

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

BARBARA J. MESSAMORE (Ed.), *Canadian Migration Patterns From Britain and North America*. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 2004, viii + 294 p.

This book is a collection of essays spawned from the 1998 Migration Conference at the Centre of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Like any edited volume, the editor had the task of compiling a rather diverse group of papers into a cohesive whole. Their diversity, however, is the true strength of the book. The topics covered range from Bruce Elliott's analysis of "Regional Patterns of English Immigration and Settlement in Upper Canada" to Karen Clavelle's chapter on "Songs of Love and Longing: Songs of Migration." The editor states: "Migration is not merely a historical phenomenon, but a key issue in Canada's social, economic, political, and cultural life. By addressing aspects of the migration phenomenon—from refugee policy to migration songs—the contributors to this collection have added greater depth and clarity to our understanding of the Canadian identity" (10). Her statement sums up nicely how the individual pieces of research in this book contribute to the overall study of migration in Canada.

At its core this book is a study of migration history and how it relates to Canada, from the earliest waves of immigration from Britain to the experiences of immigrants in Toronto, as well as migration between Canada and the United States in the early 1800s and more recently in the early 1990s. The book differs from other works on migration mainly in terms of the approaches taken. Many of the chapters, for example, reveal subtle nuances of very particular and individualised migration experiences. Terry McDonald, through published letters of Wiltshire and Somerset emigrants to Upper Canada in the early 1830s, examines how the experiences of emigrants were being used as a propaganda tool to encourage more people to migrate to Canada. At the same time, Joan Bryans asks the important migration relevant questions: "What happens when a young woman leaves her family and friends and sets out across a continent to a new life? What does she do when the physical bond to significant others is broken?" (145). She addresses these questions based on the experiences of two sisters who moved from Nova Scotia to the interior of British Columbia. Meanwhile, Duff Crerar brings forth the experiences of a Scottish Highland family who moved to Canada searching for independence and opportunity.

This book, however, is not bereft of more quantitative accounts of migration. Bruce Elliott uses Canadian Census data as well as port statistics on new arrivals to examine regional patterns of English settlement in Canada. Moreover, Gary L. Hunt and Richard E. Mueller use census data from 1990 and 1991 for the United States and Canada to present an economically framed analysis of immigration within North America, paying particular attention to the Canadian “brain drain” to the United States.

Taking a step away from more objective data allows researchers a window in the real lived experiences of those who move from one place to another, supplying an insight into the migration process which is more difficult with survey data. However, well thought out and executed survey research can greatly enhance our understanding of the immigration experience, especially allowing for generalisations beyond individual experiences. Migration is a selective process – not everyone moves, and not everyone desiring to move can. Migration-related research has the dubious task of disentangling mobility-related reasons and consequences from factors that are present in the experience of moving versus those factors present in the individuals themselves (such as greater motivation). With this in mind, I think the book does a good job of blending two very different ways of viewing the process of migration, assembling together a collection of essays that encompasses a wide range of methodological techniques.

This book would be useful academically, as well as for the layperson interested in migration trends that led to the formation of Canada. In an academic sense this book (either in its entirety or the individual essays) would be valuable in a history of migration class. At the same time, in more quantitatively oriented population studies classes, students could read about a firsthand account of chain migration through Kathleen Burke’s essay on “Migration as a Trans-generational Affair: The Pilkington and Smith Descendents Return to Canada.” Outside academia, the edited volume provides individuals who have a general interest in migration studies with a fascinating and accessible collection of essays that may provide insights into their own genealogy.

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