

BOOK REVIEWS

Teixeira, Carlos (author, editor) and Wei Li (editor).

The Housing and Economic Experiences of Immigrants in U.S. and Canadian Cities.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

384 pages.

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The *Housing and Economic Experiences of Immigrants in US and Canadian Cities* (THEE), contains eleven chapters of original research from 18 contributors who examine how immigration intersects with housing and economic integration in North American cities. Kobayashi (Preface) argues that, “Immigration presents some of the most pressing social, cultural and public policy issues in both the United States and Canada,” and the editors assert that this is the first scholarly volume that adopts a comparative approach to both the housing and economic experiences of urban immigrants.

Contributors employ a diversity of methods, ranging from multivariate logistic regressions, to simple descriptive statistics, interviews, focus groups, and landscape analysis. The chapters that adopt an exclusively quantitative approach lend themselves well to a comparative analysis of Canadian and US census data at national and metropolitan area scales, whereas the more qualitative studies tend to focus on a particular geographical area, such as one or more neighbourhoods within a city in either the US or Canada. A notable exception is the somewhat frustrated efforts of Li and Lo (Chapter 12) to interview an equal number of immigrant entrepreneurs in Vancouver, BC and San Francisco, CA.

THEE provides valuable information for scholars, policy makers, immigration services professionals, urban planners, and upper level students. I expect that the wide range of research methods will make elements of this book appealing to a broad audience, but it is the rare individual that will find every chapter to be accessible. Visual aids are effectively used to communicate the findings of some of the more rigorously quantitative chapters. Detailed literature reviews inform the reader of the development of theory regarding processes of immigrant integration and provide an excellent synopsis of the literature regarding trends in the housing and economic experiences of urban immigrants in both countries. Case studies offer contemporary insight into the lived immigrant experience of housing, employment, and entrepreneurship. As such, it is an excellent resource to learn about past and current understandings of the processes through which immigrants integrate into the housing markets and economies of cities in the US and Canada.

By focusing on the housing and economic experiences of immigrants, the editors have brought together three tremendously complex fields of study, and organizing these fields into a coherent volume requires a great deal of thought. THEE is divided into two parts: Part One is focused on the housing experience while Part Two addresses the economic. Teixeira (Introduction to Part One) explains that Part One considers the interrelated aspects of immigrants’ housing experience through seven conceptual areas: 1) housing needs, 2) copings strategies, 3) housing career trajectories, 4) inequality in homeownership, 5) loss of affordable rental housing, 6) residential segregation, and 7)

immigrants' effects on housing markets. These interrelated aspects are organized according to three research themes: a) housing inequalities and homeownership, b) housing careers, social networks, and gentrification, and c) housing suburban immigrants and policy implications. In practice this is expressed as two chapters of analyses of quantitative data at national and/or metropolitan area scales, followed by four chapters of qualitative case studies and some spatial descriptive statistics. Yu (Chapter 7) deserves special recognition for a particularly compelling integration of interviews with quantitative data. Although Mirion (Introduction to Part Two) makes no such claim that Part Two is organized according to these conceptual areas or research themes, the structure follows that of Part One; two quantitative chapters followed by three case study chapters that contain a blend of descriptive statistics and qualitative methods. In the Conclusion, Frazier (Chapter 13) offers an alternative set of concepts and themes as a way to think about this volume in its entirety. In doing so he puts the original research presented in conversation with previous scholarly work. This is an excellent end of the book as it highlights the various ways that these complicated fields (immigration, housing, and economic integration) can be brought together to gain new insight.

The goal of *THEE* is to present and encourage the comparative study of immigration in Canadian and US cities, so it is important to draw attention to a key difference in the source of authors' quantitative data for Canada and the US. All of the studies that used census data for the US (with the exception of Haan and Yu, Chapter 3) drew from the 2010 US Census, whereas census data for Canada was drawn from the 2006 Canadian Census. A notable exception to this was Li and Lo's (Chapter 12) use of the recently introduced 2011 Canadian National Household Survey (NHS) for some basic descriptive statistics for the Vancouver CMA. Darden (Chapter 2) acknowledges that the temporal mismatch between the 2006 Canadian Census and the 2010 US Census is a limitation of his study, but no comment is made as to why the 2011 NHS was not used. One could speculate that data was not available at the time research was being conducted, or that the majority of authors chose not to use 2011 NHS data. Either possibility has implications for future comparative US/Canada research; for the first suggests an inevitable temporal lag; while the second calls into question the possibility of comparative research should scholars choose not to use the NHS as a source of data. There is no evidence to support either of the speculations above, but a comment on this matter is notably absent from the text.

THEE is an engaging and informative intervention in the field of immigration research. More comparative studies of the immigrant experience in Canada and the US are needed, and I hope that scholars will be inspired to follow its lead.

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