Rust & Reinvention: Im/migration and urban change in the American Rust Belt

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Abstract

Immigration represents a promising counter-narrative for Rust Belt cities in the 21st century. Increasingly, both immigrants and refugees are part of the comeback stories of Northeastern and Midwestern cities from Buffalo, to Dayton and Pittsburgh. This review explores recent research in urban geography and allied disciplines focusing on the international migration patterns, processes, and politics reshaping the urban geography of the American Rust Belt. Recent research sheds crucial light on how im/migrant lives are reshaping urban landscapes of Rust Belt cities, and conversely, how local immigration policies in these cities are rearranging the uneven geographies of immigrant receptivity across the U.S. Overall, this review highlights the limitations of the singular spatial imaginary of the Rust Belt advanced previously by many urbanists. Rather, this review illustrates the rich, complex, and tangled contemporary spatial nuances associated with international migration in this region. These spatial nuances are complicated by increasingly exclusionary immigration policy and rhetoric at the federal level since January of 2017.

1 | Rust & Reinvention

> *Old buildings are getting refurbished. Construction cranes bob up and down. And at the center of town is a long-vacant historic Methodist church that has been renovated and converted into a beautiful mosque – a symbol of the new Utica – Tanvi Misra (2019), "The Cities Refugees Saved."*

Human migration is a central dimension of urban change (Foote & Walter, 2017; Poon & Yin, 2014; Storper & Scott, 2009; Storper, 2018) and this paper examines this relationship from the perspective of cities in the American Rust Belt, the former manufacturing heartland of the U.S. This region includes cities built on the automotive industry in southeast Michigan, northwest Ohio and eastern Indiana (i.e., Detroit, Toledo) and on metals in southwest Pennsylvania and northeast Ohio (i.e., Pittsburgh, Cleveland).

The Rust Belt is popularly understood as a region "defined by loss" – of industry, population, and status (see Piiparinen, 2013) and the rustbelt-to-sunbelt shift has been a longstanding theme of research in economic geography (Poon & Yin, 2014; Storper & Scott, 2009; Suarez-Villa, 2002). Population decline is a hallmark of most Rust Belt cities, a consequence of regional economic reversal, white middle-class suburbanization, urban core disinvestment (Coppola, 2019; Hackworth, 2018; Morckel, 2017), and the intensification of neoliberalism (Peck et al., 2013). Some Rust Belt cities have experienced sustained population loss since 1950 and were also among the hardest hit by the subprime mortgage crisis (Beauregard, 2013 Hartt, 2018; Peck, 2012). As the poster child of decline, Detroit is often highlighted as an extreme case, but East Saint Louis, Gary, and Cleveland also shrunk by half during the same period (Hackworth, 2015; Schindler, 2016). These cities have struggled with pervasive property abandonment and housing loss due to demolition (Hackworth, 2016;

Thompson & de Beurs, 2018). In recent years, geographers have underscored the link between population loss and the "deep spatialization of the class and racial differences and discrimination structuring U.S. society" (Bledsoe & Wright, 2019; Coppola, 2019:238; Hackworth, 2018; Safransky, 2018).

Increasingly, however, the narrative surrounding the Rust Belt has shifted from rust to reinvention. This reinvention narrative surrounds the new so-called brain belt emerging around universities and health care (Agtmael & Bakker, 2016). Promises of a transition from "rustbelt to robot belt" are born out by data showing a concentration of robotics-related employment in the region (Leigh & Kraft, 2018; Rotman, 2018). Other commentators note the return of millennial generation boomerangs – the "grandchildren of steelworkers" – who are embracing the urban lifestyles rejected by their parents and an urban identity based on industrialism (Florida, 2017; McLelland, 2013). "Rust belt chic" has become a viable place-marketing tool to attract younger generations seeking "authenticity," "grit," and "faded grandeur" (Gregory, 2019; Piiparinen, 2013. These comeback stories, however, are complicated by persistent patterns of acute racialized poverty and the rejection of the Democratic Party's "cosmopolitan and multicultural order" by black and white working class voters in the 2016 election (McQuarrie, 2017:123). Given these approaches, however, important questions remain. For example, where do international migrants fit within these geographies of rust and reinvention?

