Nevitt and I did conduct interviews. As I recall, we did one or two interviews with each person. So, we had two or three hours of interview material. Teddie did it his way, he had all these different types. You see, Teddie ended up being in only one section of the book, but I would say that his influ-



ence was broader than that. And Else ended up in only one section of the book. Except for the chapter on the F-scale and the concluding chapter, which were by all of us, every other chapter has an author name, which is a way of distinguishing credit to some degree. Credit became a very big issue, as you can imagine, and Sanford then mainly did the case studies. But I think Teddie worked on a number of social science projects in this country with different people, and as far as I know, it never worked out very well.<sup>28</sup> I mean they couldn't come together to allow him a real voice. They kept insisting that he should start thinking right the way they did. Yet I think one of the creative things about this is Teddie had part four, in which he could present his own thinking. These are empirical studies but they are not quantitative and they are not what anyone else in the world would do.

*I: How was the relationship between you as a positivist...*

L: At least as far as empirical research is concerned, we were also interested in Marxism and the broader philosophy of science and so on, so we had a basis for...

*I: What was Else's relationship to Adorno?*

L: Well, I would say the first division was between the three of us and Adorno. We had to work out a modus operandi to work together and we had the problems I mentioned, but I also think we found a workable way and also always liked Teddie. I'm not sure what the personal relationship was, we weren't that close. We were together maybe 8 or 10 times a year for a day or two, so we didn't spend a lot of time with one another. That is one thing. Second, for purposes of the contract, Nevitt was the director of our study. So he dealt with Adorno and Horkheimer about things that had to be negotiated, you know, funds for the coming year or so. The main project lasted three years, so we got the funding for 1944 I would say in the fall. And it went on until 1947, I think, when the main work was done. In 1947 I left Berkeley, I got my degree and went to Cleveland to take a teaching position. The whole project disbanded and there were no more salaries when we wrote the book. The main writing was done after 1947.

*I: But at least from 1944 to 1947 your financial support was quite enough to pay everybody?*

L: There was just a lot of negotiating. We had our own offices.

*I: Did you have a secretary?*

L: Yeah, we had a full-time secretary.

*I: Who were these people?*

L: Let's see, there are several categories of staff members. Three staff members were graduate students who were each brought in to do a particular project. Betty Aron was hired to do the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). She did the interviews and we also gave her the TAT, and then we had them analyzed in that chapter. We wanted to do a sample at San Quentin Prison, where we had connections to, and Bill Morrow arranged for the study and he did it, so that was his particular project and became his dissertation. And then my wife, Maria Hertz, was working at the Langley Porter Clinic in San Francisco. She spent a clinical training year there.

<sup>28</sup> Levinson is referring to the participation of Theodor W. Adorno in Lazarsfeld's Princeton Radio Research Project, the only empirical study Adorno worked on during his years in the United States (see Fleck 2011, chapter 5, for details).

*I: Didn't Else spent a year there, too?*

L: Else spent a different year there, but Maria worked in the clinic as a psychology trainee and during the year she began looking into some things relating to authoritarianism. Then it was arranged that she would give questionnaires to a sample of patients and then interview them and do something like the San Quentin study. There were two specialized samples. That was going to be her dissertation, but she wanted to become a mother and didn't take her exams. Anyway, those were three studies by graduate students, which became chapters, and in addition there were some undergraduates and graduates who were working on the statistics. There were some people who were doing interviews, probably four or five of them. See, we list the people who did the interviewing here, or people who helped. And Teddie had a small staff in L.A. who did various things but it couldn't be included in the book. It was interesting for essays but couldn't be used in a more formal research. So in Berkeley there was a staff of maybe 8 to 12 people. We had weekly staff meetings and invited others to come in, and had offices in downtown Berkeley.

*I: Wasn't it in Shattuck Avenue?*

L: On Shattuck, yes. But Else, I don't think the personal relationship to Teddie was a big factor for any of us. We knew him, we liked him, we sometimes had to find tactful ways to get him not to proceed with ideas we felt couldn't work. Sometimes we accepted it or he just did it... We understood that it was an incomplete integration but his intellectual contribution I would say was more contextual and I think, in some ways, just helped to broaden the scope of our thinking, although that breadth is not strongly reflected in the book. I think the book is very focused. And we were all ready to move that way and that was one of our strengths, but then he helped move us further.

