

Gill Bottomley and Marie de Lepervanche, eds. *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia*. Studies in Society: 24. (Winchester, MA: Allen and Unwin, 1984) 218 pp., \$29.95; \$13.50 paper.

North American social scientists can benefit from comparing immigration in their own countries to immigration in Australia, another former English colony bordering on the Pacific Ocean. Bottomley and de Lepervanche have assembled a very useful set of theoretical discussions and data-based studies which provide a starting point for such comparisons. The collection focuses on the relationship of immigrants to the institutions and ideologies of the dominant culture in Australia. The underlying perspective is Marxist, although this is not made explicit by every contributor. In addition to a historical review of immigration policies, the authors present critiques of policies and the social science theories that go with them, as well as descriptive and analytical accounts of immigrants in particular institutional contexts such as labor, law and education.

The authors are anxious to remind the reader of the interrelatedness of three concepts listed by the title, but priority is given to class over ethnicity or gender as the concept with the greatest explanatory value. The theoretical status of ethnicity is stated most directly by Kakakios in van der Velden: “. . . ethnicity, as specifically ideological form, does not serve as a basis for explanation but itself requires explanation . . . [We begin with] particular class relations within the migrant communities and their political and ideological structuring within the context of the economic processes and class relations of Australian capitalism in general” (p. 145). While gender is the focus of two papers and is incorporated into many of the discussions, it is never integrated theoretically into the Marxist perspective encompassing class and ethnicity. It is disappointing that the authors did not make a greater effort to correct this serious shortcoming in many Marxist analyses.

The title also suggests a general and inclusive discussion of ethnicity, class and gender in Australia. But the reader learns nothing of ethnic relations within the numerically and economically dominant English-speaking segment of Australian society because this group is assumed to be homogeneous. The authors have chosen not to discuss Aborigines for sound analytical and political reasons. The exclusion of these groups reduces the scope the reader expects of the work. Nevertheless, the authors argue that a Marxist account of Australian immigration is needed, and for that purpose their omissions are justifiable.

The articles in the first part of the book set the stage by presenting the major issues of immigration to be discussed (Collins), the historical sequence of Australian policies and their theoretical underpinnings (Jakubowicz), and the impact of the dominant ideologies on immigrants (Morrissey). These writers present cogent arguments, although the force

of Morrissey's point is reduced by a too-abrupt ending. Lepervanche offers a variety of criticism of sociobiological theories of ethnicity, attacking especially well the contradiction in sociobiological analyses of miscegenation and the ethnic phenomenon. While the theory in this section is illustrated with Australian data, it is not tied to them and can be readily applied to immigration issues in other societies.

The papers in the second part of the book are more descriptive. Ethnic diversity is discussed in terms of the shortcomings of multiculturalism in educational policy (Kalantzis and Cope) and the lessening of ethnic divisions in Australian trade unions (Tracy). Immigrant women are compared to their sisters in their countries of origin by Bottomley, and Martin demonstrates once again the inadequacy of Marxist accounts of production when they omit reproduction. The three remaining papers focus on specific immigrant communities and adaptations to particular institutional contexts: self-perception of class membership among Sicilians (Hampel), interrelations of politics and class among Greeks (Kakakios and van der Velden), and articulations of Islamic and Australian law in the Lebanese community (Humphrey). Bottomley's article illustrates the unfortunate practice of applying the label "migrant" to people who are described as settled rather than in the process of migrating, so that the migration process is, in fact, not considered. These descriptive articles offer intriguing data for the theoretical perspective being considered.

Clear writing, relatively free of jargon, enhances the book's appeal as a text. Background lectures on Australian society would be a necessary prelude to its use in North American classrooms. The editors could have strengthened its potential as a text by concluding with a short summary of the advantages and disadvantages of their approach and indications of further problems to which it might be applied. This is a valuable collection. Most of the work is not theoretically innovative, but it does break ground in applying the Marxist model to the Australian context.

— Mary A. Ludwig
California State University, Fresno