Immigration is often overlooked as a critical dimension of change in the urban Rust Belt, because most Rust Belt cities have small foreign-born populations. They have also not received substantial new influxes as sunbelt "new destination" cities like Charlotte and Phoenix did in the 1990s (Singer, 2015). But local governments and non-profit organizations in Rust Belt cities have become notably active pro-immigration advocates in the last ten years. Indeed, twenty-nine cities and counties in the region have joined Welcoming America's network, a national nonpartisan network promoting immigrant integration (see Figure 1). Through the Welcoming Economies Global Network, a string of actors has united in the potential of newcomers to reverse the economic fortunes of this region. Some cities have sought to retain international students after they graduate and have promoted refugee-led neighborhood revitalization. As the quote above illustrates, the media have celebrated the potential of immigrants and refugees to "inject life into the Rust Belt" (Misra, 2019; Wainer, 2013). At the same time, these promises are complicated by increasingly exclusionary immigration policy and rhetoric at the federal level since January of 2017.

[Figure 1]

This review examines im/migration and urban change in the American Rust Belt. I use the term "im/migration" as an umbrella concept encompassing very different experiences of international migration to the US, including formally admitted immigrants, refugees, undocumented migrants, and holders of temporary non-immigrant visas. Following Mavroudi and Nagel (2016:4), I organize this review around the "patterns, processes, and politics" of migration, asking: (a) what are the observed patterns of im/migration driven urban change across the Rust Belt? (b) what micro-scale processes associated with international migration have been observed in Rust Belt cities? and; (c) what are the urban politics surrounding im/migration and welcoming in the region? I take these questions up in Sections 2-4, with the final section highlighting new directions for future research. Overall, recent research on im/migration to the Rust Belt highlights the limitations of the singular spatial imaginary of the Rust Belt advanced by many

urbanists. Rather, this review illustrates the rich, complex, and tangled contemporary spatial nuances associated with international migration in this region.

2 | Patterns: Geographies of Immigration & Refugee Resettlement in the Rust Belt

Im/migration has often been ignored as a driver of change in American Rust Belt cities. But a macro-level examination of international migration patterns shows the limitations of thinking of the Rust Belt singularly as a region defined by population loss. One of the main reasons for this neglect is that today, Rust Belt metro areas have foreign-born shares below the U.S. average of 13.7 percent. While the larger industrial cities (Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis) were major immigrant gateways with thriving European immigrant enclaves in the early 20th century,[1] their foreign-born shares have been lower than the national average every decade since 1930 (Singer, 2015). In 2017, immigrants comprised less than 6.6 percent of the total Metropolitan Statistical Area populations in 2017 in most Rust Belt cities (ACS, 2018). Singer's (2015) typology of immigrant gateways classifies large Rust Belt cities (except Columbus) as either "former gateways" (with higher immigrant shares than the national average during the early 20th century), or as "low immigration metros" (with foreign born populations consistently lower than the U.S. average during the 20th century). [2] This categorization, while helpful, however, misses several spatial nuances highlighted by recent research in geography.

