

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century, Edited by John Biles, Meyer Burstein and James Frideres, Kingston, Ont.: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2008, 283 pp., ISBN 978-1-55339-216-3.

Michel Racine

Volume 65, Number 2, Spring 2010

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/044306ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/044306ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Racine, M. (2010). Review of [*Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century*, Edited by John Biles, Meyer Burstein and James Frideres, Kingston, Ont.: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2008, 283 pp., ISBN 978-1-55339-216-3.] *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 65(2), 331–333. <https://doi.org/10.7202/044306ar>

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 2010

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

tivement détaillé de l'évolution des droits du travail des différents pays de l'Amérique latine où, en dépit de disparités, s'observe l'atteinte d'un certain compromis après des années récentes d'apogée des politiques néolibérales, pour passer ensuite à la zone Asie-Pacifique (développement relatifs à l'Australie, à la Nouvelle-Zélande et au Japon), de même qu'au cas tout à fait riche d'enseignements de l'Afrique du Sud, dont l'influence rejaillit sur des pays voisins.

Des observations finales aussi significatives que brèves se veulent d'un optimisme modéré. Elles se fondent en ce début de XXI^e siècle sur le retour de la liberté syndicale dans différents pays, notamment de l'Europe de l'Est, sur l'élaboration par différents gouvernements de techniques d'appréhension des nouvelles formes de travail, sur la reconnaissance de la pertinence du droit du travail dans le contexte du commerce international et, peut-être avant tout, sur celle de la primauté des droits fondamentaux de la personne au travail. En finale – et le lecteur ne peut qu'être d'accord en cela avec l'auteur à la suite de son riche et précis cheminement : « In other words, the answer to those who argue that labour law is purely a product of the twentieth century, and is rather dated today, is that the great challenge of labour law now is how to respond to the problems of the twenty-first century in order to avoid a return to the social injustices of the nineteenth » (p. 258).

Pierre Verge
Université Laval

Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century

Edited by John Biles, Meyer Burstein and James Frideres, Kingston, Ont.: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2008, 283 pp., ISBN 978-1-55339-216-3.

Immigrant integration should be treated cautiously. Research on the topic should be done with methodological rigour. Authors of this collective work, mainly from the public and academic sectors, are involved at different levels with the Metropolis Project, "an international network for comparative research and public policy development on migration, diversity, and immigrant integration in cities in

Canada and around the world" (p. 176, n4). Published half way through its 5-year funding period, this book's main intention is to propose a thorough evaluating program outlining the Canadian approach regarding immigrant integration, and to improve the way we "measure" this phenomenon. Reaching a high level of conceptualization, the book is designed to be useful to academics, but above all to policy makers. Would these officials ensure that from now on integration is considered as a matter not only of rights to be respected or services delivered, but also of responsibilities to be assumed by the persons living in a migration situation? This "two-way street" perspective, which nowadays taints Canadian immigration policy, is implicitly a recognition of the limits governments can impose on immigrant integration.

Measuring integration comprehensively represents a major undertaking. In Part I, the concept of integration is scrutinized through four lenses. For each of these, contributors also give a relevant update of the research on the immigrant situation. Being the concern of the moment, economy opens this part. With all due caution, we learn that generally it takes more time for recent immigrants to reach Canadian-born standard of living, if compared with older cohorts of immigrants (p. 20, in chapter 1, written by Sweetman and Warman). Authors also assert that "there is no substantive evidence that immigration has negative net economic impact" on Canadian economy (p. 30). Still, indicators such as the number of immigrants who benefit from pre-arranged employment and other measures would help improve our overview of the complex economic situation of immigration. Talking about immigrants' responsibilities regarding their own integration, authors analyze factors such as knowledge of one of Canada's official languages and its economic benefits, especially for second-generation immigrants.

The second lens through which Canadian immigration is analyzed is the political one. In chapter 2, Anderson and Black elaborate on a three-stage process that an immigrant could go through to be fully considered as integrated: 1) naturalization, 2) political participation (including voting and involvement in

voluntary association), and 3) representation as office-holding. Reversely, contributors give a complete description of the requirements the host society has to fulfill in order to reach the closing stages of political integration.

The next chapter tackles the complex subject of social integration. Its author, Frideres, who also acts as one of the book's editors, explores every issue of the term, occasionally addressing other dimensions of integration, to attain a model made of three entities: 1) the host society (showing or not acceptance, institutionally and in its attitudes); 2) the immigrant (at both individual and community levels), and 3) social integration. This last entity shows up at three levels: i) the social one, addressing the immigrant's institutional participation; ii) cultural, involving the internalization of values and norms, and iii) identity, the personal belonging to host society. Again, many indicators stem from this model.

Part I's last chapter deals with an interesting concept inspired by UNESCO's work with indigenous people: cultural citizenship. After sorting out many definitions of this term and others connected to it (e.g. Bourdieu's cultural capital, cultural participation, cultural sustainability, etc.), the authors, Stone *et al.*, propose indicators surrounding cultural diversity (languages, cultural content in media and academic curricula, etc.), cultural participation (including donations, cultural consumption behaviours, participation in local libraries...), and intercultural dialogue. Although the book's editors recognize overlapping of a number of indicators, measuring integration outcomes on a long-term basis, with the collaboration of the many bodies participating in immigrant integration, would help "acquire a holistic picture on the integrative successes of immigrants" (p. 275).