*I: But what about the relationships between you, too. Else complained that she didn't get much credit for the work, or not as much credit as she felt would have been her due.*

L: Yeah, maybe I can address that better if you say a little about what you understand to be the case.

*I: I don't know what she said. I read it in the papers of Brewster Smith.<sup>29</sup> On one of his personal notes it says that Else felt she wasn't credited enough for her contribution. I don't know what would have been the reason for that.*

L: Alright. Let's try that one. Before, I didn't say what the hardships were. The relationship between Else and Nevitt was problematic. Not from the start, but as soon as we were seen as a project and we were in a larger world, then there were questions of credit. Each of them felt that they had made an important contribution and, at times, felt that the other one minimized or neglected it. But I would say there's a sociology of this, which is that the world around us wanted to know who was the real hero of this, who was the intellectual god of this, the source. There were those who said it was Nevitt, and those who said it was Else. Nobody said it was Teddie or me, but I believe that the world played a very big part in increasing the tensions and dividing them and did very little to support the relations. We had to do that. I felt that that was one of my personal functions in our group to help us stay together. But certainly in 1946 or 1947, this project was getting to be known in the country. In the 1940s, California was a little bit like Siberia. It was very far from the center of intellectual life in this country, which was in the East and a little bit in the West. I think Berkeley was known to be a good

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<sup>29</sup> M. Brewster Smith (1919–2012) was a US social psychologist who graduated from Harvard in 1947. During WWII he served in the U.S. Army and acted as a liaison officer for the study which became known as *The American Soldier* (see Stouffer et al. 1949 for the first of the four-volume study). Brewster Smith held professorships at several US universities.

university, we didn't feel that we were unknown, but ... There was a lot of interest in the project. The American Psychological Association (APA) has divisions like the division on social psychology or personality. Both Nevitt and Else were active in the APA and the division on social psychology published a handbook of social psychology in 1946 or 1947.<sup>30</sup> Something like that. And they knew enough of our work so that Nevitt and Else were asked to write a piece in this handbook on prejudice. They began doing it and then decided to include me, so the three of us did this. And the names were in alphabetical order, which meant that Nevitt's name was last. That became an irritant to him, understandably. There was an interest in our study. I would say that by 1945 or 1946, it existed in the world of psychology and sociology. I think it was partly because of the times, that is the war, the fight against fascism, and the sense of mold on our great democracy was very important in American culture then. Our study signified that within psychology. I mean, our study more than any other represented that interest to do research that was of significance in the world, and was also well done scientifically, positivistic.

*I: Was it that Sanford was the last in the listing, and that made him feel jealous of Else?*

L: That's one of the things. There are things that just came to my mind as an example. Things happened with both of them, that made them feel that the world would underestimate their contribution.

*I: Mm, both felt the same.*

L: In my view, both felt the same, and in both there was a mixture of rationality and irrationality in that. I'm sure you or I would have felt the same in our own particular form in the same situation. But, you see, Nevitt never did any one distinctive piece of work, he was always the advisor or the manager of it. He had to deal with Horkheimer more than the rest. But there's no one part of this that's distinctively Nevitt's. It's clear the interviews are Else's, and the scales are mine. Now, even though he didn't directly do one part of work, he was involved in it all, so in some ways he could easily be neglected. On the other hand, it's also true that he was not directly responsible for one thing, that's a limitation. So he was in danger of being neglected. At the same time, he was identified as the director of the project. That's one part of it. And then Else for her part, you see, she did much of the writing, it was her work. But there were a lot of social forces limiting the credit that she got. At least until after the book came out.

