

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

VALERIE ZAWILSKI and CYNTHIA LEVINE-RASKY (Eds.)
Inequality in Canada: A Reader on the Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2005. 428 p.

The development of texts that support a curriculum for the teaching of inequalities in Canada is an important task for sociologists in academic settings; however, there is a scarcity of works that succeed in creating a truly inclusive Canadian experience. Jeffrey Cormier's renewal of the spirit of the Canadianization movement of the 1970s (*The Canadianization Movement: Emergence, Survival, and Success*. University of Toronto Press, 2004), and the recent surge of Canadian nationalism after 9/11 has once again raised the issue of the need for scholarship that is clearly Canadian, and for epistemological self-sufficiency, especially from American scholarship. But to invoke some Orwellian imagery, all books published in Canada might be Canadian, but some are more Canadian than others. With a few oversights, Zawilski and Levine-Rasky have succeeded where other recent works in this field have failed in producing a quality textbook and a reader that is demonstrably Canadian. Their editorial choices were guided by the principles "that the articles had to be recent, Canadian, and about inequality," had "a strong representation of women," and "sought regional representation and aboriginal voices" (v).

This collection of essays is organized around intersectional theorizing, which is *au courant* in contemporary sociology, but can present some problems. As Daiva Stasiulis points out, one problem is the "dizzying array of differences" (gender, race, class, ability, sexuality and a long list of others) that can be spread out *ad infinitum* so that any focused analysis becomes impossible (51). Some sociologists might celebrate the passing of this so-called "inclusive" methodology which by its very structure excludes data that might be important to any one segment, and creates serious debates around prioritization.

The editors have chosen a remarkable array of Canadian experts in the field: Roxana Ng, George Sefa Dei, Daiva Stasiulis, Meg Luxton and Agnes Calliste, to name a few. The work of these Canadian luminaries is supported with other substantial research, including Schissel and Wotherspoon's (2003) "The Legacy of Residential Schools," and O'Brien and Goldberg's (2000) "Lesbians and Gay Men Inside and Outside Families." However, the authors in this collection are over-represented by those from English Canada, and in particular, Toronto (York, OISE/UT and Ryerson are strongly represented, and Roxana Ng has been allotted two

articles). There was no effort to include papers that address inequalities in French Canada, so this text perpetuates the “two solitudes” of Canadian sociology. This draws attention to the need for the inclusion of translations of seminal French works for an English audience, or simply articles originally published in French. Missing, for example, are the works of sociologists who specialize in inequality from the Université de Montréal: Paul Bernard, Christopher McCall and Johanne Boisjoly.

Historically, inequality in Canada has often been studied as regional disparity, so much so that the metropolis-hinterland perspective theorized by Arthur K. Davis has become a cliché in Canadian sociology and anthropology. Yet the claims of this text to be sensitive to regional inequalities are unrealistic and a few gaps can be found in the collection. There is no work representing the inequalities extant in Arctic communities: Nunavut, the North West Territories, the Yukon or Labrador. The works of scholars in Atlantic Canada have been marginalized, with no representation from Newfoundland or New Brunswick; there is a focus on work from Western Canada, and even more conspicuously, scholars from Ontario universities.

The organizational shortcomings of this collection are restricted to (1) the lack of an index, which is useful to librarians, students and professors alike; and (2) there is no biographical information available on the contributors, so one is left to research authors’ backgrounds in order to evaluate their authority. Despite these relatively mild organizational weaknesses, this text, when compared to other recent work on inequality in Canada, fares extremely well. The writing is clear throughout and the research is generally of high quality. This collection of essays is recommended as a second or third year textbook in undergraduate sociology courses in inequality, and for general knowledge of the field, bearing in mind that supplemental readings for the territories, Atlantic Canada, and Quebec would be needed.

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