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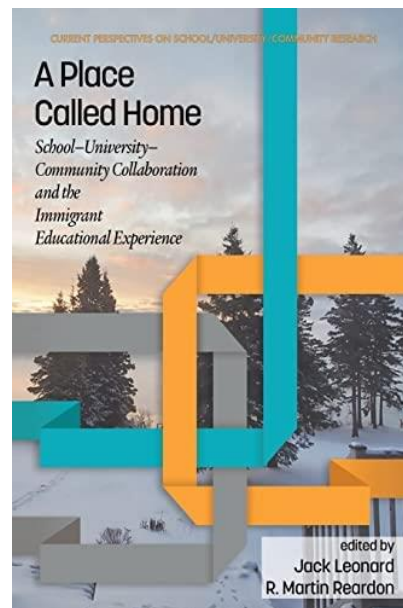
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More migrants are living outside of their birth country globally than ever before (Dimock, 2016; UNICEF, 2021), yet recent world events make clear that mobility, safety, and acceptance in receiving countries are not equitable for every immigrant group. A recent volume by Jack Leonard and R. Martin Reardon from the series “Current Perspectives on School/University/Community Research” seeks to address some of these inequities. *A Place Called Home* showcases the role of the community and educational institutions in fostering safety from oppression and violence and social acceptance for immigrant students and their families, particularly for those who are lower-income and fled precarious conditions only to be discriminated against and marginalized in their new environments.



Less than one year after the volume’s release, the world witnessed the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a crisis of war, in March 2022, which produced mass migration out of the invaded country. The mostly white Ukrainian refugee movement was met with sympathetic messages of welcome from the U.S. and Europe, in stark contrast to the anti-immigrant attitudes towards refugees coming from countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Central America in previous years. This reversal in immigration stance reveals how some environments are conditionally welcoming to immigrants, with the

Harris, S. Y. (2022, December 7). Review of *A place called home: School-university-community collaboration and the immigrant educational experience* by J. Leonard & R. M. Reardon (Eds.). *Education Review*, 29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/er.v29.3555>

condition being whiteness. This contribution to immigration scholarship by Leonard, Reardon and their fellow contributors could not be timelier.

The book's starting point is how immigrant children's opportunities and experiences are shaped by the manner of socialization and integration into the larger or dominant society. As such, institutions and organizations meant to support these children and their families in realizing their aspirations must also be cognizant of the sociopolitical complexities of an increasingly multicultural society. The editors and contributing authors do not shy away from addressing racism and its effect on the lives of non-white, non-English speaking, poor, immigrant children, and families, nor how some communities and schools can be inhospitable environments or fail to provide equitable schooling and services. In response to these realities and the alienation of displaced peoples, *A Place Called Home* illustrates several school-university-community collaborations seeking to transform local spaces (e.g., neighborhoods, centers, campuses) into welcoming environments. Through narratives of collaboration, the contributors ask what it means to be a good citizen or member of a society or call a place home.

As a holistic introduction to school-university-community collaborations, this volume offers a wide range of methodological perspectives, from qualitative ethnographies to quantitative statistical analysis, and from mixed methods case studies to program evaluation. Although the geographical focus is on North America, no two chapters are alike in their specific locality. The documented studies and social projects span the U.S. and Canada, each focusing on the unique experiences of immigrant populations in those places. Research settings include South Texas, Minnesota, Michigan, the Mid-Atlantic, Alabama, the San Francisco Bay Area, Washington, and more. The immigrant populations were diverse, having come from various Central and South American, African, and Asian nations. Further, the structure of each collaborative initiative differed widely from one chapter to the next. The contributors describe the various actors within these initiatives – educational non-profits, charter schools, tutoring centers, community schools, school leaders, and activist networks – by situating each within their unique geographic settings and in relation to universities and K-12 school systems as they respond to the specific needs of their local immigrant groups.

The wealth of perspectives and settings presented in this volume will benefit multiple audiences. Graduate student and faculty researchers might be interested in the reviews of immigrant education scholarship or the accessibly written introductions to many critical, theoretical frameworks contained in the chapters. This volume would be of particular value for researchers whose work focuses on equity in education, identity, and language learning. It also may be relevant for those working with students designated as English learners or heritage learners within informal learning settings. Teachers and school leaders might benefit from chapters like the one by Susnara, Blake Berryhill, Wilson, and Ziegler (Chapter 6) that unpacks the relationship between immigrant parent-school involvement and student

outcomes and offers suggestions for how to facilitate strong parent-school engagement. Program evaluators might appreciate the numerous evaluations of programs that attempted to balance the needs of 1) schools, which often have a bottom line and are under-resourced, and 2) immigrant students and their families, who may have the most to lose in the long run. Policymakers who want to make local spaces more welcoming to immigrant students and families by implementing *structural* changes might appreciate the incorporation of important contextual information relevant to specific cases. For instance, Colvin, Stevenson, and Barajas (Chapter 7) interrogate visibility and belonging in a small rural town through a collaborative program providing immigrants with language and literacy assistance, but they situate their contemporary study within the larger history of community, labor, and migration in and out the area.