*I: Why?*

L: Ok. One: She had no academic appointment. That made and still makes a big difference in this country. I mean, in Europe you have the phenomenon of "Herr Professor" and a lot of "Dozents" or whatever it is, and that's very hierarchical and it's very hard at the bottom or the middle of the hierarchy to make your name public. It's harder there than here because there's a more explicit structure or hierarchy. Things are somewhat freer here, but there is still a hierarchy, and on several hierarchies Else had a lower position than Nevitt although she was in fact the same. He was moving from assistant to associate to full professor, he could apply for grants. If money came in, it went to him, it couldn't go to her. We speak of being on the tenure track. If you're appointed as an assistant professor, ordinarily it means that you will be considered for promotion to associate professor and then to

<sup>30</sup> Around 1944/45 the American Psychological Association was reorganized and divisions were established. One of them was dedicated to "personality and social psychology." The production of a "handbook" might have been discussed back then, because the last one had appeared in 1935, but the new Handbook of Social Psychology came out only in 1954, edited by Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson. Neither Frenkel-Brunswik nor Sanford contributed chapters to the three volumes of this Handbook.

full. If you have some other appointment, you have no assurance that your appointment will be renewed, you are not on the path leading upward within the faculty. There are lots of positions and she was like a research associate—I'm sure you have an equivalent there. What is not generally recognized is that the size of the non-tenure track group in a department may be as large or larger as those on the tenure track, and they are the disadvantaged ones. Second: Most people who are not on the tenure track are women—gender is an important issue—and faculty members who consider themselves to be liberal on social questions don't want to recognize how prejudiced they are and how many forms of authoritarianism there are within the university. You see it more when you are students looking up—as we move up, we tend not to notice it that much... I think it's very important and it was very important for Else. So because Else, as a marginal member of the department—and being a woman was a major disadvantage—couldn't apply for research funds, she worked on someone else's project at the Institute. She and Nevitt were colleagues but it was his project. Nevitt became director of our project not only because in some ways it was simpler. Horkheimer preferred to deal with a man and wanted to deal with somebody who had the more academic status in the department and so on. So, that is a fact, a woman who is marginal is like a wife with a husband. There are a lot of gender issues in this. Else was a very independent person and wanted freedom to do her own work. She would be very helpful to a lot of people, but Else was not what today we would call a feminist. She was not fighting for the rights of women in the university. She was just trying to find a way for herself. She never made it a political issue, that she didn't get a salary. Later on, in the 1950s I think, that nepotism-rule was taken away and there was a question of whether she would become a professor. Did she become a professor?

*I: No.*

L: She didn't.

*I: No, but the decision was made that she should get a professorship. That would have been the year 1958, October 1958, I think, but she died earlier on March 31, 1958. There must be a record at the University of Berkeley, which says that the department agrees that further representation should be done in one or two main fields of the candidate, meaning Else, that Dr. Brunswik is a highly qualified person, and that an appointment as professor of psychology should be sought for her in connection with sociology and/or the Institute of Child Welfare.*

L: In connection with that, not just psychology?

*I: Not psychology.*

L: Not psychology, Jesus.

*I: And then they agreed that an appointment up to one half-time would be acceptable and that this appointment should be done. Also, if the money for that has to be borrowed ...*

L: I mean, it's a position in the structure.

*I: They wanted to give her a ...*

L: A half-time professor jointly with another department. Now you see that is a horrible thing. You have to understand that. That's exactly the fitting ending to the whole story. Else should have been made professor years before. It's very hard now, it's a sociological, psychological ... It's hard now to

recapture that but by every criteria Else was one of the most distinguished members of the department and she could have been made a professor before that or somehow recognized. Even when they finally recognized her, they still made it a half-time appointment, they still made it in conjunction with a research thing, what was it?