[Table 1]

First, today, immigration represents a promising counter narrative for Rust Belt cities (Mallach, 2018). Across the Midwest, 37 percent of all metro population growth during the 2012 to 2017 period is attributed to immigrants. Comparatively, newcomers comprised half of the growth in Akron, and a quarter of all growth in Cincinnati and Milwaukee (Paral, 2017). In mid-sized Midwest and Northeastern metros, foreign-born population growth outpaced native-born growth from 2000 to 2013 (Kelly et al., 2017:455). Geographers have also highlighted shifts in the characteristics of immigrants in Rust Belt cities. Poon and Yin (2014) show, for example, that from 1980 to 2010, Rust Belt cities' foreign-born populations became *more* educated relative to sunbelt destinations. All but two Rust Belt cities saw increases in both their educated immigrant and educated native-born populations. Significantly, in Akron, Dayton-Springfield, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Toledo, the skilled immigrant population more than doubled during this period. These findings challenge assumptions about Rust Belt human capital losses, illustrating

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[1] By the 1930s, these cities were home to significant migration-related diversity, as immigrants were drawn to modern industrial economic opportunity (Dieterlen, 2015). Researchers have examined the dispersal of European ethnic enclaves, such as Akron's Greek community (Constantinou, 2007), which waned with the suburbanization of these immigrant populations and the eventual absence of new influxes of these groups.

[2] Former gateways in the Rust Belt include Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. Low immigration metros include Akron, Cincinnati, Dayton, Grand Rapids, Louisville, Syracuse, Toledo, and Youngstown. Singer's (2015) typology includes only the largest 104 metro areas in the U.S. in 2014. Columbus is an exception within the region, as it is classified as a minor-emerging gateway.

the imperative to explore "human capital dynamics in deindustrialized and peripheral cities" (Poon & Yin, 2014:295).

Second, im/migration-driven urban change is happening unevenly. Table 1 summarizes the foreign born share and total population for selected Rust Belt cities. As Table 1 shows, there is considerable variation in their foreign born population shares. In one set of cities (Hamtramck, Dearborn, Utica, and Ithaca), the foreign born population is greater than the U.S. average of 13.4 percent. In another set of cities (Akron, Detroit, Dayton), the foreign born population is less than half the national average. In some places, suburban municipalities are driving change at the metropolitan level, such as newcomers from Bangladesh and Yemen in Detroit-Hamtramck's Banglatown (Mallach, 2018). In contrast, in Syracuse, im/migration to the urban core is driving change. The divergence of these trends illustrates the need to cast a finer grained lens on former and low immigration metropolitan areas. It also raises the importance of looking beyond the largest metro areas when examining migration-driven urban change. As Table 1 shows, some the largest foreign born shares are found in smaller urban cores with total populations of less than 50,000.

Third, refugee resettlement is a significant dimension of urban change in many Rust Belt cities. While the Sun Belt states of California and Texas received the largest numbers of refugees in recent years, New York, Ohio, and Michigan are ranked among the top ten refugee resettlement states (Krogstad 2019). Researchers have emphasized the importance of the Great Lakes region in the U.S. refugee resettlement landscape, including the role that refugees have played in stabilizing population decline in its cities (Brown et al., 2016; Housel et al., 2018). Significant refugee (and former refugee) populations are present in many non-traditional destinations in the Rust Belt that do not otherwise receive substantial numbers of international migrants, a geography owed to the distribution of voluntary agencies (many faith-based) across the country (Forrest & Brown, 2014; Mott, 2010). Bose and Grigri (2018) examine patterns of approved resettlement capacity across small and mid-sized U.S. cities as determined by the refugee resettlement agencies and the federal government from 2012 to 2016. In the Midwest, refugee flows are a major metropolitan phenomenon, with most states prioritizing their largest cities (i.e., Columbus in Ohio and Indianapolis in Indiana). Detroit is an exception, with no refugees approved for resettlement within the city proper, although Troy, Dearborn, Southfield, and Clinton Township (all in the Greater Detroit area) approved significant refugee resettlement. This resettlement pattern aligns with the non-profit members of Welcoming America ringing Detroit shown in Figure 1.

