Unsettling Settler Societies

Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class

Daiva Stasiulis
Nira Yuval-Davis

editors

Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations

1 1

Unsettling Settler Societies

Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class

Daiva Stasiulis
Nira Yuval-Davis
editors

Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations

v o l u m e   1 1

Unsettling
Settler
Societies

Foreword

During the past 30 years, scholars have become increasingly interested in comparative race and ethnic studies. Especially during the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, there was much debate about the comparative characteristics of societies created through European-descent domination and exploitation. Most of these attempts to define and study such 'settler societies' dead-ended with efforts in developing historically static topologies portraying idealized frozen states of such societies. The lack of sophisticated attention paid to the complexities and material dialectics of historical processes as well as imbalances in status analyses resulted in a comparative literature of plural and/or settler societies which was grossly inadequate.

The major consequence of the absence of material dialectical historical analysis in settler society research has been the neglect of or, better yet, the oversimplification of the roles of the consciousness, movements and political economic contributions of the racialized oppressed in the formation of such societies. The imbalance in status analyses has meant the focus on affluent male-centric issues regarding the roles of dominant and oppressed populations in the construction of European-descent settler societies.

This book fills an important gap in the comparative race and ethnicity field. It offers sophisticated case-by-case societal and regional level analyses of the historical materialistic dynamics behind the construction and transformation of settler societies. The roles of women, people of colour, indigenous people and the poor are centred in efforts to establish a more complex and accurate perspective on the histories, politics and social organization of settler societies around the world. The Introduction offers an inviting theoretical overview of issues which cannot help but begin to change the minds of many scholars who have assumed that the last word has been written on the sociological and political nature of settler societies.

John H. Stanfield II
Race and Ethnic Relations Editor

Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to all those who are involved in progressive struggles to transform settler societies beyond dichotomies.

Biographical Notes

Nahla Abdo is a Palestinian living in Canada. She is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Carleton University, Ottawa. She has published extensively on women, the political economy and politics in the Middle East. She is currently conducting research into women, law and democratization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Natividad Gutiérrez is a sociologist who teaches theories and problems of nationalism at the London School of Economics. She is a founding member of the Association of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN). She is currently undertaking research on the critical responses of ethnic groups to the nation-building project. Her other research interests include the rise of ethic intelligentsia, women and nationalism and the militarization of indigenous peoples.

Anissa Hélie was born in Algeria on February 24, 1964 – the day of nationalization of oil in Algeria. Her parents were involved in the national liberation struggle and she comes from a line of feminist women – mother, grandmother, great aunt and great grandmother. After completing secondary education in Algeria, an MA on Women's History in France and an MA in Women's Studies in Holland, she is currently finishing a PhD in Women's History on European women primary school teachers during colonization in Algeria. She is working within the international solidarity group, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, where she has been handling many solidarity campaigns.

Susie Jacobs was born in Houston, Texas. She studied at the London School of Economics and obtained her D.Phil. at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. She has worked in northeastern areas of Zimbabwe and has published various articles on aspects of gender, land and the state in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. She currently teaches sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Dolores Janiewski holds a Senior Lectureship in US History at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Among her previous publications are *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender and Class in a New South Community* (Temple University Press, 1985, 1993) and various articles dealing with labour history, women's history and race relations. She is currently working on *Passion, Power and Punishment: Citizenship and*

Criminality in North Carolina, 1866–1932 (University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming). Her other research interests include gender, colonization, Native Americans and settler societies from a comparative perspective. She received her PhD in History from Duke University in 1979.

Radha Jhappan is an Assistant Professor in Political Science at Carleton University, Ottawa. Born and raised in Guyana of Indian and Irish parents, and educated in England, she has published many papers on the politics of indigenous peoples and specializes in law and constitutional politics.

Wendy Larner was a Lecturer in Geography at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She is currently a Commonwealth Scholar at Carleton University, Ottawa. Her research is on economic globalization, restructuring, and changing sexual and spatial divisions of labour.

Jan Jindy Pettman is a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the Australian National University. She has recently published *Living in the Margins: Racism, Sexism and Feminism in Australia* and is currently writing a book on gender and international politics.

Sarah A. Radcliffe lectures in Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the co-editor of *Viva: Women and Popular Protest in Latin America* (Routledge, 1993).

Paul Spoonley is Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Social Sciences at Massey University's Auckland campus at Albany, as well as a member of the Department of Sociology. He is the author or editor of 16 books including *Racism and Ethnicity* (Oxford University Press, 1993) and *New Zealand Society* (Dunmore Press, 1994), as well as an editor of *New Zealand Sociology*. His current research is on the labour market participation of Maori, right-wing extremism and the politics of majority/dominant groups.