*I: Sociology and/or the ICW.*

L: The ICW, right. There is something very grudging about it, and I believe that gender is an important part of that. Something they wouldn't do to a man, and that a man wouldn't accept, and that Else—although she was very independent, she was like many women in those times—just took for granted: that she could not have what her husband had, and she felt bad about it. She may have tried it in indirect ways, to get more recognition or to get more position or whatever, but the possibilities were limited and she was really mainly fighting to do the work, not to get the position. But after the book, starting in probably 1948 or 1949, both Else and Nevitt were doing very well. At that point the study of personality was a big field in psychology. The idea of this kind of social psychology was very interesting. They were seen as leaders in that field. My part in that book helped me get to Harvard in 1950 as an assistant professor after being an assistant professor in Western Reserve for three years. Nevitt's part in the book got him to be a professor at Berkeley around 1950—then he left because of the loyalty oath.<sup>31</sup> And it made Else a celebrity but she was still a research associate. Nevitt began being elected or appointed to various offices. He became the president of the division of personality, social psychology, this sort of thing. But he wouldn't sign the loyalty oath and left and spent a difficult year in England not knowing what he would be doing next.<sup>32</sup> Then he began another study, which was an important new project and then went to Stanford as a professor, so he was getting a lot of return, much more than Else. At the same time there were people who saw Else as intellectually more creative, and she was opening up and she was looking more intensively at certain issues, like intolerance of ambiguity in personality. She might have had colleagues or assistants working with her but it was very much her project, and she was on the production line as well as managing. Nevitt talked about his project, much of which was the work of others Else talked about her work. In fact he was not as productive intellectually, so he was open to the charge that she was the more creative force. At the same time, he was doing more things and was more prominent and so she could feel that he was getting too much credit for things that she did. I think that working on the interviews in TAP was probably the most intellectually interesting and creative part of the study. I would say that, knowing that it's not my part. I think there's more new and creative theoretical *Prägnanz* there than in scale, which is more about showing how ideas can be tested. But the world continued to divide them, I

<sup>31</sup> In 1949, the regents of the University of California voted to impose a special anti-Communist oath on all faculty, initiating controversy that lasted into 1952. Forcing the faculty to sign this oath was legitimized because the University of California system was a public institution, and its employees were therefore seen as public employees similar to the people employed by the federal government. Most private universities did not follow this course of action. Several well-known professors declined to sign the oath and resigned from their post as a consequence. Besides Edward C. Tolman and Erik Erikson, Nevitt Sanford was one of them (see Paier 1996 for details).

<sup>32</sup> Else Frenkel-Brunswik did not join the group refusing to sign the loyalty oath. In a letter to Edward C. Tolman, she reasoned that her research was the main line of contribution to society, not political action: "I am thinking of myself as a woman of 'thought' rather than of 'action'. [...] You may say at this point that what is now going on is the first step to further controls and we have to stop it right here and this is certainly a valid argument. On the other hand, we have to recall that the faculty agreed upon the anti-communist policy by an overwhelming majority. And though I do not agree with this policy, I feel that this battle is lost." (Letter from Else Frenkel-Brunswik to Edward C. Tolman, July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1950, AGSÖ 25/01.108).

believe. As far as I know they had very little contact after the book came out and no collaborations. I believe the rivalry between them was accentuated after the book came out.

*I: I never heard about them being in contact or in closer contact after publication of the book.*

L: But the fight wasn't between the two of them. The fight was between the two denominations, the two religious denominations that built on their names, which to some extent each one wanted because they did feel somewhat underappreciated. That was reflected earlier when we talked about the authorship of the book. It was essentially an injustice that Teddie's name came first...

*I: Was it just to have the names in alphabetical order?*

L: Yes... But the reason we chose alphabetical order was that if it wasn't alphabetical, we would have to decide who is first, Sanford or Frenkel-Brunswik, and that was harder to deal with than being alphabetical. The assumption I think that both Else and Nevitt made was that alphabetical means that it's equal, that nobody is claiming to have been the primary source, that we can all go on to develop the things that interest us. I don't have to claim to have been the primary source but I can show from what I went on to do that I was an important figure in it. I don't think either of them expected that the conflict would become as great as it was. See, that was the first time either of them became famous. They were known before but to some extent this became a kind of heroic book in American psychology. I thought that without being involved in these struggles, and very often I was referred to it or people introduced me like that. And it started being called a monumental classic, and all these ridiculous terms. My own feeling now is that in absolute terms it's a pretty good book. In relative terms it's unusual because psychology didn't know then and still doesn't know how to do anything like it. I don't think there's an empirical study that's similar, even now, that has combined some degree of scientific quality and the intellectual substance. Partly this is because collaborative enterprises tend to fail. If I believed in miracles, I would say there is a kind of a miracle in this, that we actually kept going and sustained the work and got through the writing. Because the destructive forces around were so great, including the people who wanted to know who's the real mastermind, which is very destructive for collaboration.