This dynamic is particularly apparent in small and mid-sized cities and towns in the Northeast. Buffalo and Syracuse resettle more refugees than major immigrant gateways like New York City and Boston (Bose & Grigri, 2017). According to a 2016 study, Onondaga County in New York had the third highest per capita refugee acceptance rate in the U.S. (Baker, 2016; Hutchinson, 2017). In Erie, Pennsylvania, approved refugee capacity makes up almost half of the city's total foreign born population. Unlike in the Midwest, smaller northeastern cities like Utica that are not in the vicinity of major metro areas are also significant receivers of refugees (Bose & Grigri, 2017). Utica and Syracuse have been dubbed the "cities that refugees saved" because from 2005 to 2017 these cities would have experienced losses in their total populations were it not for New Americans (Graybill, 2012; Misra, 2019). While small in number, these populations are highly diverse: refugees resettled in Onondaga County alone speak 80 languages (Morland et al., 2016).

Fourth, the secondary migration of refugees in other destinations in the U.S. is also playing an ongoing role in some Rust Belt cities. Columbus, for example, has the largest Somali population in the U.S. because of the secondary migration of Somali refugees. Mott's (2010) study of Somali refugees in Columbus emphasized the importance of social networks, including the reputation of the local voluntary organizations and the presence of the existing Somali community, alongside affordable housing as key pull factors drawing former refugees to Columbus. Dayton, similarly, has benefitted from the in-migration of Ahiska Turkish refugees who settled elsewhere in the US but were attracted to Dayton by low-cost housing and work opportunities in trucking (Housel et al., 2018). In St. Louis, the growing Bosnian community on the city's south side attracted former Bosnian refugees from across the U.S. The city now hosts 70,000 Bosnians and Bosnian Americans, the largest Bosnian diaspora population in the country (Hume, 2015).

Fifth, while im/migrants may mitigate the vulnerabilities experienced by post-industrial cities, including population decline, shrinking tax bases or the out-migration of the creative class, they are also implicated in the vulnerability of these locations. This vulnerability is particularly apparent with refugee flows which federal policy changes can disrupt (Graybill, 2012). Since January of 2017, the Trump administration has drastically cut the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, slashing admissions from 84,995 in 2016 to 22,491 in 2018 (Migration Policy Institute, 2019). Alongside these new admission ceilings, this administration has also moved to restrict new refugee flows (and federal funding) to all local offices who resettled less than 100 refugees in 2017 (Refugee Council USA, 2019). These cuts have had dramatic consequences for the small Rust Belt cities and towns which have not only joined the Welcoming America program, but have also transformed their housing and employment strategies around refugee flows. Without new flows of refugees (and the federal dollars that accompany them), local offices in Akron, Columbus, Erie, Ithaca, Pittsburgh, Toledo, and Youngstown have been forced to close (ibid). Staff layoffs, stalled property developments, labor shortages, and health clinic closures represent just some of the local economic impact of the systematic dismantling of the U.S. resettlement infrastructure (Misra, 2019). These changes are part and parcel of the deepening anti-immigrant xenophobia and restrictive migration regime of the Trump administration that have especially impacted refugees and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries.

In summary, research on the patterns of im/migration in Rust Belt cities has highlighted an overall increase in the skilled immigrant population, the uneven geographies of arrival and settlement across the region, and the significant role played by refugee resettlement and the migration of former refugees to particular cities. In the next section, I consider how these patterns are playing out within the everyday landscapes of the urban Rust Belt, focusing on the process of place-making.

3 | Processes: Im/migrant Lives and Rust Belt Urban Landscapes

Research has also examined the socio-economic processes of im/migration *within* Rust Belt cities. Namely, this research has examined how im/migrants confront or engage with other systemic challenges that Rust Belt cities face such as deindustrialized labor markets and structural problems of deindustrialization like housing crises and property abandonment. Drawing on focus groups with Liberian immigrants and refugees in Pittsburgh, Covington-Ward (2017) illustrates how migrants navigate the everyday dynamics of a deindustrialized city in their working lives. Recent Liberian immigrants have sought employment in low-wage heath care

jobs, a product of Pittsburgh's bifurcated post-industrial labor market. Covington-Ward also documents the mismatch between the expectations of Liberian immigrants about the U.S., and the reality of the state of infrastructure in Pittsburgh.

