

**Esslinger, Dean R. *Immigrants and the City: Ethnicity and Mobility in a Nineteenth Century Midwestern City*. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975. Pp. 56. Tables, maps. \$9.95**

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Numéro 2-77, octobre 1977

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019581ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019581ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Katz, M. B. (1977). Compte rendu de [Esslinger, Dean R. *Immigrants and the City: Ethnicity and Mobility in a Nineteenth Century Midwestern City*. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975. Pp. 56. Tables, maps. \$9.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (2-77), 133–134.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1019581ar>

structure and consciousness in 19th century Britain with which the North American experience can be compared. Furthermore, considering the flow of Scottish immigrants to this continent, Gray's work may provide a more direct insight into the development of industrial capitalism in North America.

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Esslinger, Dean R. Immigrants and the City: Ethnicity and Mobility in a Nineteenth Century Midwestern City. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975. Pp. 156. Tables, maps. \$9.95.

Immigrants and the City is a study of immigrant mobility in South Bend, Indiana, between 1850 and 1880. As it grew in size from 1,378 to 7,070, South Bend shifted from a commercial to a small industrial city with a predominantly native-born population. Esslinger studies the minority: all immigrants (at first English, Irish, and German, later Polish) and their children. The work is primarily quantitative, supplemented by material from newspapers and other local historical sources.

Esslinger traces the geographic origins of the population, the extent of population persistence, residential patterns, occupational mobility, and community leadership. He finds that only about one-fifth of the foreign population remained in the city during intervals of ten years and that industrialization had little effect on persistence. Residential patterns were not segregated, though by the end of the period more clustering by ethnicity and occupation had become evident. The Polish immigrants remained in semi-skilled factory work while the Irish, English, and Germans more often entered skilled work or non-manual occupations. Native-born sons of foreign men had more

occupational success than their foreign-born peers. Immigrants other than Poles managed to attain positions of leadership within the city largely through participation in a reasonably extensive network of voluntary societies. In essence, Esslinger interprets the immigrant experience as modified rosy.

Esslinger does not compare the experience of immigrants to that of natives, which makes it hard to interpret his findings. Nor does he specify his methodology in any detail. There is no indication, for instance, of how he linked people from one census to another. The analysis rests primarily on simple two-way cross-tabulation without the introduction, in important places, of controls for age or other variables. In some places no evidence for conclusions is offered.

According to Esslinger, the rate of upward mobility among manual workers in South Bend was much higher than in Newburyport, Massachusetts, as reported by Thernstrom. (p. 81) His conclusion rests on an incredible error. He presented Thernstrom's figures as though they applied to all foreign-born manual workers in Newburyport and compared them to those for all foreign-born manual workers in South Bend. However, Thernstrom's figures apply only to common laborers who, quite naturally, ended up far less often as skilled workers or small proprietors than men who began as skilled workers. In South Bend, as in most places, the skilled workers outnumbered the unskilled laborers and dominated the original group whose movement Esslinger traced. His comparison with Thernstrom is thus totally spurious and comparative rates of mobility in Newburyport and South Bend remain an open question.

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