

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

HARRY H. HILLER (Ed.) *Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2005. 325 p. + index.

This is a quality textbook for half-credit introductory courses in Urban Studies or Urban Sociology, containing articles within the grasp of an undergraduate student. It is organized in traditional textbook style: each chapter begins with an introduction called “Getting Perspective” that answers a question related to the topic under examination. Following this, there are several statements in point form under the heading “Learning Objectives.” Every chapter ends with a glossary of terms, study questions, suggested reading and a list of references. Individual chapters are replete with boxes, up-to-date statistics, figures and maps, and the works are indexed. The chapters are timely, well written, and demonstrate a modestly concerted effort to be inclusive from the diverse standpoints of gender, race and class.

Nevertheless, if a new edition of this textbook is to be considered, work should be included on issues of social inclusion in urban space for the blind, as well as accessibility for the physically challenged. Here, Philippe Apparicio and Anne-Marie Séguin’s (2006) article in *Urban Studies*, “Measuring the Accessibility of Services for Residents of Public Housing in Montréal” might be of interest. No attention is given to sexual orientation and the social organization of the gay village. All large urban centres in Canada incorporate gay populations in specific geographic city spaces: in Montreal, *Le Village Gai*; in Toronto at Church and Wellesley; in Quebec City, the Gay Quarter; in Winnipeg, Osburne Village; Davie Village in the West End of Vancouver; and Bank Street in Ottawa. Douglas Janoff’s chapter, “Urban Cowboys and Rural Rednecks: Community Resistance to Homophobic Violence” in his *Pink Blood: Homophobic Violence in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2005), might be a worthwhile addition.

Thirteen contributors are clearly identified with institutional affiliations. Three professors from Concordia, Université Laval, and the Université de Montréal respectively ensure a strong representation from Québec. Nonetheless, Ontario universities are over-represented: two authors are from York University, four from the University of Toronto, and one from the University of Waterloo, meaning that at least half of the contributions come from this province. Two writers come from the University of Calgary, and one hails from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Therefore, an equitable representation of Canadian scholarship is

lacking. Further, the article by Keith N. Hampton from MIT, “Social Ties and Community in Urban Spaces,” has a general theoretical focus that repeats other work in the text, and might have benefited from a more Canadian analysis, i.e., an elaboration of S. D. Clark’s (1966) study of fifteen suburbs in the Toronto area, and his work on the notion of hinterland-metropolis. Since the word “Canadian” is included in the textbook’s title, it is important to focus on just that. Moreover, throughout the text, there is an unnecessary, repetitive focus on the Chicago School of Urban Sociology.

One other criticism and a *caveat emptor* are worth noting. As frequently happens in scholarship claiming to be “Canadian,” there is a regrettable marginalization of Atlantic Canada, notably Halifax and St. John’s, Newfoundland. These cities are undergoing new processes of urbanization and economic re-structuring after the devastation of east coast fisheries following the cod moratorium in 1992. To redress this, thought might be given to Bernard and Fingard’s (2005) “Black Women and Work: Race, Family and Community in Greater Halifax” (in *Mothers of the Municipality*, edited by Judith Fingard and Janet Guilford). Finally, Tracy Peressini’s article in chapter eight, “Urban Inequality: Poverty in Canadian Cities” contains a box (8.2) on Cabrini-Green, located in Chicago. It is cited from Wikipedia.com. A recent issue of *Business Week* (December 14, 2005) quotes Jimmy Wales, founder of the Wikimedia Foundation, as warning students and researchers **not** to cite the website. Beware of cyberjunk, hardly a source of rigorous science!

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