Other research has examined the landscape changes associated with the place-making processes of im/migration, including neighborhood revitalization and the use of vacant residential, commercial, and industrial spaces, through fieldwork and participant observation. Hume (2015), for example, documents the socio-spatial dimensions of refugee resettlement over two decades in St. Louis. By the early 2000s, the area around Bevo Mill, a working class neighborhood on the south side formerly home to German immigrants, had been dubbed "Little Bosnia." Refugees occupied abandoned housing, started businesses in empty storefronts, and found jobs in light manufacturing that had gone unfilled due to population loss. Hume illustrates how Bosnian newcomers and Bosnian-Americans changed the city's cultural landscape, including the language of signage and the visibility of cultural symbols. As she shows, many Bosnian-owned businesses displayed the fleur-de-lis, which coincidentally is both the Bosnia's national- and St. Louis' municipal symbol. These newcomers bought into the housing market relatively quickly, in some cases pooling resources to make down payments. By 2011, as many as three-quarters of Bosnians in St. Louis owned their own homes. These patterns of shifting homeownership introduced subtle changes in the cultural landscape of St. Louis, such as the appearance of backyard smokehouses in the Bevo Mill area. Ozay describes the process by which refugee restore unused or abandoned residential, commercial, and residential spaces as "resettlement urbanism" (forthcoming). Writing about Buffalo, he notes, "resettlement urbanism is a byproduct of these multifaceted practices – an opportunistic form of unpremeditated urbanism that relies on, transforms, and amplifies as-found urban assets like affordable housing and commercial space, institutions, and public transit." He highlights the "cosmopolitan ethical framework" that faith-based institutions and other actors in the refugee resettlement field have provided for Rust Belt cities. These institutions enable refugee resettlement to operate as a "viable albeit imperfect force for rebuilding distressed cities."

Elsewhere, immigrants' adaptive re-use of abandoned industrial spaces has also spurred neighborhood change. Karam (2017) points to the emergence of a religious reuse district in Hamtramck, Michigan through the conversion of empty warehouses, churches, and car dealerships into Mosques by Muslim immigrants. These place-making efforts have raised property values in the surrounding neighborhoods because congregants wish to live in walking distance of the mosque and commercial areas. The strict prayer schedule provides "round-the-clock-eyes on the street" (Karam, 2017:259). As Karam notes, these developments have met opposition from long-time residents, who object to hearing the call to prayer via loudspeakers, the fact that religious institutions do not contribute to the tax base of the city, and their potential to curb other kinds of re-investment because of the zoning changes they entail. These adjustments are significant in a region with pronounced infrastructure and environmental challenges stemming deindustrialization, and suggest landscape change on many fronts, from the built environment to the sonic geographies of particular neighborhoods.

Along similar lines, other scholars have pointed to the reuse of vacant urban spaces for agriculture as an important strategy to help newcomers navigate the food systems of Rust Belt cities while mitigating property abandonment. Urban gardening projects have emerged across the region that repurpose vacant property for use in im/migrant-focused community agriculture, including in Buffalo, Cleveland, Rock Island, St. Louis, and Syracuse (Ferguson, 2019; Judelsohn et al., 2017; Hardman, 2017; Petrin, 2018). Strunk and Richardson (2019) examine the

involvement of refugees in urban gardens in Rock Island, Illinois. They demonstrate how urban gardens can function as "potentially inclusive places that can promote new understandings of landscapes, agriculture, food, and even urban sustainability" (2019:829). After two decades of population decline, Rock Island's population stabilized with the arrival of new refugee populations from South and Southeast Asia and Africa, who settled in its West End. Rock Island's capacity to provide services to these new populations was limited, and the formal planning process was slow to change. Refugee groups, often with the assistance of resettlement organizations, began using vacant lots for agriculture, introducing new culturally-important plant species like roselle and experimenting with cultivation strategies such as terracing. Strunk and Richardson, however, also highlight the fraught relations that surround urban gardens, amongst long-time midwestern residents and various groups of newcomers that have different ideas of what a garden should look like and produce. Drawing on their observations of the gardens and interviews with garden users, they challenge the idea that the garden is a site of harmonious social interaction. Instead, they demonstrate how urban gardens in Rock Island constitute spaces of cross-cultural agricultural learning, where, because of language barriers, connections are made by observing others' plots and farming strategies.