They became famous, they became the famous authors of a book that represented the hopes of one major part of academic psychology, and psychology as part of society. We were fighting social prejudices and working for social good and all that stuff. And I don't think they were well prepared to become celebrities, I mean, that increases the rivalry.

*I: So, in 1947 the empirical work for that study was finished.*

L: And the funding was over.

*I: You went to Cleveland, you mentioned before.*

L: Yes, in 1947.

*I: ... and became an associate professor in Harvard.*

L: No, it's Western Reserve University where I went first, which is a good university, a good psychology department. It was very hard to get jobs and that way I was doing well. In 1950 I went to Harvard. I think that was just around the time the book came out and I think one of the reasons why Harvard was interested in us was that study.

*I: Did you maintain contact with Else?*

L: Yes, with both Else and Nevitt. Although not a lot, we didn't see each other a lot. I saw them at meetings in the early 1950s, well, between 1947 and 1950 when we were corresponding, during the writing. Most of the writing got done between 1947 and after I left. I had written my dissertation which provided the basis for a few of the chapters. You see, my dissertation was on ethnocentrism and it was an early form of that whole part one. And I had some other things in it that didn't go in the book. We ran a lot of correspondence around the writing. Each of us would send the drafts of our chapters to the others. There were two big decisions about our authorship, sort of mild forerunners... One was about the order of names, and going alphabetical was a way of avoiding conflict. I think one reason the three of us, and in particular Else and Nevitt, were willing to do alphabetical order was that Adorno wasn't so well known in psychology. We were thinking mainly in that context, so if people read that order they would still want to know which of the two of them was the one. It was only later when Adorno became more famous...

*I: But he didn't become famous for empirical research here...*

L: No, that's right.

*I: It was never his style.*

L: That's right. But there are still a lot of arguments about which one was the main one. But that was one issue and the other was that we decided to put names on chapters. We put all the names on the F-scale, because that seemed very collective, but the other chapters had either one or two names on them. In some way, that gave us some recognition for particular things. So we were in a lot of contact by correspondence. I don't think I went to Berkeley at that time but they would come East. It's very hard to say no to Harvard but I knew it would be a mixed blessing. If you go you may regret it, but if you don't go you'll regret it more. In the early 1950s, when Nevitt was my advisor, I went to Berkeley once or twice but he didn't ask me to be on the staff there. Nevitt went to study a college and I went to study a mental hospital, which was part of an attempt to become more sociological and still consider personality, things like that. I saw Else but not much, and I did see her after Egon died in 1955.

*I: You hadn't been to Berkeley before that?*

L: Well, I saw her in Berkeley after he died and I saw her at APA meetings along the way, so I had a sense of what was happening in her life, but not as much...

*I: Well, I think she got a travel grant for Norway in 1950. I think that must have been after the book was published*

L: Yes, right. Let me just think.

*I: In 1954 she was at the Center of Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and that was an honor.*

L: Yes, and if she could get that, she should have become a professor, too. But now, I saw her after Norway, in 1952 maybe, but I remember something of that talk that may be of interest to you. It was either right after or maybe a year after she got that, and she said that she was becoming less of a positivist. There were a lot of concepts that interested her that she wanted to study without having to measure quantitatively or to develop operations and definitions. I remember that, but also that I myself was moving that way, that's an interesting parallel. Her orientation was changing, she would

have been 43 to 44 then in 1952. I now understand that from my research. I believe that in a person's early forties, it's a time of important developmental change in adulthood, what I came to call midlife transition, and I think that she was going through an important transition. One result of it was her decision to look at the middle age ...

