

tions in health-care organisations. Rising costs and declining patient well-being are problems that system modellers frequently investigate. Though viewed through two different lenses, this specific example shows how this book could help to bridge sub-disciplines of systems research. For those interested in polycontextuality and polyphony in general, health care is a perfect example in which to investigate these concepts. It is easy for the general reader to see that health-care organisations contain many different function systems, which makes understanding systems theory concepts easier as well. The threshold for those attempting to read this book from outside sociology is moderate. The book is jargon-filled, but the authors, especially the editors in the introduction, do an excellent job of explaining discipline-specific concepts. The title of this book is a bit of a misnomer, however, as the book draws only on a very specific part of systems theory.

The ethics chapters are arguably the most important for those in other disciplines of systems research. Ethical conversations and reflections are sparse in many system science/engineering disciplines and sub-disciplines. The chapters that concern ethics are a valuable and much needed addition to the ethics literature concerning systems in general, and I highly recommend further development of the ethical concepts applied in this book by all types of system scientists and engineers. Though the chapters on ethics specifically explore issues regarding prioritisation in health care and medical research, they raise ethical issues regarding the plurality of system goals where one normative goal is achieved at the expense of another, all within the same organisational unit under one common management.

I recommend this book to those researching health care in any field and from any approach, especially those from outside of sociology, for example, system dynamics and systems engineering, because

of the potential for bridging aspects of the systems research divide. This book provides an abstract exploration of health-care systems with concrete examples on and between the individual, organisational, and societal level. This is a well-motivated book because of the continuing challenges with health-care systems. By helping to make sense of these complex challenges, it is a welcome addition to the literature.

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Vic Satzewich: *Points of Entry*

Vancouver 2015: UBC Press, 291 pp.

'Maria enters the interview booth with a broad, confident smile.' The book opens with the vignette capturing an applicant's interview for a family class spousal visa to Canada. The book is a valuable ethnography of gatekeepers based on research on the decision-making of Canadian visa officers. Officers work in a complex bureaucratic environment that has specific rules, policies, processing manuals, and criteria they need to follow when making decisions about visa applicants. However, there are many other factors influencing the process and the final visa refusal or issuance. Discretion plays an important role in the decision-making process. The focus of the book is on how visa officers exercise discretion, how they constitute risk and credibility,

and the nature of bias in the border-control process. But Satzewich applies a perspective that is different from the existing accounts of the discretion of the street-level bureaucrats within the immigration field and that goes beyond decision-making based on individuals' values or background. Instead, it focuses on more complex processes of policy implementation, on the organisational culture in which officers work, and on the demands deriving therefrom.

The book is organised into nine chapters. It starts with the overview of the existing literature in the field of migration and non-citizenship studies. Satzewich discusses the importance of researching the 'migration industry' (p. 20) consisting of actors who are in charge of controlling and regulating migration. Referring to existing scholarship on the role of discretion, he stresses that accusations of bias need to be considered and the decision-making of visa officers understood 'in the context of the larger policy implementation process.' (p. 36) In the following chapters he reviews different levels of immigration policy implementation; summarises various actors and their roles and interests within this process; introduces readers to the current immigration policy in Canada, categories of immigrants, programmes, and they types of permits that can be issued to visa applicants; provides an overview of the organisational structure of visa offices and officers and their positions and responsibilities; and analyses the visa approval rates in an effort to test the racialisation of discretion through the existing quantitative data. These four chapters offer a valuable insight into the wider context of the environment in which visa officers make their decisions. Satzewich provides a complex understanding of the character and impact of macro- and meso-level factors. He discusses the enforcement-minded and facilitative types of officers deciding on the basis of their personal values, but also their

experiences, caseloads, pressures, the different types of applications they encounter, and their career pathways.

The next three chapters discuss particular visa categories: spousal and partner sponsorship; federal skilled workers; and visitors' visas. These chapters provide insights into officers' decision-making and understanding of structural forces entering into potential discretion. Chapters are great ethnographic accounts revealing the variety of factors influencing officers' final decisions. Key arguments are supported by relevant quotations and field notes illustrating Satzewich's findings and putting together the whole mosaic of the problem at hand. The author explains in more detail the importance and influence of macro-level factors such as the understanding of global inequalities, the socio-economic situation, the religion or beliefs characteristic of a particular country or region, and the understanding of fraud and complex visa regimes; and meso- and macro-level factors such as the office organisational culture, the environment in which various actors may pose a pressure and in which efficiency and productivity are the top requirements; but also micro-level views of the immigration system and personal orientations.

The concluding chapter discusses the unequal power relationships within the social process of processing files and interviewing the applicants, in which the client is always in a subordinate position. Based on extensive interviews with visa officers and participant observations during the interviews with applicants, Satzewich reveals important notions about what constitutes not only discretion but also the complex decision-making process.

As the opening chapter notes, the meso-level research on lawyers, bureaucracy, officers, agencies, and agents is highly under-researched within migration studies. *Points of Entry* is a valuable contribution to this field of study. It reflects the ex-

isting sociological literature on discretion and street-level bureaucrats arguing, like Pratt [2005], that discretion and rule of law do not exclude each other. Rather, they are complementary, as even these require a certain level of interpretation and context. Thus, the author does not deny the role of discretion in visa officers' construction of risk and credibility and their final decision-making. Neither does he neglect the existing categorisation within the whole process. However, he tries to explain from a different perspective that a popular perception of officers as racists is simplistic. On the contrary, the job of a visa officer has multiple shades to it formed by different factors that come into play. As Satzewich states, 'it is hard to see how a racist immigration officer could survive in a context where the pressure is on to issue visas and to issue them quickly.' (p. 137) Within the environment of different forms of pressure and constraints, Canadian visa officers are required to meet specific visa issuance targets and are encouraged to decide primarily based on the provided supporting document. Therefore, the direct interaction with clients occurs on limited occasions and primarily with more problematic applicants. Drawing on Lipsky's work [2010] on street-level bureaucrats, Satzewich widens the understanding of the face-to-face contact of visa officers arguing that the lack of contact has multiple consequences for the decision-making process. Particularly, it negatively influences officers' job satisfaction and their mindset, and they become cynical and lose nation-building feelings.

Although the author never reveals whether Maria from the opening vignette obtains her visa, he offers numerous interesting insights and stories of significant numbers of visa officers illustrating and explaining what drives them to say 'yes' or 'no' to the applicants. This persuasive book makes the reader step back and reconsider the general perception of visa bureaucrats

as being inherently racist and biased. At the end of the day, the reader realises that it is necessary to think outside the box because there are various shades of different aspects of officers' decision-making, whether procedural, contextual, organisational, or even those human.

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Petre Petrov and Lara Ryazanova-Clarke (eds): *The Vernaculars of Communism: Language, Ideology and Power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*
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Throughout the communist world the 'essence of unreformability' stemmed from the fact that, in one way or another, all power structures stuck to the same ideology, as the authority of argument, the cornerstone of autonomous science, was gradually replaced by the argument from authority [Wagener 1998]. This evolution, however, as this book masterfully shows, was more than just a matter of novelty in language forms, as the new idioms abjured the linguistic-ideational status quo (p. 2). Although the volume is mostly built around developments in the USSR and/or Russia, its nine dense chapters go beyond the standard analysis of a 'wooden language' in diverse contexts behind the Iron Curtain, like Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

Rather than focusing on the language of a concrete policy area (as, for instance,