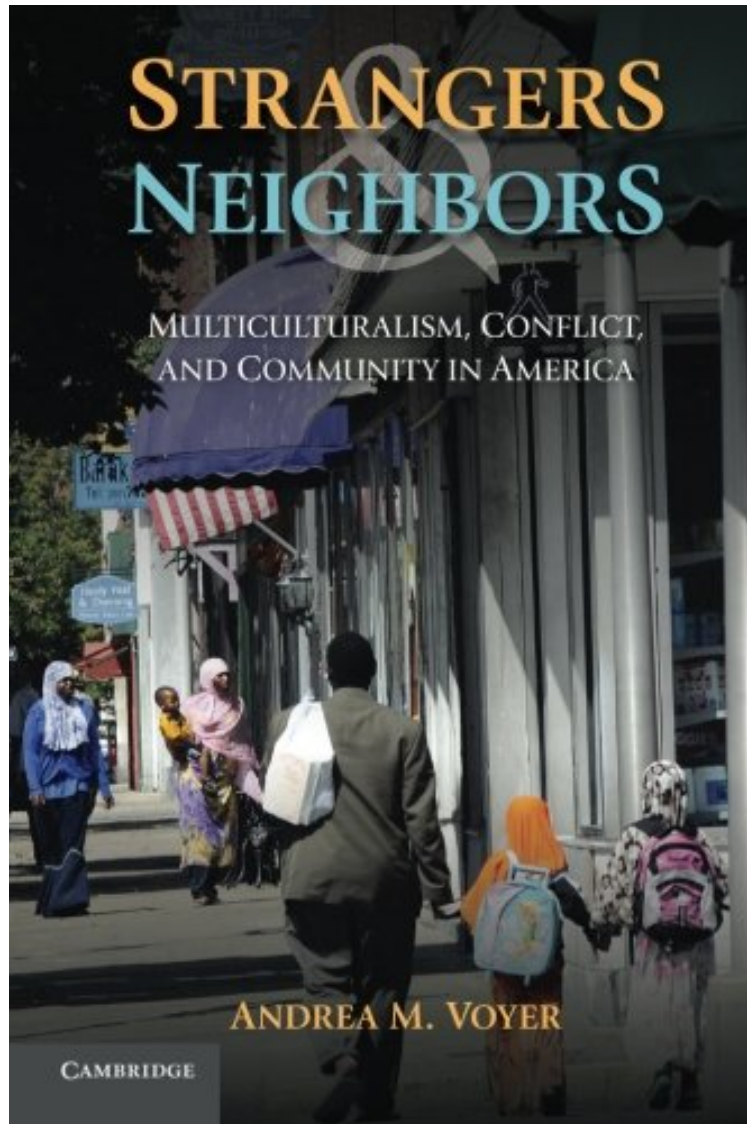


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# Strangers and Neighbors: Multiculturalism, Conflict, and Community in America

Andrea M. Voyer

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**Andrea M. Voyer : Strangers and Neighbors: Multiculturalism, Conflict, and Community in America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strangers and Neighbors: Multiculturalism, Conflict, and Community in America:

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amhHelpful - I'm seeking more knowledge and understanding. We have a substantial Somali population in our small town. Lovely people who are working hard and building good lives.

The city of Lewiston, Maine, has struggled since its mills began closing in the 1950s. Historically recognized for its large French-speaking population descended from the Canadians who staffed the city's mills, in the new millennium Lewiston acquired a new identity as "Maine's Mogadishu." Beginning in 2001, substantial Somali immigrant settlement gave Lewiston the largest per capita Somali population in the United States and sparked controversies and collaborations that redefined the city. In *Strangers and Neighbors*, Andrea M. Voyer shares five years of observations in the city of Lewiston. She shows how long-time city residents and immigrant newcomers worked to develop an understanding of the inclusive and caring community in which they could all take part. Yet the sense of community developed in Lewiston was built on the appreciation of diversity in the abstract rather than by fostering close and caring relationships across the boundaries of class, race, culture, and religion. Through her sensitive depictions of the experiences of Somalis, Lewiston city leadership, anti-racism activists, and even racists, Voyer reveals both the promise of and the obstacles to achieving community in the face of diversity.

"In this riveting new work, Voyer uses a theoretically critical (and inherently fascinating) case to build new insights into the evolving nature of multiculturalism, citizenship, and the relation between global and local in the emerging ethno-political order of the United States. A truly great contribution not only to our understanding of ethnicity, but of culture as well." John Levi Martin, University of Chicago "An extraordinary book that documents, interprets, and explains an extraordinary yet somehow typically American situation. Black Islamic Somalis come to Maine, and Maine first rejects and then incorporates them! Or does it? Bringing creative theorizing together with thick ethnography, Voyer's cultural sociology of contemporary immigrant incorporation is a major achievement." Jeffrey C. Alexander, Yale University "The empirical object of *Strangers and Neighbors* is the 'diversity trouble' that arose in a small New England town when an influx of Somali immigrants substantially altered its cultural and racial fabric. But its underlying theoretical object is the larger picture of challenges facing all Americans in an age of growing ethnic diversity. This thoughtful and beautifully written work will speak powerfully to race scholars, students of immigration, cultural sociologists, and specialists in urban studies. But its penetrating insights into the complexities and ambiguities of multiculturalism also will contribute importantly to our broader public debate regarding what incorporation means and how best to achieve it." Mustafa Emirbayer, University of Wisconsin, Madison "The freshness of Voyer's research; the imaginative ways she adjusts to the (inevitable) problems we all encounter in fieldwork; her commitment of time, energy, and mind to following the project to its theory-inspired end - as well as the graceful presentation of the work - are very impressive. This is an excellent ethnography-based study. It embodies very extensive original work and careful analysis. Voyer's theoretical reflexivity is refreshing and not too common in our subject area. Although it is a case study, her theoretical and practical conclusions provide insights with wider relevance." Martin O. Heisler, University of Maryland "I am impressed by Voyer's thick, nuanced, and sensitive analysis of Somali belonging - something I can easily relate to, as I observe many similar issues and challenges faced by my own and other 'new' immigrant communities. Her interpretation from the lens of the cultural pragmatics of incorporation of familiar strangers is simply brilliant. I also appreciate very much the effective and elegant writing, among other merits." Pei-te Lien, University of California, Santa Barbara "Voyer's book is a magnificent accomplishment. I was bewitched by her prose and her compelling, thick description of careful, impressive, and dedicated fieldwork. It is the book I would most likely recommend to lay readers and undergraduates." Daniel J. Tichenor, University of Oregon

About the Author  
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