*I: Yes, she started with that, but she didn't finish it ...*

L: And it was difficult for her, I assume, for many reasons. I think that study reflected her own sense of becoming older, or becoming middle aged, and wanting to look at more complex issues, being less governed by quantification.

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### Author biographies

**Daniel J. Levinson** (1920–1994) was an American psychologist, contributing to the fields of developmental and social psychology at the University of California in Berkeley, Harvard, and eventually Yale University. While a student at Berkeley, Levinson became part of the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group and one of the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, R. Nevitt Sanford, and Theodor W. Adorno. Of his later works, his book *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978) achieved great publicity.

**Dietmar Paier**, sociologist, conducted this interview with Daniel J. Levinson as part of his PhD thesis on the emergence of modern sociology in Austria and as the editor of the book *Else Frenkel-Brunswik (1996) Studien zur autoritären Persönlichkeit. Edited by Dietmar Paier (=Bibliothek sozialwissenschaftlicher Emigranten, Band 3)*. Today, Dietmar Paier is a higher education didactic expert, lecturer, systemic coach, and trainer in Vienna.

## BOOK REVIEW

# Helping Hands

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Leff, Laurel (2019) *Well Worth Saving: American Universities' Life-and-Death Decisions on Refugees from Nazi Europe*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press

357 pp.

ISBN 978-0-300-24387-1

Price: \$30.00

Mulder, Bertus (2021) *Sophie Louisa Kwaak und das Kapital der Unternehmerfamilie Weil: Ein Beitrag zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Frankfurter Schule* [Sophie Louisa Kwaak and the capital of the entrepreneurial family Weil: A contribution to the economic history of the Frankfurt School]. Translated from Dutch by Arne Braun. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag

283 pp.

ISBN 978-38353-3915-6

Price: €24.90

Stöckel, Tommy (2020) *Wissenschaftsorganisatoren in den Sozialwissenschaften 1890–1940* [Managers of the social sciences 1890–1940]. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien (Humboldt University Berlin Dissertation)

575 pp.

ISBN 978-3-658-38168-4

Price: €64.99

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It is really a truism to assert that practicing the profession of science needs not only intellectual capacities. One crucial element of the 'add-ons' in scholarship is that it requires other people. Another is the enabling activities; in most cases, relevant and essential actions are performed by non-scholars, sometimes, however, scholars themselves devote time and effort to help peers to be able to continue with their core business. Those who concentrate completely on the helping side seldom gain any kind of recognition in the history of science and scholarship, and the scholar who volunteers in these supportive roles usually does not improve their reputation as a scholar – because scholarly credit is calculated according to intellectual contributions alone.

The three books under review here deal with individuals who devoted (some of) their energies in the support of scholars. The most voluminous is a dissertation from the Department of History at Humboldt University in Berlin. Indeed, the book presents three relatively unrelated cases from the

social sciences in France and the United States. Stöckel calls his subject *Wissenschaftsorganisatoren*, and one could translate this compositum to organizers of science and scholarship (the more telling alternative “organisation men” —alluding to William H. Whyte’s famous book from 1956—is nowadays inappropriate for well-known reasons). Stöckel, who left academia after finishing his PhD, analyzes organizational activities in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where prominent social scientists played crucial roles. The author claims that the new role of the organizer crystalized in these decades but concedes elsewhere that some organizing was also done in earlier epochs.

The first case compares two French sociologists, the famous Émile Durkheim and the less prominent René Worms. Those familiar with Durkheim and his school won’t learn much from the chapter, but putting the more famous alongside the one who lost much of his reputation (and might not have gained a level of acclaim during a lifetime which could compete with that of Durkheim); highlights that even an author of the standing of Durkheim did have the obligation to spent a reasonable part of his efforts in supporting activities such as founding a journal, persuading others to submit their promised contributions, and writing letters to publishers, to name just a few. Interestingly enough, one of the endeavors of Worms remains, even if it is only experts who remember the founder of the Institute International de Sociologie. The journals founded by Durkheim and Worms lived much shorter lives.

