

Luann Good Gingrich, *Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2016. Pp. ix + 300. Softcover, \$24.70.

The United Nations estimates that there are currently 244 million international migrants representing an increase of forty-two

percent since 2000. Economic globalization has been identified as the root of this unprecedented transnational mobilization and Latin America has borne the brunt of this new world order known as neoliberalism. Luann Good Gingrich's monograph, *Out of Place*, explores the impact of these global processes on conservative and Old Colony Mennonite immigrants in Mexico and Bolivia. Despite the safety created by a culture of deep communalism, these Mennonites are also experiencing these economic challenges and are returning to Canada in record numbers. While immigration looms large within the core global Mennonite story, the Mennonites in Good Gingrich's study are unique within these broader narratives. Even though Mennonites have traditionally migrated within large extended families or even entire communities, these migrants arrive as individual families with some historic connection to Canada, many of whom claim citizenship. Drawing on qualitative research conducted between 2003 and 2013 in rural Ontario and Alberta, Good Gingrich focuses on these immigrants' experience as clients of Canada's social service system. Sixty-six immigrants were interviewed and all but four were conducted in Low German (*Plautdietsch*). The interviews were loosely structured and free flowing intended to allow the *Dietsche* immigrants the opportunity to give testimony on their experience with human services. Good Gingrich also interviewed fifty-five social service workers and employers from welfare, health and mental healthcare, child protection, employment services, education, housing, police and legal services (20). Through seven chapters that incorporate theory and lived experience, the author highlights the tensions and contradictions inherent within the immigration experience and social service system established to support it.

Employing the unique lens of social service providers, Good Gingrich explores the profound tension in world views experienced by these Mennonite migrants between the larger market driven Canadian society and the microcosm of deep communalism. While a majority of immigration scholarly literature focuses on the ways in which both the receiving nation and the newcomers work towards assimilation or inclusion, Good Gingrich argues that Canada's social services system is ironically designed to exclude, pointing out that the human services system operates as a market system of capital organized and maintained by four forms of social exclusion: namely, economic, spatial, sociopolitical and subjective (66). She notes that "the organizing principles of the social spaces that make up the state operate to propel processes of social exclusion and reinforce its outcomes. In these public spaces, the market

and the state merge to form a closed loop: a singular social field and system of capital. This is social exclusion by design” (64). This tension is compounded by the complex relationship Mennonites historically have had with government. Not only have Mennonites remained separate from the official nation-state, these particular Dietsche immigrants have also broken away from the colony heritage, often relinquishing their colony citizenship (174).

The core of Good Gingrich’s argument appears in chapter six where she explores the definition (and I might argue re-definition) of social exclusion. Gingrich argues that social exclusion is not about being left out, or even cast out. Rather, social exclusion concerns the relationships between people who are variously engaged with or *inside* society’s social institutions and systems which she defines as “the official procedures and everyday practices that function to draw individuals and groups inside to devalued and dispossessed places, and thus (re) produce, reinforce, and justify economic, spatial, sociopolitical, and subjective divides” (12). The Dietsche Mennonites, who appear to be working against their own self-interests in not connecting well with the social services workers and inclusion within Canadian society, are actually practicing a completely different set of life values, one that has been influenced by centuries of communalism and a commitment to simple life style (both characteristics currently threatened within affluent Mennonite Canadian society).

The implications of this project are rather impressive as Good Gingrich challenges the nature of social services and its relationship to the market driven economic system. It raises fundamental questions regarding the nature of social service system and the author aims to engage the imaginations of policy and practice responses that promote social justice, shared social responsibility and social inclusion. This book will appeal to a wide audience including scholars and social policy scholars and anyone who engages with the processes and practices that organize those social spaces and define social relations. This book is also intended for practitioners who identify with ethno-cultural minority groups who feel themselves to be neither in nor out in both social contexts (24). This work alerts us not only to the internal conflicts and social contradictions experienced by this particular group of immigrants but also to the broader systemic contradictions experienced by all migrants to this country. There are no easy solutions and this volume offers more questions than answers. While its conclusions will be verified by future comparisons with other immigrant experiences,

it challenges readers in the present to engage with migrants, working towards listening and learning together.

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