

[Suzanne M. Hall](#)

Book review: New York and Amsterdam: immigration and the new urban landscape

**Article (Accepted version)
(Refereed)**

Original citation:

Hall, Suzanne M. (2015) *Book review: New York and Amsterdam: immigration and the new urban landscape*. [Ethnic and Racial Studies](#), 38 (8). pp. 1449-1451. ISSN 0141-9870

DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2014.979849](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.979849)

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Available in LSE Research Online: May 2015

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TITLE:

New York and Amsterdam: immigration and the new urban landscape, edited by Nancy Foner, Jan Rath, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Rogier van Reekum, New York, New York University Press, 2014, 336 pages, £16.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8147-3844-3

The pivotal question of transformation - simultaneously urban and societal - provides the axis for the important collection of essays in this book. The editors introduce the comparative base of two cities, New York and Amsterdam, as urban landscapes in which approximately one third of inhabitants are foreign born, and, since the 1950s, are composed of a diversity of immigration flows mostly from outside of Europe. However, the two cities operate with divergent political and economic structures and distinctive migrant compositions and repertoires, opening up a 'transatlantic lens' (pg. 4) in which immigration and the (re)making of the urban landscape are closely entwined. Urban formations, underpinned by the assemblage of governance and economy, and lifestyles and legitimations, form the basis of comparison. As an explanatory and exploratory composition, the city offers distinctive views of immigration, revealing a different scalar perspective from international and national framings, and significant variegations evident in specific urban spaces.

The essays are organised around five central themes starting with the dynamics of history. Time is conceptualised as hierarchical, provoking questions such as who benefits from the production of cultural continuity; what differential impacts result from a rapid influx versus more gradual migratory processes; and what citizenships emerge in the enduring nomenclatures of the first-second-evermore generation immigrant. Nancy Foner advances a 'then-to-now' approach (p. 30) exploring how one period of immigration influences another, and how successive migrations mutually reinforce the social and urban transformations of New York. While Foner articulates a relatively fluid migration dynamic, Leo Lucassen traces sharp disruptions to the tolerance of immigration in Amsterdam. Lucassen connects ideological and economic shifts, revealing changes in immigrant dynamics following overhauls of both economic and welfare orders, illustrating how class status is a crucial dimension of an historic perspective of urban immigration.

The second core theme considers relationships between urban economies and immigrant incorporation. David Dyssegaard Kallick's chapter is compelling in its detail, revealing in-depth dimensions of ethno-racial differences in terms of wage, employment concentration and share of economic output. Seen together, the data clarifies the significant contributions

of immigrants to the New York economy, indicating that immigrant groups fare comparatively well in the city's economy, one in which economic polarisation is a key characteristic. But not all groups fare equally well, and Dyssegaard Kallick reveals distinctly uneven features of labour and occupation when origin, race and ethnicity are considered. Contrastingly, Robert Kloosterman outlines the national features of a 'corporist welfare state' (p. 111), defining a labour market of constrained access to 'outsiders', where ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by unemployment. More variegated patterns of employment and inclusion occur amongst 'second-generation', 'non-Western migrants' in the labour market, including increased self-employment. While the upswing in Amsterdam's economy is attributed to the city's cultural energy and its position as a 'pocket-sized global city' (p. 126), enduring social stratifications – in which the migrant is particularly marked – prevail.

The prism of discrimination and the practices of prejudice form the third focus of the book. Mary C. Waters explores the interplay of historic 'pathways' and 'barriers' to immigrants in New York, drawing a distinction between '*racism* and *nativism*' (pg. 143). Waters argues for greater analytic intersections between race and immigration in a city with persistent racial inequalities. Justus Uitermark, Jan Wiilem Duyvendak and Jan Rath focus on the intersection of secularisation and Islam in Western Europe through the "civilising offensive" (p.171) adopted as a moral mode of governmentality by the Dutch state. The authors articulate how deprived urban neighbourhoods in Amsterdam host a dense network of 'disciplinary institutions' (p. 175) for the purpose of inculcating an acceptable culture cultivated on Dutch norms, and generating urban infrastructures for the purpose of moderating civic conduct.

Issues of politics, power and civil participation are explored in the fourth section, starting with the distinct increase in political representation of immigrant groups in New York City and Amsterdam over last five years (p. 196). The section highlights the question of political influence of immigrants, relating aspects of political representation and political impact, as well as restrictions faced by immigrants in increasing their political representation. John Mollenkopf explores the dynamics of 'ethnic succession in politics' (p. 206), connecting spatial patterns of ethnic and racial concentration, elected representation, and the flux of urban political systems. Floris Vermeulen, Laure Michon and Jean Tillie reveal divergent relationships between political participation and political influence among different immigrant groups, and draw distinctions between political access and political power.

The last section focuses on urban culture, and engages with how ethnic diversity is connected with cultural innovation. The two cities suggest divergent realities, immigrants having a recognised influence on New York's cultural scene, while in Amsterdam such

participation is more curtailed. In a captivating essay, Philip Kasinitz correlates the 'cosmopolitan space' (p. 266) of New York in the mid-twentieth century, with the emergence of art worlds and creative industries in which immigrants and their children were and are active participants. Christine Delhaye, Sawitri Saharso and Victor van de Ven differentiate between the varied registers of 'everyday youth culture, mass popular culture, and [...] "high culture"' (p. 287) in Amsterdam, emphasising how dimensions of socio-economic status ethnicity, age and gender influence how urban cultures are made, represented and evaluated. The authors mark a shift in the 1980s, following a political distinction between so called native and foreign cultural expressions, with state intervention in 'diversity initiatives' (p. 301) producing cultural compartmentalisation and relegation.

This book forms a significant contribution to our understanding of the different systems and practices of urban immigration in cities, in particular New York and Amsterdam. The book impresses the underlying need for analytic variegation in immigration studies, advanced here through the temporal, systemic and experiential dimensions of the urban. The challenge for such 'transatlantic' projects remains one of how to conceptualise immigration as 'of' the urban landscape, firming up our twenty-first century understandings of citizenships of the urban, and exploring how this might challenge the national strictures in which much immigration scholarship and policy is bound.

REVIEWER NAME & INSTITUTION

Suzanne M. Hall

Department of Sociology

London School of Economics and Political Science

s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk