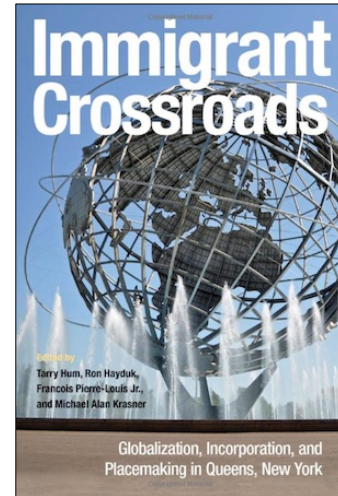


Tarry Hum, Ron Hayduk, Francois Pierre-Louis Jr., and Michael Alan Krasner (Eds.), **Immigrant Crossroads: Globalization, Incorporation, and Placemaking in Queens, New York**, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2021, 392 pp., \$42.95 (paperback), \$42.95 (ebook).

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Stories about our neighborhoods fly in countless directions. When I lived in Los Angeles, I used to attend Dodgers games in Chavez Ravine. Occasionally, I would wonder how the team got there. Before the Dodgers were Southern California's own, they played on Flatbush in Brooklyn, winning a World Series, desegregating Major League Baseball, and earning a place in neighborhood lore when Jackie Robinson took first base on April 15, 1947. Of course, the route this New York team found out west is a source of considerable controversy. For many, the blame for losing the beloved home team lies squarely on New York Construction Commissioner Robert Moses, who longed to place a stadium for the team in the geographic center of New York City, in Flushing Meadows Park, in the borough of Queens, imposing a top-down development model still tormenting New Yorkers to this day. The plan fell apart. The Dodgers were displaced, landing westward. Five years later, the Mets played their first game in Shea Stadium, and Queens had its own baseball team. A year later, the 15-year-old Whoopi Goldberg's mother surprised her, taking her to see the Beatles play at Shea, in what many remember as their first desegregated cultural experience, at those shows. The waves of stories and people, ideas, and narratives are many here; this is the story of New York City, its boroughs, ideas, and tides, ever crashing and clashing, rushing and receding, to borrow Walt Whitman's (1881–1882) words. The stories of its neighborhoods are shifting, increasingly subjects unto themselves.

In New York, these neighborhoods are divided among dispersant boroughs, brought together in a deal that consolidated Staten Island and the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn in 1898. Each space has its own resources, culture, and history. The borough of Queens, just north of Brooklyn, is no exception. It's the home of the 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump, and "certainly the most diverse community in the United States, probably in the world today" (p. vii), as editors Tarry Hum, Ron Hayduk, Francois Pierre-Louis Jr., and Michael Alan Krasner note in the preface to **Immigrant Crossroads: Globalization, Incorporation, and Placemaking in Queens, New York**. The most antithetical of boroughs, its identity is formed by both its notoriously anti-immigrant son mixing with the voices of its million-plus foreign-born residents. The clash extends to the nearly two million people who live in Queens. Recall the borough's punk innovators The Ramones, whose lead singer, Johnny Ramone, praised Republican President George W. Bush during the band's entrance to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, even as their left-leaning singer Joey Ramone performed anti-racist anthems such as "The KKK Took My Baby Away." When Johnny and Joey fought over a girlfriend, the two stopped speaking; silence followed them for years while touring the country. The schism is not lost on the editors of *Immigrant Crossroads*, who note immigrants in

Queens hail from 120 countries, communicating in some 135 languages; it represents both obstacles and possibilities in multicultural democratic living.

The challenges are omnipresent, the ebb and flow of bodies, followed by variations of attraction and repulsion. The borough was home to 28-year-old Kitty Genovese, killed outside her apartment on March 13, 1964; countless witnesses were said to have heard something, yet no one helped. Queens came to be characterized as a space of both reaction to and engagement with difference. Throughout the 1970s, viewers across the United States came to know Queens as the home of conservative grouch Archie Bunker from Norman Lear's (1971) seminal TV show, *All in the Family*, ever lamenting the immigrants and hippies, longing for the good old days. Bunker's cry seemed to embody the voices of the coalition that helped elect Richard M. Nixon.