Despite this variety, the chapters share a focus on the challenges facing educational practitioners and researchers: the achievement gap, the immigrant education paradox, and increasing family engagement and support. The school-university-community collaborations across the chapters differ in name, setting, form, and outcomes, yet their stories shared the same vision of transforming a place from being simply a site that receives immigrant communities to a home that actively welcomes them. In each, the creation of a sense of belonging was a vital part of supporting immigrant students and families. As Provinzano, Koskey, and Sondergold (Chapter 4) explain, a welcoming school environment can be multiply beneficial for immigrant students and families including positive outcomes for physical and mental health as well as academic achievement. However, the challenge of this transformation, as described by Niu-Cooper, McManus, and Ysasi (Chapter 3), is that any single school or university or community group cannot independently create a welcoming educational environment or a place that everyone can call home. Rather, as this collection illustrates, schools, universities, and communities are each uniquely positioned to tackle some of these fraught realities together.

From these efforts to transform spaces into ones that are welcoming, it becomes evident collaboration is crucial. Each member of the school-university-community partnerships has something to bring to the table that others cannot. For instance, educators that possessed the dedication and drive to ensure every student thrives may not have had relevant information or training. Community advocates had first-hand knowledge and skills but did not have access to funding and resources for dissemination or application. Universities could offer capacity-building and infrastructure for social action or programming; however, they first had to be willing to position themselves as learners and be receptive and responsive to the perspectives and practical knowledge of schools and communities. Not only is collaboration important, according to the authors in this volume, but it is much easier said than done. Xiong, Her, Lee, and Yang (Chapter 2) reveal challenges that emerge in these collaborations, such as committing to the extensive time that it takes to build relationships and trust, getting sufficient

buy-in and support from members, participants, and institutions, and maintaining flexibility and adaptability on the ground (e.g., being willing to change study objectives and timelines). Despite these challenges, this volume provides evidence that partnerships are worth pursuing, not simply because of the aforementioned value for immigrant youth and their families, but for the mutually beneficial potential that such partnerships hold for schools, universities, and communities.

For readers who are involved in their own school-university-community collaborative efforts, this collection might serve as an informative how-to guide. From my perspective as a researcher-educator involved in such collaborations, the following points are noteworthy:

- Get involved with schools and communities early; be present at relevant local functions
- Revisit and re-evaluate partnership values and goals often
- Have multiple lines of communication and communicate clearly and frequently
- Partner with stakeholders and leaders who share the same commitments to students and equity
- Form *authentic* relationships
- Recruit a coalition with a membership that is both diverse and representative of the community that it is meant to support
- Be aware of the perception of your program as it fits into the larger system of educational institutions that may have already failed and lost the trust of students and their families

Success stories such as moments when immigrant students experienced not only belonging but were able to become a part of “place-making” through civic engagement and social justice were, in my view, the highlights of this volume. For example, Montemayor and Chavkin (Chapter 1) describe immigrant students who were stereotyped as “not college material” or future dropouts and pressured out of taking advanced STEM courses by their counselors; the students challenged these deficit perspectives and demanded that their academic ambitions be taken seriously. Similarly, in the chapter by Eppley, Villar, and McKoy (Chapter 5), eighth-grade students engaged in civic learning projects gave presentations about the affordable housing crisis and how it was being experienced firsthand in their community. The multilingual presentations were attended by community leaders, university scholars, and statewide planners. Students were thus positioned as “essential and powerful champions for change for their communities, their region, and the nation” (p. 105). Such narratives are powerful models for future students and programs.

Finally, the authors of *A Place Called Home* are transparent about the realities of conducting research with(in) precarious communities and during precarious times. For example, a number of these studies took place at the height of the COVID pandemic. Reading between the lines, readers might imagine the uncertainty, exhaustion, and disappointments likely experienced by the researchers, collaborators, and families. From their descriptions, it is obvious that immense effort and time were spent on research and planning while building relationships, trust, and collaboration. The contributors make clear that school-university-community collaborations are no easy undertaking, but also highlight the necessity for institutions to work together, alongside immigrant youth and their families, to create a welcoming environment for those already here and those yet to come. This volume offers helpful insights through numerous examples of successful as well as failed efforts to collaborate between schools, universities, and communities. Perhaps its greatest contribution is the straightforward discussions of lessons learned and the practical recommendations for future collaborative initiatives.

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About the Reviewer



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