In summary, research in this vein examines the everyday place-making practices and experiences of im/migrants in Rust Belt cities through the qualitative methods of focus groups, interviews, and participant observation. This research highlights the distinct micro-geographies of newcomer incorporation, often revolving around the ad-hoc reuse and repurposing of vacant commercial and residential spaces.

4 | The Politics of Welcoming Im/migrants in Rust Belt Cities

In contrast to the previous set of literature examining the micro-geographies of human mobility in the Rust Belt, another distinct body of literature focuses on the municipal-level policy responses surrounding im/migration in the region and their implications for the lives of im/migrants. This literature considers Rust Belt urban responses to im/migration in the context of the variegated landscape of local immigration activity across the U.S. Geographers who study subnational immigration activism have highlighted how local governments are becoming more responsive and proactive in the geographies of welcoming and exclusion (Furuseth et al., 2015; Huang & Liu, 2018; Kerr et al., 2014 McDaniel et al., 2019; McDaniel, 2018; Pottie-Sherman, 2018a; Pottie-Sherman, 2018b; Walker, 2015; Walker & Leitner, 2011). As Figure 1 highlights, Democratic partisanship is an important dimension of Rust Belt city's stances on immigration. Since 2017, pro-immigration local initiatives have become a key part of the politics of anti-Trump defiance in majority democrat cities and counties, a symptom of the ongoing disjointed immigration reform debate and rising nativism at the federal level. As Housel et al. (2018:385) explain, the "fragmentation of the U.S. immigration policy which happens at multiple levels – national, state and local – has created openings for localities to create, redirect, and implement immigration policies and practices on the ground."

Partisanship alone is insufficient to explain local immigration activism, however. In the context of increased immigration policy fragmentation, local responses are also inspired by problems and politics at multiple scales, the "sociohistorical legacies of localities" (Matos, 2017:810) and the emergence of "eco-systems" of policy entrepreneurs (McDaniel et al., 2019). In the Rust Belt specifically, researchers have highlighted the growing policy consensus around the instrumentalization of im/migration to address problems affecting deindustrialized and/or

shrinking cities (Filomeno 2017; Housel et al., 2018; Pottie-Sherman, 2018a; 2018b). In analyzing the string of initiatives that have formed around the Welcoming Economies Global Network, Pottie-Sherman (2018a) highlights the alignment of welcoming efforts in the Rust Belt with post-recession austerity politics after the Wall Street crash of 2009. These projects draw on the socio-historical legacies of European immigration, and celebrate newer im/migration flows as symbolic of the reinvented American Rust Belt. Such initiatives commonly position immigrants and refugees as solutions to other issues Rust Belt cities face, including racial segregation, out-migration, population decline, and property abandonment. For example, a unique policy model has emerged in several Rust Belt cities (mainly Cleveland, Toledo, and Detroit, but also more recently, Syracuse) to match refugees with abandoned homes or vacant property seized by land banks. Rust Belt cities with multiple higher education institutions, like Cleveland and Buffalo, have seized on the potential of higher education institutions to act as welcome mats for international students. Policies like Ohio's Global Reach to Engage Academic Talent focus on the potential of international students and temporary visa holders to offset their aging workforce, drive innovation in technology, and attract foreign direct investment (Pottie-Sherman, 2018b).