For most of us, Queens has become synonymous with urban diversity, a hot immigrant mix, its sons and daughters vying for their bit of this diverse urban space. Hum, Hayduk, Pierre-Louis Jr., and Krasner explain: "As in other metropolitan areas, immigrants have repopulated and revived Queens neighborhoods, turning blighted areas into thriving ethnic communities, filling vacant housing, and creating small businesses, and community gardens" (p. viii). Of course, there are those who do not quite see these contributions. Baseball-minded observers recall Atlanta Braves reliever John Rocker's rant to *Sports Illustrated* in John Pearlman's (1999) article, in which Rocker said of playing at Shea Stadium: "The biggest thing I don't like about New York are the foreigners" (Pearlman, 1999, para. 7).

We didn't know it at the time, but Rocker's complaint, echoing Archie Bunker's, would foreshadow narratives that would enable Trump's ascent. As Rocker's rant suggests, there's a lot more we need to learn about this most complicated of boroughs. The editors of and contributors to *Immigrant Crossroads* unpack the social dynamics of this ever-transforming urban space. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative approaches, chapters function as case studies. Some consider immigrant voting and economic development, residential patterns and neighborhood identities, democracy renewal, community organizing, globalization, ethnic diversity as well as migration. Among the more fascinating chapters is "Flushing Meadows Land Grab" by Donovan Finn. With a story of community organizing, Finn traces the successful efforts of local residents against a Bloomberg-era land grab:

Across the varied groups was a core concern that wealthy developers and sports leagues were being provided with subsidized or free land in one of the city's largest parks to line their own wallets, while the surrounding immigrant and working-class neighborhood received nothing in return. (p. 284)

The pattern seemed to be expanding exponentially, all over the city, organizers mobilizing to stop developer giveaways with varying degrees of success. In Coney Island, organizers saved some old businesses. In Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn, developers finally succeeded in putting up the stadium that would have kept the Dodgers in Brooklyn, only a half century too late. In Queens, they stopped the giveaway, although Finn is quick to avoid taking credit: "It is impossible to say with absolute certainty that the efforts of the Fairness Coalition of Queens had a direct effect on shaping the outcomes of these three development proposals" (p. 292).

Developers don't always win here. Other innovations have taken shape, driven by citizen participation. Consider this story from *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York's Public Spaces* (Shepard & Smithsimon, 2011). When Hayduk moved to Jackson Heights in 2007, he saw the area lacked open spaces. The local park, Travers Park, felt crowded. Hayduk started talking with his neighbors. In between changing diapers, he joined a group to address such conditions. Jackson Heights Green Alliance requested permission to shut traffic on Sundays, winning street closures. Traffic would be diverted away so the children could have a space for play without cars.

The innovations are everywhere here. Consider the Smiling Hogshead Ranch, a community garden built on abandoned rail tracks at 25–30 Skillman Avenue. Gil Lopez had just moved to town when he saw the fenced-up space and started cleaning up and picking weeds, planning, creating a "guerilla garden." Eventually, they cut a deal with the MTA to secure a lease as a garden.

Across Queens, immigrants are transforming urban space. At the old Rockaway Beach, a group of surfers from France and Italy have taken to organize weekly surf parties along Beach 67, encouraging everyone to brave the waves. The secret of the beach party: inclusion. Everyone is invited, as surfers ride into the sunset.

In 2019, organizers in Queens successfully prevented Amazon from locating in Long Island City. Still, the many-headed hydra of capitalism struck in Red Hook, Brooklyn, as the city was just waking from its COVID-19 haze, with a warehouse at the former site of the Revere Sugar Factory at 280 Richards Street, bringing work, while simultaneously jeopardizing the waterfront with new buildings blocking the once gorgeous views. Increase, reduce, such are the tides of New York City.

"Victories are possible," writes Donovan Finn. "Diverse communities can indeed work together to address clear and present threats to equity and social justice" (p. 296).

The stories of New York are many. *Immigrant Crossroads* reminds us that we have much to learn by considering the experience of the spiciest, richest of boroughs and the innovation shaping this ever-transforming urban space that people from around the world have come to call home.

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