The second case study is concerned with the creation of the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, edited by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin S. Johnson. The fifteen volumes were published between 1930 and 1934 by Macmillan, sixteen reprint editions came out after WWII until the next, the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, substituted for its predecessor in 1968. Based on archival material, Stöckel demonstrates the crucial role of Johnson in the whole enterprise. The somewhat older Seligman presided more over the project, whereas Johnson really organized it. Given the fact that the same man was also president of the New School of Social Research where he initiated the University in Exile for the disbanded German professors, and took part in other refugee help schemes, one is surprised about the time resources of the no longer quite young man. Stöckel concentrates on Johnson’s editorial role and presents several telling stories about it. It is worth mentioning that Stöckel disapproves the established view about the influence of the (older) German *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* (4<sup>th</sup> edition 1923–1929). Johnson had been aware of the eight volumes of German scholarship in the field, which at that time was called *Staatswissenschaften* but covered nearly the same territory as the social sciences in the English-speaking world (the difference was in the approach, more humanistic in the German world, more empiristic in the US).

Two of Stöckel’s findings deserve to be mentioned. On the one hand, the finances of the project were affected by the Great Depression, but Johnson outmaneuvered those who felt the enterprise would fail by promising deliveries at deadlines he overstretched regularly. When threatened with premature termination by the publishing house’s accountants, he even cut Seligman’s honorarium instead of backing down. The Foreword to the 1968 *Encyclopaedia* and Johnson’s *Pioneer’s Progress: An Autobiography* (1952) have hinted towards his leading role in the enterprise but Stöckel’s chapter reveals many more details. On the other hand, it is interesting to learn the extent to which Johnson and his associate instructed the authors – taking a far greater editorial role than either previous editors or those subsequent. Johnson, Seligman and a handful of other scholars prepared not only a list of entries, but designed every contribution with regard to both content and scope. Obviously, some of the invited contributors did not follow these editorial commands. It would have been worth investigating this further, but unfortunately the author switches to another case.

The third case is concerned with the role of the Rockefeller philanthropies in the development of the social sciences in France during the wars. The 130+ page long chapter presents a detailed coverage, based on the French, English and German literature plus archival material located in the Rockefeller Archive Center. The multilingual author deserves credit for the coverage of the many less successful interventions by the officers of the Rockefeller Foundation. For various reasons, the Americans did not collaborate with the most innovative exponents of French human sciences, such as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Maurice Halbwachs, or Marcel Mauss, but with second ranked representatives including Célestin Bouglé and Charles Rist. Whereas the Rockefellers made a difference in most European countries where they invested effort and money in the interwar years, they could not overcome the French system of patronage.

Laurel Leff, specialist in Jewish Studies and journalism, investigated the role of university presidents and similar administrators in the years after 1933, when Hitler held power in Germany, dismissing many scholars who then sought refuge abroad. With some verve, Leff follows the struggle of Jewish scholars to escape Nazi territory and establish themselves elsewhere. Leff picked eight scholars as cases and studied their destinies in detail: Max Fleischmann (law), Hedwig Hintze (history), Leonore Brecher (zoology), Michel Gordin (Russian literature and linguistics), Mieczyslaw Kolinski (musicology and anthropology), Marie Anne Schirmann (physics), Käthe Spiegel (medieval history) and Hedwig Kohn (physics). The first names of these individuals indicate a gender proportion of five women to three men: thus clearly suggesting the eight were not drawn as a representative sample of refugee scholars. However, the selection legitimately demonstrates the failure of rescue. Only one of the eight reached American shores, another survived in hiding as a “U boat” in Nazi occupied Belgium. The other six perished in the course of the killing of Jews in the 1940s by the Nazis. Leff claims that all could have been saved if the American institution had been more helpful. The evidence is overwhelming, and Leff accurately exposes the responsible actors: university presidents, like the ones from Harvard and Columbia; James Conant and Nicholas M. Butler; the State Department; and a majority of US consuls abroad. He claims they were lazy, anti-Semitic, or highly bureaucratic and overly officious.