If such projects constitute rebranding initiatives, a related question is to what extent they have led to substantive policy changes or have improved the lives of im/migrants living within their jurisdictions. The evidence, to date, is mixed as Schrider's (2017:iii) analysis of Rust Belt policy initiatives illustrates:

> with the exception of two cities—Chicago and Detroit—these cities are not passing new immigration laws, and that they all maintain existing laws that can both positively and negatively affect the context of reception. If these cities are trying to attract immigrants as a revitalization strategy, most of them are not doing it through changes to their municipal codes. They also are maintaining policies that could undermine their efforts.

For example, as Judelsohn et al. (20177:413) note in the case of Buffalo, the city's planning department was slow to change. Buffalo's 2006 Queen City Plan lauded immigrants' potential to "breathe new life into" Buffalo, but did not mention refugees despite that refugees from Burma have been settling in Buffalo for two decades. More recently, however, Buffalo established an Office for New Americans within its law department in 2015.

On one hand, researchers emphasize that substantive changes surrounding pro-im/migrant welcoming policies at the municipal level may be limited. But, on the other hand, newcomers may strategically engage and benefit from symbolic urban branding initiatives. Watson (2019:8) identifies the "welcomed refugee" as a central actor in the new economies of Rust Belt cities. Pittsburgh's welcoming agenda, he notes, was born out of a desire to combat population decline, and to shed its reputation as "parochial" and "economically depressed." Through interviews with the city's Bhutanese refugee community, Watson highlights how diversity branding is beneficial for refugees who can use their status as refugees in contexts of low diversity to "gain access to resources, recognition and decision makers."

In contrast to projects that rely primarily on symbolic rebranding or fail to engage newcomers, other research has reconceptualized im/migrants contributions to Rust Belt along ethical or cosmopolitan lines. Policymakers and academics have lauded Dayton's "Welcome Dayton" initiative has as a community-driven, consensus-based project grounded in a social justice framework (McDaniel et al. 2019). The Welcome Dayton process centered on the question: "what is possible if Dayton became a city that intentionally welcomed immigrants?"

According to Housel et al. (2018:396), the process reframed im/migrants' presence in Dayton through an "ethics of recognition" that was "welcoming without conditions," rather than contingent on their economic contribution (and self-sufficiency). Drawing on theoretical work by Gibson-Graham (2008), and MacKinnon and Derickson (2012), Housel et al. illustrate the importance of "active communities" that acknowledge the "shared humanity" among members that comes from "being-in-common" (Gibson-Graham, 2008:81). Such an approach, grounded in social justice, provides a valuable alternative to the aforementioned narratives of im/migrants as economic contributors.

Recent policy changes around immigration, from travel bans to family separation, underscore the importance of welcome in the current period (Ehrkamp, 2019; Gill et al., 2018). It is also important to note that research in this field also provides evidence of how local welcoming movements can falter in the face of external pressures. Caglar & Glick Schiller's (2018) research on post-industrial Manchester, New Hampshire, is instructive. Municipal politicians, while once embracing refugee-led revitalization, turned against refugees after the recession brought on protracted unemployment and when the city's regeneration efforts failed. While Rust Belt cities that have signed on to the Welcoming America and Welcoming Economies movements have not exhibited signs of backlash, their local efforts continue to clash with Trump's immigration agenda in various ways. The heightened uncertainty surrounding immigration and non-immigrant visa policy has made it more difficult for local actors in Ohio to use the immigration system to stimulate population growth and economic development (Pottie-Sherman, 2018b). While Rust Belt cities are trying to recast themselves as welcoming and inclusive, political narratives at the federal level have also aimed to co-opt the Rust Belt as a "symbolic anchor" for the Trump agenda (Watson, 2019).

To summarize, research on the politics surrounding immigration in the Rust Belt has focused on the emergence of pro-immigration (and refugee) municipal policies and practices across the region. This research has highlighted the instrumentalist nature of these new policies and suggests alternative practices of resistance to such narratives.

