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Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age. Philip Kasinitz, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. Reviewed by Joanna Doran.

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Book Reviews

Philip Kasinitz, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway, *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008. \$49.95 hardcover

Immigration has been rising steadily since the 1960s and currently, over 33 million persons of foreign origin live in the United States, which is about 12% of the population. When their native born children are included, the proportion of people living in immigrant families rises to about a quarter of the total population. Social scientists have long been interested in how these children fare and how their future economic well-being is related to their cultural assimilation into American society. Many posited the straight line assimilation theory, where economic success eventually follows cultural assimilation into the mainstream. This model, popularly known by its "melting pot" metaphor, was canonical until proponents of an alternative segmented assimilation theory emerged in the 1990s. They countered that children of immigrants from impoverished neighborhoods will not succeed unless their parents actively prevent their assimilation into the poor urban communities in which most immigrants live. The children of immigrant families, they believe, are most likely to succeed if they are assimilated into the economic mainstream. More recently, others have questioned this conclusion arguing that cultural assimilation is less of an issue today because tolerance for diverse ethnic expression has increased.

Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway (2008) contribute to this debate in their study of children of Chinese, West Indian, Russian, South American and Dominican immigrants in New York City. They argue that the milieu in which these

young adults find themselves not only rewards a diversity of cultural expression, but offers practical assistance to the racial minorities through affirmative action programs. This results in what they call the second generation advantage, where the children of immigrants possess the unique ability to choose those cultural features they find most useful to promote their economic integration. As a result, the children of immigrants are often more successful than both their parents and their native born peers from poor communities. This guardedly optimistic interpretation forms the core theme of this book, paying particular attention to second generation immigrants as emerging adults. The first two thirds of the chapters follow the life cycle of these young second generation immigrants, while the last third focuses on key areas related to cultural assimilation.

The authors base their conclusions on data gathered through 3,415 semi-structured telephone interviews and 333 in-depth face-to-face interviews, as well as Census Microdata and ethnographies. The book is methodologically innovative for two reasons. First, the authors have developed a technique that allowed them to randomly select their sample. Second, they matched immigrant groups with non-immigrant control groups, controlling for racial and socio-economic characteristics. The use of control groups is surprisingly rare in such studies, perhaps because few immigrant groups have natural native counterparts. For instance, the authors' comparison of West Indian immigrants to African-Americans makes intuitive sense, while that between South Americans and Puerto Ricans is more problematic.

The largest limitation of this study is that it was undertaken during a time of economic boom and in one rather unusually cosmopolitan place, New York City. It would have been interesting to explore the extent to which second generation advantage is evident in the new gateway areas in which immigrants are increasingly settling, especially in a time of economic downturn. Another problem is that there was relatively little direct engagement with other studies in the field, especially since the third author of this volume had previously conducted an important study that illustrates the segmented assimilation approach. Waters' *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Lives and American Realities* examined West Indian immigrant

parents' struggle to guide their children's assimilation in New York just a few years earlier, making this a natural point of comparison. Despite these limitations, *Inheriting the City* is an impressive piece of scholarship and is extremely well written. It is highly recommended for social scientists and non-academic readers alike.

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Wim van Oorschot, Michael Opielka and Birgit Pfau-Effinger (Eds.) *Culture and the Welfare State: Values and Social Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Williston, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008. \$140.00, hardcover.

Comparative social policy scholarship has amassed a great deal of empirical information over the years to investigate the factors that account for the differences as well as similarities in the social policies of different countries. This research has spawned a variety of hypotheses which are by now widely known, if not widely accepted. These hypotheses posit the importance of industrialization, class conflict, electoral politics, ideologies, diffusion and a variety of other factors in the emergence of welfare systems in different countries. More recently, the importance of historical traditions in the emergence of durable welfare institutions has been stressed. Although an analysis of institutions leads logically to a better understanding of the role of culture in the emergence of social policies, scholarly work on the importance of culture in social policy has been neglected.

The editors of this wide-ranging book seek to contribute to a better understanding of the role of culture in social policy by bringing together a collection of original contributions that focus primarily on ways values and ideologies shape social policies in different parts of the world. The book's 14 chapters are divided into four parts, dealing respectively with the foundational ideologies that inform welfare thinking, particularly in Europe. Part two examines the role of values in specific countries and reaches, while part three focuses on cultural change in social welfare. The last part discusses popular values and beliefs about social welfare, mostly in the European context.