Leff pays tribute to those who devoted much of their time and energy trying to save foreign scholars. Besides the already well-known institutions, such as the University in Exile and the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars; Leff found some more candidates for Yad Vashem’s Righteous Among the Nations. Besides Johnson, mentioned earlier, the New York physician Alfred E. Cohn, Leff depicts the efforts of another prominent scholar, who acted as a helper: anthropologist Melville Herskovits fought for many years to bring the musicologist Kolinski to the US but was unsuccessful. After the liberation of Europe, Herskovits was happily informed of Kolinski’s survival who finally arrived in America in 1951.

Leff’s well-researched book includes two appendices, the first concerning the American institutions and individuals who played a central role in determining whether refugee scholars could come to the US, and the second a list of displaced scholars and how they fared. The author is to be praised for avoiding overstretched deductions from a handful of cases by paying tribute to the helpers and their efforts. She is outspoken in her condemnation of those Americans who had had the chance to do better. I hesitate to mention that Leff’s scholarship would have been even more impressive if she had included studies on her subject published in other languages.

Whereas Leff presents a collective biography, Mulder decided to focus on a single case. A social historian by profession, Mulder had previously published two papers on the fate of Andries Sternheim, who was a collaborator of Max Horkheimer's Institute for Social Research Geneva branch in the 1930s. When as a consequence of Friedrich Pollock's failed investments at Wall Street Horkheimer reduced Sternheim's salary, the Swiss authorities terminated his residence permit. Together with his family Sternheim returned home to Amsterdam, where the Nazi seized and deported them. They died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the course of his research on Sternheim, Mulder must have come across another Dutch employee in the service of the Institute of Social Research: Sophie Kwaak, the daughter of working-class parents living in rural Netherlands who managed to climb the social ladder and became a stenographer typist in a Rotterdam investment firm. In 1933, Kwaak was hired by a newly established firm, the *Rotterdamsche Belegging- en Beheermaatschappij* (ROBEMA). Initially only a secretary, she was conferred as procurator in 1938 and assistant manager in 1939. ROBEMA handled the investments of the Argentinian-German family Weil, famous in the history of social research because early in 1920 Felix Weil persuaded his father Hermann to donate money for the creation of an institute devoted to the study of Marxism. It finally became known as the Institute for Social Research. This privately financed research enterprise successfully transferred its wealth out of Germany before Hitler became Reichskanzler. For more than 30 years, Kwaak worked for ROBEMA, and came to be in touch with the men running the Institute: Weil, Pollock and Horkheimer. Whereas these three men and the initial manager of ROBEMA, Arthur E. Nadel, lived in the US, Kwaak, who was not Jewish, stayed in the Netherlands and managed to save the assets of the Weils and the Institute. Mulder tells this story with compassion for his hero, amidst his detailed reports about the finances of the Institute.

It is not known whether Kwaak only administered the accounts or made decisions regarding the investment of assets, but it is clear that she did not collaborate with the Nazi occupiers but wholeheartedly resisted them. The Nazi administration in the occupied Netherlands sought to get hold of all "Jewish money" but Kwaak ingeniously fooled the Germans and their Dutch helpers. Her bravura was not without risk for herself because if the Nazis were to become aware of her disobedience the consequences would have been severe.

After liberation, Kwaak continued with her efforts to put the interests of ROBEMA above personal wishes from some of the Weil family. The relationship to the Institute was affected by the fact that Kwaak's former boss, Nadel, experienced increasing resentment from Horkheimer and Pollock after his arrival in New York (Nadel reported this to Kwaak after liberation). Her own interaction with Pollock remained punctilious on her side but condescending from his.

The full life history of Kwaak in Mulder's account might not be of undivided interest for those who are concerned with the history of the social sciences, but readers interested in the conditions of life of ordinary people will find this biography worth reading.

While both traditional and recent histories of science, as well as STS, focus on researching individuals or on the immediate research process (the laboratory); studies such as those presented here can alert us to the fact that successful research requires more: institutional frameworks shaped by actants (rather than just the actants themselves), researchers who undertake organizational activities, and individuals, readily referred to as auxiliaries, who keep the machines running. All three books are relevant for a better understanding of the role of these helping hands for the development of science and scholarship.