

## Recensions – Book Reviews

*A Minority in a Changing Society: The Portuguese Communities of Quebec*, by J. António Alpalhão and Victor M. P. Da Rosa. Research Monographs in Social Sciences, No. 6. University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa. 335 pages, tables, bibliography, subject index, author index.

The translation of *Les Portugais du Québec* (1979) is a welcome addition to the English literature on immigrants to Quebec. Anglophones need to understand the position of “third language” immigrants who face not only the dilemma of having left home for an uncertain future, but also the serious problems arising from social changes in Quebec. The book fills a gap for those interested in the well-being of immigrants as well as providing a foundation for more research. For Portuguese readers of English this book will provide an opportunity to learn much about the immigration of their compatriots to Quebec.

Alpalhão and Da Rosa have produced a comprehensive account of Portuguese migration and adaptation to Quebec society, using a vast array of sources on the Portuguese as well as on Quebec. The bibliography of published and unpublished material in several languages is invaluable for researchers in migration studies. In addition to extensive use of these materials, participant observation and interviews provided the authors with further insights into the Portuguese communities of Quebec.

As stated in Part One, Portuguese emigration has been a response to massive suffering and oppression since the 17th century, scattering the Portuguese throughout the globe. Although emigration during the 1960's must be seen in the context of an oligarchic and absolutist Portuguese state, people have continued to leave Portugal since the 1974 revolution. Thus, Portuguese immigration to Canada is also due to the attractions of high wages, advantages of social security and good prospects for the children of immigrants. Quebec is chosen due to the «presence of and testimony by immigrants already established there, to its politico-social image and to advertising abroad» (p. 37). The book may portray Portuguese migration as a bed of roses but the accompanying thorns are not ignored: «In a system which consciously exposes workers to the exploitation of man by man, we must recognize the complicity between governments which export their manpower and those which accept this manpower» (p. 30). The authors thus plead for recognition by governments of the potential and actual problems so that the immigrants may adapt to Quebec society and the Québécois to the Portuguese immigrants.

Having set out the problem, the authors show in Part Two how extensive the Portuguese presence in Canada has been, even providing a list of place names of

Portuguese derivation (e.g., Anticosti, Labrador, Bay of Fundy). Brief examination of some founding migrants from as early as the 17th century show the importance of Portuguese pioneers and the degree to which they have become Québécois, with names like Rodrigue and Portugais. In order to assess the similarities and differences between the milieu of origin and that of Quebec, climate, history, ethnic composition, population, language, family and religion are compared. The image of the Portuguese as nostalgic and resigned as expressed in the «saudade» is accepted, but the other side of their character is also presented. As one immigrant to Canada put it: «The Portuguese is joyful. He dresses gloomily but his soul is brightly coloured. He weeps easily but he loves to laugh, talk and fraternise...» (p. 97). The Québécois are somewhat ethnocentric at the same time as their desires to please and sociability attract the Portuguese who appreciate the good breeding, hospitality and democratic spirit of the Québécois (pp. 99-100). Alpalhão and Da Rosa warn against generalization at the same time as they use general characteristics in a sensitive manner to identify factors which affect the "mutual adaptation of the two peoples". Favourable factors are the varied ethnic population of Quebec which is open to new lifestyles, the common Latin origin of French and Portuguese languages, and the similarities in family and religion. Unfavourable factors are the cold climate, the traditionally closed Quebec society and the present political instability. The authors conclude that "the peoples of Portugal and of Quebec are sufficiently different to be distinguishable one from the other and similar enough to be able to live together" p. 115). Further, Alpalhão and Da Rosa suggest that the Portuguese presence in Quebec calls for adaptation, not assimilation. The Portuguese have much to offer besides their labour, but for the process to be advantageous for everyone, the problems of adaptation of the immigrants need to be understood.

Part Three, therefore, is a comprehensive examination of the Portuguese presence in Quebec. Details on family life, education and culture, work and leisure, health and welfare, economic development and migration, immigration policy, religion and community organizations constitute the bulk of the book. Here Alpalhão and Da Rosa examine the problems of Portuguese immigrants as well as the ways in which immigrants have changed as a result of migration.

Part Four includes a typology summarizing Portuguese immigration to Quebec and a series of goals and hopes for the future. Although some aspects of the migration are clarified by the typology, it does little justice to the richness of other parts of the book. For example, the authors state that social structures may be different or identical. Quebec's social structure is clearly different from Portugal's, but few modern migrations involve exchange between similar social structures. As Alpalhão and Da Rosa suggest (p. 199) modern migrations occur due to structural differences in the political economy of development. A typology which placed the Portuguese-Quebec movement in the context of capitalist development might have been more appropriate. Furthermore, there is an apparent contradiction between the structural differences and the many cultural similarities between Portuguese and Québécois identified in Part Two, but culture is not a part of their typology. In general, the conclusions are well presented and the goals provide a meaningful and realistic guide for action.

Alpalhão and Da Rosa have produced a fascinating, multi-dimensional study of migration. This book should serve as a model for researchers who hope their studies

will affect government policies, organizations serving immigrants as well as public responses to immigrants. For this Alpalhão and Da Rosa are to be congratulated. By sympathetically representing the Portuguese culture of Quebec, they too are "guardian[s] of the past and beacon[s] for the future» (p. 288).

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