Part II is intended to give a broader picture of immigrant integration in Canada, in order to better contextualize the different dimensions depicted in the first part. The opening chapter, written by the book's first editor, provides the basics on integration policies in the English-speaking regions of Canada. Biles patiently describes services provided by all levels of government, beginning with the federal one (main departments involved and

all programs offered), followed by provinces (Quebec addressed separately) and their specifics concerning the integration of newcomers. The municipal level follows, exposing Canada's main cities' peculiarities. Then a typology of main "community partners" is exposed – service providers, multicultural organizations, issue-based organizations (racism, health, housing...), the so-called "universal" organizations (v.g. United Way) and the private sector. This comprehensive chapter ends with enumerating a number of challenges these multiple actors have to face: the most important being co-ordination.

The following chapter, written by members of the *Conseil des relations interculturelles* exposes Quebec's own approach about immigrant integration. The first section deals singularly with what could be considered the main instrument contributing to immigrants' adaptation: the education system. Authors, Rimok and Rouzier, then highlight another initiative, regional agreement, encouraging Quebec's regions and cities to be involved with immigrant integration. Services provided by the government of Quebec are also described, followed by an important issue, policy evaluation. Finally, authors describe Quebec's specificity regarding its immigration approach, which distinguishes it from the federal government, based on multiculturalism. However, they underline that "Quebec and federal policies have points in common, particularly regarding respect for pluralism, commitment to social justice, and civic participation by citizens of all origins"; divergence is mainly over the learning of French (p. 203).

The book's last chapters focus on public opinion about immigration and integration. Author of chapter 7, Jedwab delivers a longitudinal and comparative analysis about polls on attitudes toward immigration. In the finest way he can, he manipulates harsh categories, namely the "too many," "too few" and "about right" groups of respondents answering questions such as "In your opinion, do you feel there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?" These categories are subdivided with other factors such as estimates of annual immigrant levels, effects of immigration on nearby communities, or a desire that immigrants become more like other Canadians.

About this last factor, researchers should consider whether the inclusion of a cultural component like learning one of the official languages (French or English) would produce better-quality measurement about this assimilating desire. After a comparative study with a number of Western countries, the author concludes that "policy-makers in Canada are very likely to maintain current immigration levels."

The next chapter is about public opinion on immigration in Canadian English-speaking media. Its author, Mahtani, provides a broad scope on the question, studying: newspapers, television and the emerging ethno cultural media. She is interested not only in the "consumption" of media, but in its production. She also turns to research methods other than traditional content analysis to get in touch with producer (individual interviews), study minority journalism (ethnography) and explore immigrants "media diet." Representation in Canadian media about immigrants is not always positive, showing a tendency to "miniaturize (...) minorities," "an irrational suspicion," "[i]mmigration (being) scrutinized negatively." The reader may stumble on one discursive point regarding this text. When referring to her own works, the author oscillates in the use of the first or third person, a variation which could lead to an interesting content analysis...

Finally, Belkhodya, from the University of Moncton, studies a restrictive subject in one media type, newspaper, published in French-speaking Canada. The theme studied surrounds what the author calls the "controversy" over reasonable accommodation in Quebec. The method used consists of content analysis of five newspapers, two of them being published outside Quebec (*L'Acadie-Nouvelle*, New Brunswick, and Ottawa's *Le Droit*). Without apparent justification, the author chose to analyze editorials, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor containing the phrase "reasonable accommodation." Prior to that, the author would describe "The Situation in Quebec," sketching the province's history in a single paragraph to present the context explaining criticism of Canadian multiculturalism. The author would then rapidly zoom onto an event that made Prime Minister Jean Charest react by creating the Commis-

sion on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, chaired by philosopher Charles Taylor and sociologist Gérard Bouchard. If those actors nowadays are still active in their respective fields, other ones the author specifically refers to in order to sustain his claim against manifestations of one-way street integration have disappeared from the political scene (specifically, a member of a village's municipal council who triggered the event, as well as Mario Dumont, chief of the right-wing Action démocratique du Québec). While other authors in this book insist on the importance of elaborating longitudinal analysis to study both sides of the immigrant integration phenomenon, this article focuses on mere circumstances. It says little about Quebec's general public opinion on immigration and integration, and little about its evolution. Belkhodja submits several extracts from citizens expressing frustration toward accommodations – a listing mixed with an excerpt from a so-called political analyst denouncing these same attitudes. These findings are not only "preliminary" (p. 254), as the author mentions, but incomplete. The author concludes his article with "impression[s]" (p. 263), leaving the reader somewhat confused and the Quebecer disappointed for not being probed in his/her ethos regarding this book's fundamental theme.

Other than this last article, "Immigration and Integration in Canada" is a must-read review about the Canadian approach towards a reality that has changed the country's composition during the last years and will do so even more deeply in years to come. This book also provides policy-makers with a number of vital indicators that, if undertaken, will help survey the evolution of this phenomenon and maybe provide key collective transformations.

Michel Racine
Université Laval

The Effects of Mass Immigration on Canadian Living Standards and Society

Edited by Herbert Grubel, Vancouver: The Fraser Institute, 2009, 236 p., ISBN 978-0-88975-246-7.

Canada is widely perceived as a country of immigration. Indeed, Canada's annual rate of immigration is one of the highest in