In recent times, globalization caused by immigration has become an increasingly important issue in the housing market (Moos and Skaburskis 2010). Particularly in Canadian cities, the influx of wealthy and skilled immigrants from East Asia has had strong effects on the local housing market. As Moos and Skaburskis (2010) clarified, recent immigrants from Asian countries did not always join the local labor market; they earned income in their country of origin. In addition, they had a strong influence on the rising cost of housing in Vancouver.

The housing markets in Vancouver and many other Canadian cities were characterized by such wealthy migrants from East Asia. This book clarifies the features of a new type of wealthy immigrants called “millionaire migrants,” who originally belonged to the middle class or upper middle class and who tend to be well-educated.

The author discusses the following two points in this book by describing millionaire migrants in Canadian cities. The first point is transnationalism and the importance of geography in the discussion of globalization for the following reasons:

1) The social field stretching from East Asia to Canada is differentiated spatially, and the lifestyles of East Asian immigrants have been diversified.
2) Time-space compression still matters: A large number of millionaire migrants live in fragmented families. The men work in East Asia, and the women and children live on the opposite side of the Pacific Ocean. This separation leads to significant costs.
3) Cultural attributions and features of the cultural geography of the countries or regions of origin are embedded in the way of life in the destination; in other words, the place matters. The meaning or significance of property in the East Asian countries strongly affects the housing market in Vancouver.

Another aspect that the author has focused on is the emergence of business immigrants: *homo economicus*, or the rational economic man. Canada has accepted not only skilled workers but also business immigrants since the 1980s. The increase in millionaire migrants was closely connected with the neo-liberal policy implemented by the Canadian and state governments: open market and borderlessness in the global business market. About 45% of Canada's business immigrants from 1980 to 2001 were of Hong Kong or Taiwanese origin. They ran successful businesses in both their origin and destination countries, and thereby contributed to the globalization of business across the Pacific Ocean.

To examine the perspectives presented in the book, the following aspects were discussed:

1. Introduction: Trans-Pacific Mobility and the New Immigration Paradigm
2. Transition: From the Orient to the Pacific Rim
3. Calculating Agents: Millionaire Migrants Meet the Canadian State
5. Embodied Real Estate: The Cultural Mobility of Property
6. Immigrant Reception: Contesting Globalization… or Resistant Racism?
7. Establishing Roots: From the Nuclear Family to Substantive Citizenship
8. Roots and Routs: The Myth of Return or Transitional Circulation?
9. Conclusion: Immigrants in Space

In Chapter 2, this book clarifies the process of the historical formation of the multicultural and globalized Canadian cities. During the twentieth century, the immigration policies of Canada have changed dramatically: from the caste system that avoided non-white settlers under the dominion of the British Empire since 1931 to the class status in the era of globalization. Globalization strengthened the free movement of the workforce beyond borders, and “a significant redefinition of entry categories has occurred as human and economic capital have become the privileged criteria for the valuing of immigrants while ethnic and racial status have been
disqualified” (p. 64–65). This shift, from the 1960s to the 1980s, was affected by liberalism or neo-liberalism, and the economic recession in the 1980s strengthened the process of transformation. Business immigrants from East Asia had strong networks, *homo economicus*, and superior business skills in the Pacific Rim; therefore, immigrants from East Asia gained a high status in the Canadian cities.

The institutional aspects or career support for millionaire migrants in Canada are described in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 5, the relationship between the affordability problem of housing in Vancouver and the increase in the number of the millionaire migrants is examined. Although the local income remained stable, housing prices rose remarkably from the late 1980s. A large number of wealthy immigrant households were eager to purchase property for various purposes including investment, and this led to the globalization of the housing market and the rise of housing prices in Vancouver.

In Chapter 6, discussions and conflicts on the landscape in Vancouver’s Westside neighborhoods are examined. As the population of immigrants, or Chinese Canadians, increased and as they were eager to purchase single houses, the characteristics of neighborhoods also changed. The author has studied the discussions of landscape change or housing design in Shaughnessy, Vancouver Westside considering the concept of racism and multi-culturalism.

Chapter 7 describes the features of transnational Chinese-Canadian families. The first typical case is of fragmented families in which the men work in China and their wives and children stay in Canada. The other case is of transnational Chinese-Canadian families which are astronaut and satellite kids; these children stay in Canada in order to receive Western-style education.

Pursuing higher education in Canada is a great motivation for such families to move across the Pacific Ocean. Chinese immigrants gradually climb up the ladder of integration, and some of them gain high status in Canada; they encourage other wealthy Chinese immigrants to participate in many economic or social activities in Canada, and gradually gain honorific status there.

In Chapter 8, the millionaire migrants and their families who returned to Hong-Kong from Vancouver are examined. Of course, when they returned to their country of origin, they lost the social capital that they had earned in Canada. However, they use other social capital such as friends or family members in Hong Kong and join the Hong Kong labor market. The author suggests that they may return to Canada for their adult children’s education when they are old enough. Such a parallel movement between borders will occur in many metropolitan areas, where labor markets attract young adults.

The mobility of millionaire migrants represents the shift from geographical embeddedness to mobility in the globalized world. Although many wealthy Hong-Kong and Taiwanese immigrants returned to their countries of origin from Canada, today, new younger and skilled workers from East Asia have joined Canada’s labor market. Vancouver, in particular, is open to these new immigrants, and therefore, it is now recognizing as a new type of gateway city.

In sum, this book describes the globalization of the housing market and the new roles of gateway cities by discussing the detailed case studies in Vancouver. The discussions in this book will facilitate the understanding of many arguments related to globalization, such as those on livable or sustainable cities.

References


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