5 | Future Directions

This review examines the recent patterns, processes, and politics of im/migration in the urban Rust Belt. It underscores the important spatial nuances associated with immigration and refugee resettlement across Rust Belt cities, highlighting how these nuances challenge the singular discourses of Rust Belt population, industry, and status loss. With this contribution in mind, I propose several avenues for future research. First, this research surveyed for this review raises the need for inter-urban and cross-national comparison between diverging Rust Belt cities and with other deindustrialized and peripheral regions. One avenue of research should compare migrant lives in former gateways to low immigration metros and pre-emerging gateways in the region. Does a city's socio-historic legacy as a former immigrant destination make it easier to adapt to or encourage change, or to recruit and retain newcomers?

Second, deindustrialization had profound but highly unequal effects on the urban social geography of cities in the Canadian and U.S. Rust Belt (Neumann, 2016). Yet, there has been a notable lack of cross-national comparative research, largely owing to the diverging racial projects that have shaped Canadian and American cities. Recent research underscores the significant differences between the American Rust Belt and its Canadian city counterparts like Hamilton and Windsor, Ontario (Hackworth, 2016; Harris et al., 2015). As Hamilton lost

manufacturing jobs over the last four decades, poverty deepened and became more spatially concentrated (Harris et al., 2015), yet the Canadian "Steeltown" escaped the urban crises experienced in Cleveland. While Hackworth (2016) fruitfully engages with the legacy of immigration as nation-building policies at the federal level, the role of cities in the politics of immigration is unexplored. What role has immigration played in the U.S. and Canadian Rust Belt? Third, future research on the geographies of migration in the Rust Belt should also engage further with themes of race and difference. In particular, it would be fruitful to examine with the parallel set of literature underscoring "anti-blackness" engrained in property markets, urban renewal efforts, policies to address population decline, and the neglect of water infrastructure (Bledsoe & Wright, 2019; Safransky, 2018).

Finally, there remains a need to investigate how the multi-territorial governance of migration shapes not only im/migrant lives in the Rust Belt, but also institutions and organizations that touch the migration sector, and local urban economies more broadly. This dimension is increasingly important as the U.S.-wide refugee resettlement infrastructure is dismantled by federal policy changes since Trump's election. If these institutions have enabled refugee resettlement to operate as a framework for reinventing distressed Rust Belt cities and neighborhoods, it is crucial for research to consider how this apparatus has come under threat by policy changes since January of 2017. Research has illustrated the economic contributions of refugees to Rust Belt cities, but a better understanding is needed about the depth of the impacts of recent and proposed cuts to the local resettlement economy.

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Table 1. Foreign born percent and total population estimate, selected Rust Belt cities

City	Foreign born persons, %, 2013-2017	Total population estimate, July 1, 2018
Hamtramck, MI	42.3	21,716
Dearborn, MI	27.8	94,333
Utica, NY	19.4	60,100
Ithaca, NY	17.5	30,999
Syracuse, NY	12.5	142,749
Columbus, OH*	11.8	892,533
Grand-Rapids, MI	10.3	200,217
Milwaukee, WI	9.7	592,025
Buffalo, NY	9.5	256,304
Rock Island, IL	9.5	37,678

Pittsburgh, PA*	8.6	301,048
Fort Wayne, IN	7.8	267,633
Erie, PA*	7.4	96,471
Louisville, KY*	7.1	620,118
St. Louis, MI*	6.7	302,838
Akron, OH*	5.9	198,006
Detroit, MI	5.8	672,662
Cincinnati, OH	5.5	302,605
Cleveland, OH	5.2	383,793
Dayton, OH*	4.8	140,640
Toledo, OH*	3.7	274,975
Youngstown, OH	2.7	64,958

Data: American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017
* Welcoming America local government partners (city or county)

Figure Legend:

Figure 1. Welcoming America local government and non-profit members in the Rust Belt and 2016 Election Results

Data source: Welcoming America, 2019; Cartography: Jen Combs, McGill GIC, 2019