

Indigenous Homelessness: Perspectives from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Edited by Evelyn J. Peters and Julia Christensen. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016. 400 pages. \$39.95 paper; \$70.00 electronic.

Indigenous Homelessness begins to fill significant gaps in our understanding of the experiences of homeless indigenous people in three Commonwealth countries: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. There is, as far as I know, no other volume tackling this tough terrain, either in the countries considered here or in the United States. The book thus constitutes an important collection and synthesis of research and should serve as a point of departure for some time to come. There is clearly much more work to be done, both in communities and in the academy, but the book succeeds in laying an impressive and sturdy foundation for what comes next.

Indigenous Homelessness is broadly divided into three sections, one for each nation, with brief introductions that explore the national context. A total of eight separate empirical chapters are derived from work in Canada, with four from Australia and two from New Zealand. Additional pieces open and close the entire volume, which emphasize themes that cut across the three nations. These essays include local histories of the displacement of indigenous people from their homelands, considerations of the role of housing policy in creating and perpetuating homelessness, and explorations of the value of culture in crafting sustainable solutions.

Although readers of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* are all-too-familiar with how indigenous people in each nation have often violently been displaced from their original homelands, several chapters emphasize the direct connections between this history and contemporary homelessness in the now-appropriated homelands. This broader historical context proves vital for understanding contemporary experiences of homelessness, not just in terms of physical displacement, but also in cultural terms, or what several authors refer to as “spiritual homelessness.” Central to understanding “spiritual homelessness” are the ways that state institutions, including residential schools, foster care, and corrections, have continued to isolate indigenous people from their home communities and cultures.

In “They Don’t Let Us Look After Each Other Like We Used To,” Christensen and Andrews refer to displaced individuals’ efforts to reconnect to homelands and culture as “home/journeying.” The chapter’s title reflects a second major theme of the collection: the role of housing policy in perpetuating homelessness. In all three national contexts, state housing policies often prevent indigenous people from honoring their obligations to each other by limiting occupancy. This sadly means that people who attempt to provide housing to friends and family in need can find themselves homeless as well, evicted for violating rules about who can live in housing units.

Indeed, broader vulnerability to homelessness, with large numbers of indigenous people precariously housed, is a consistent theme in multiple chapters. The editors propose analyses across a spectrum of homelessness that ranges from “absolute” to “hidden” homelessness. While the former includes individuals who literally have no residence, either “sleeping rough” or in shelters, the latter includes individuals sharing residences, e.g., couch surfing. Movement between these different forms of

homelessness is likely quite common, and is explicitly documented in Peters and Kern's chapter on mobility in Winnipeg. Other chapters document the experience of homelessness in rural communities, which often are not considered in the broader discourse on homelessness. The homeless in rural communities confront unique challenges that will continue to warrant special attention: compared to cities, small rural communities are likely to have even fewer housing options and much less developed service systems.

One major goal of *Indigenous Homelessness* is to understand the more proximate causes of homelessness—substance abuse and violence between intimate partners, for example—within a broader historical and cultural context. Analyses of indigenous homelessness, or actually, homelessness more generally, have often given the lion's share of attention to these individual problems. Contributors to this volume are clear that solutions to these problems need to draw on the historical and cultural analyses in the volume, but equally do not shy away from an honest appraisal of their role in individual stories.

At least one chapter from each national context describes efforts to meet the needs of indigenous homeless individuals in ways that respect cultural values. These include innovative solutions in housing and in creating shared community spaces where cultural values can be practiced, which King, Hodgetts, Rua, and Te Whetu, in their chapter's title, refer to as a place where "homeless men can be Maori." Close collaborations with community leaders and service providers are reflected in several chapters, and contributors to the volume also represent a broad range of academic disciplines relevant to understanding and addressing homelessness, including architecture, geography, public policy, psychology, and social welfare. These kinds of interdisciplinary and multisector collaborations are likely vital to future work, and the contributions from architecture, geography, and planning are especially welcome. Even if the problem of homelessness is much broader than housing, it is clear that innovative approaches in housing are essential, and the book has a number of important suggestions in this regard.

Indigenous Homelessness is a pioneering book that seeks to root a persistent contemporary problem in a critical analysis of settler colonialism. At the same time, contributors to the volume make clear the ways in which solutions to the problem will require sustained and authentic engagement with the unique cultural values of indigenous communities in each nation. The book seeks and strikes a careful balance between these perspectives—on what has gone wrong and on what remains right in contemporary indigenous communities—and it establishes the kind of broad collaborations that will be required to better meet the needs of indigenous people at risk for homelessness. It deserves to be widely read, and will hopefully serve to launch parallel efforts in the United States and Latin America.

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