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**Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Ethel Tungohan, and Christina Gabriel,
*Containing Diversity: Canada and the Politics of Immigration in the
21st Century***

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Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Ethel Tungohan, and Christina Gabriel, *Containing Diversity: Canada and the Politics of Immigration in the 21st Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023), 336pp. Paperback. C\$68.95. ISBN: 978-1-4426-0905-4.

The politics of citizenship, immigration, and multiculturalism in Canada in the twenty-first century has witnessed important shifts and currently exhibits many paradoxes. Polls today demonstrate considerable pro-immigration and diversity sentiment overall for which Canada is well-known, but also polarization on the right influenced by the rise of misinformation and right-wing populism from both domestic and transnational sources, with at times deadly effects. In the years since 2015, Canada's Liberal government has increased permanent immigration levels significantly and frequently spoken to the importance of providing protection for refugees, and more recently the need to recognize the 'essential' work of many migrants and immigrants amidst the Covid-19 pandemic by providing further 'pathways' to permanent residence. However, in many ways like their Conservative predecessors (2006-2015), such increases are greatly outstripped by an increased reliance on programs featuring more precarious forms of temporary migration and intensified efforts to prevent asylum seekers from reaching Canada, as witnessed in the recent expansion of the Canada-United States of America (USA) Safe Third Country Agreement to apply between border crossings, for example. There have also been glaring inequalities in the treatment of different refugee populations in need of resettlement, which is particularly visible when the restrictions imposed on racialized refugees from the Global South is compared to the rightly welcoming treatment recently accorded to Ukrainian refugees.

While Canada's political left, centre, and mainstream right often employ language praising the benefits of immigration and diversity, whether migrants and refugees under different bureaucratic categories can become permanent residents and citizens remains a politically contested terrain of tremendous significance for hundreds of thousands of members and prospective members of Canadian society. From 'below,' these battles are in many cases being led by migrants and immigrants themselves, including increasingly frequent mobilizations for 'status for all,' as the pendulum of inclusion and exclusion sees unfulfilled opportunities for swings towards inclusion in this realm, particularly emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic.

How do we make sense of these contemporary paradoxes and the wider politics of immigration in Canada this century? Fortunately, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Ethel Tungohan, and Christina Gabriel's important new volume *Containing Diversity* offers many compelling thoughts and explanations. Even when not offering definitive answers, they helpfully conclude their volume by framing and calling for research into some of the most important questions for the politics of belonging in Canada today, such as concerning the impacts of increased xenophobic movements, the potentials of progressive coalitions, and global climate change.

Bookmarking their analysis between 9/11 and the Covid-19 pandemic, in their own words, the authors 'highlight how racialized and exclusionary trends – the hallmark of containing diversity – find expression in immigration, multicultural practice, and the politics of citizenship in the period 2021-2021.' Drawing on frameworks of intersectionality, critical and feminist political economy, and feminist scholarship on care, they offer compelling lenses for how selective inclusion in a formally multicultural settler colonial state must be thought through and confronted 'through an ethical frame.' In doing so they refuse to be restrained intellectually by existing bureaucratic immigration categories in a manner that insists on considering

and foregrounding 'what ought to be,' while recognizing the humanity of all immigrants, migrants, and displaced persons.

In not accepting such terms of debate, the authors challenge methodological nationalism, including by putting Canada and immigrants and migrants and the policies that impact them in their international and transnational context. Illustrative of this is their chapter on family migration as seen as 'undesirable' in the eyes of the Canadian state in neoliberal terms – an area where diversity is certainly contained rather than facilitated. That chapter considers questions of family – the right to family and the treatment of family members – across several migrant worker and immigration categories. It also, as in other chapters, includes the voices of migrants, immigrants, and their campaigns and struggles.

In engaging in this conjunctural analysis that explores the at times contradictory impacts of securitization and neoliberalism on the lives of immigrants and migrants, Abu-Laban, Tungohan, and Gabriel explicitly place Canada in its historical as well as international context both early and throughout the volume. They then chronicle and offer substantive policy and political analysis of refugee (Chapter 3), 'skilled' immigration (Chapter 4), migrant worker (Chapter 5), family migration (Chapter 6), and citizenship and multiculturalism frameworks and policies (Chapter 7). Though primarily focused on the present moment, the authors remind us that 'the process of containing diversity is not confined to particular leaders or particular times, but has resonance in Canadian history and its formation and evolution as a settler colony.'

While there are important differences, subsequent developments to the publication of the volume that contain diversity that the book's framework can readily help the reader understand are of the type that frequently leave informed observers questioning themselves as to how fundamental the differences between Canada's Conservative and Liberal parties are in many important respects, and where to turn for inspiration and new thinking about how to overcome their limits. Such developments – or lack of developments- include the 'modernization' of the Canada-USA Safe Third Country Agreement, the Liberal government's failure to follow through on promises to update and offer a more inclusive citizenship guide and eliminate citizenship fees, and the continued vast expansion of migrant worker programs rather than offering the more secure and rights-respecting option of permanent residence on arrival. Anticipating this need, in a chapter entitled 'towards a politics of global and social justice,' they offer just such reflections, and what alternative values might lead to a more inclusive society and world.

While the specialist in each area of citizenship, immigration, or multiculturalism in Canada might like to see some further depth devoted to a particular sub-topic, the breadth and depth of analysis these authors achieve in not further lengthening a 336 page volume is truly impressive. Thus, critiques for such reasons are more likely to be the cardinal sin of the reviewer requesting the book they might have written rather than praising the excellent one they encounter.

In addition to both its new arguments and impressive synthesis of existing literature that will appeal to both new and senior scholars, it is easy to envision how this volume will be an excellent teaching resource for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses. *Containing Diversity* would work well as a core text addressing the politics or sociology of migration in Canada whose chapters each address a core theme, or as an assigned book for students to review and contend with its framework. Of significant appeal for pedagogical purposes, Chapter 8 explores, contrasts, and critiques both older communitarian 'closed border' perspectives as

well as liberal and cosmopolitan perspectives before moving to more contemporary scholarship on no-borders, open borders, Indigenous, and solidarity and care-based perspectives. These frameworks, accompanied by concluding reflections and pressing questions for future research will leave readers motivated to deepen their own work and hoping for future collaborations between these scholars, in addition to the already impressive and important bodies of work each has already produced.

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