***The Warmth of the Welcome: Is Atlantic Canada a Home Away From Home for Immigrants?* Edited by Evangelia Tastsoglou, Alexandra Dobrowolsky, and Barbara Cottrell (Cape Breton University Press).**

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*The Warmth of the Welcome: Is Atlantic Canada a Home Away From Home for Immigrants?* edited by Evangelia Tastsoglou, Alexandra Dobrowolsky, and Barbara Cottrell, three well-known Canadian immigration scholars, makes an important contribution to our understanding of the challenges Atlantic Canada faces in the attraction and retention of immigrants. It is the authors’ intention “to provide an array of engaging, accessible analyses from across the region that helps us to outline and assess how to extend a more substantively “warm” welcome to newcomers, and how to truly make Atlantic Canada a lasting “home away from home” for immigrants”. The focus of the book is not only timely but critical.   For years Atlantic Canadian scholars and others (most notably the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy) have pointed to the worrisome state of Atlantic Canada’s demographic and economic future.  Immigration has repeatedly been identified not only as an answer to demographic shortfalls but also imperative to the economic health of the region.  To date, recognition has not led to effective action and our ability to attract and retain immigrants has consistently been mediocre at best and of considerable concern. As such, this edited volume takes the bull by the horns as it were by grappling directly with questions that we should not and cannot ignore.   Are Atlantic Canadians as open to immigration as we espouse to be?  Are we politically and systemically appropriately responsive to the needs of immigrants?  Is our perceived “friendliness” actually welcoming?

The volume is a much needed departure from the mainstream economic/labour market focus of much immigration related academic research and public discourse.   Collectively the authors recognize that creating a home away from home for newcomers is an individual, community and systemic responsibility. As such, a number of the authors point to the importance of acknowledging and addressing the everyday practices of social exclusion, racism and blatant discrimination that exist throughout the region. The chapter by Baldachino is particularly forceful and eloquent on this point. Other authors, most notably Yax-Fraser and Cottrell as well as Tastsoglou, Cottrell and Jaya call for appropriate and culturally responsive community supports which take into account, among other factors, the often overlooked gendered nature of immigration. Still others (Ramos and Yoshida; Dobrowolsky, Bryan and Gardiner Barber) stress the importance of policy development that recognizes the need to balance the social and cultural well-being of immigrants with their economic contributions and needs. Overall the authors conclude that no, we are not individually, collectively or systemically particularly welcoming of immigrants and that little will change unless we openly acknowledge the problem as such.

*The Warmth of the Welcome* is a must-read for Atlantic Canadian (or at least Maritime) politicians and policy makers.  While not suggesting quick fixes, collectively the chapters provide thoughtful and useful insights into the multiple dimensions of settlement decision-making and newcomer satisfaction.  If I were to have one criticism it would be that while the editors spend considerable time in the Introduction worrying whether one can talk about Atlantic Canada as a distinct region with a unitary identity, in-depth case studies from Newfoundland-Labrador are glaringly absent from the volume. It is unfortunate since the chapters by Wilson-Forsberg and Hanson are particularly insightful as to the critical importance of localized active and engaged manifestations of a welcoming, not just friendly, community.