Daiva Stasiulis is Associate Professor of Sociology at Carleton University, Ottawa. Born in Canada of Lithuanian and Estonian parents, she has written extensively on racism, multiculturalism, and the responses of the state, the feminist and other social movements to ethnic diversity and racism. Her current research includes an investigation of domestic workers and nurses from the Philippines and West Indies which explores the racial and gender boundaries of citizenship. She is co-editor of *Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

Elaine Unterhalter is the Director of Research on Education in Southern Africa (RESA) based at the Institute of Education, University of London. She was born in South Africa and educated in South Africa and Britain. She has written on the experience of colonial rule in Zululand, South African women's organization and education in South Africa. She co-edited the writings of the Women in South African History (WISH) group and two collections on the transformation of South African education, *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles* (Rauan, 1991) and *Education in a Future South Africa: Policy Issues for Transformation* (Heinemann, 1991).

Nira Yuval-Davis is an Israeli who lives in London where she is a Reader in Gender and Ethnic Studies at the University of Greenwich. She has written extensively on women, nationalism, racism and fundamentalism mainly in Israel and Britain. Among others, she co-edited *Woman-Nation-State* (Macmillan, 1989) and *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain* (Virago, 1992) and has co-written *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (Routledge, 1992). She is currently finishing *Gender and Nation* (Sage, forthcoming).

Contents

1

Introduction: Beyond Dichotomies – Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class in Settler Societies

Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis

The complex articulations of race, ethnicity, nation, class and gender that form the subject of this book on 'settler societies' have only recently been explored within feminist literature. Analyses of societal development in mainstream social science have generally been inattentive to these multiple and intersecting social relations. When comparative models of ethnicity and race typologies have been attempted (see Schermerhorn, 1970; Rex, 1983; van den Berghe, 1979), they have tended to construct ethnic and racial collectivities as organic wholes and have failed to examine their inter-class, gender and other social relations. The chapters in this book join a small but growing body of work which has begun to tackle these issues (for example, Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983, 1992; Bottomley et al., 1991; Enloe, 1989; Kandiyoti, 1991; Pettman, 1992; Stasiulis, 1987, 1990). Moreover, the analyses in this book reflect a long-standing preoccupation among its editors and contributors with rendering a richer and more complex sense of political economy and social transformation – one that is inextricably bound up with gendered, racial/ethnic and class relations.

The impetus for this book arose from two observations on the part of its editors. First, whatever their variations in historical genesis and development, settler societies share certain common features and challenges pertaining to the coexistence of diverse indigenous and migrant collectivities. Furthermore, these commonalities stem from the foundational claims made by European migrant groups intent on settlement and on the building of self-sustaining states independent of metropolitan centres. Further similarities pertain to the settlers' political domination over the indigenous populations as well as other racialized minorities.

Secondly, while comparative analyses of settler societies have led to various insights into societies which have developed relatively advanced economies in conjunction with colonial and other hierarchies of privilege, most of this work has remained untouched by the growing body of feminist scholarship on the gendered constructions of colonization,

nation, citizenship, the state, development and oppositional movements. Thus, while the concepts of class, colonialism, race and ethnicity figure prominently in studies of settler societies, gender and the distinctive hierarchical and interdependent relations of women from various national, ethnic and racial collectivities have for the most part been neglected. One major purpose of this book is to locate the shifting conditions and politics of women in settler societies within frameworks that provide a sense of the ways in which indigenous peoples, 'settlers' or superordinate migrants, and other migrants not regarded as 'settlers' have been constructed relative to one another.

The notion of 'settler societies' presented in this book is therefore, on one level, a concrete empirical phenomenon and historical reality and is analysed as such. Of course, in many settler societies the dominant groups have been forced to relinquish their dominance, sharing in the more general global decline in colonialism. In some classifications, however, they are considered to be just one of several sub-types of colonies (together with occupation colonies, mixed colonies and plantation colonies – see Fieldhouse, 1966; Fredrickson, 1988; Shafir, 1989). Nonetheless, as Weitzer (1990: 24–5) argues, because settler states represent 'home' to a dominant group, the intransigence of settlers regarding both indigenous resistance and metropolitan or other external pressures for change complicate the transformation of these states. Change in the form of accommodation of the claims of indigenous peoples and non-dominant migrants offers quite different challenges in 'settler societies' than those involved in the decolonization of 'conventional' colonies where the imperial power has not rooted itself through settlement.

On another level, the cleavages and conflicts that characterize 'settler societies' can be found in virtually all contemporary societies which have involved encounters between indigenous and migrant groups, and successive waves of free and coerced migration corresponding to different phases of capitalist development and political upheavals. Several authors have viewed settler societies as *extreme* examples of 'plural' societies, characterized by profound cleavages along racial, ethnic and religious lines (Kuper and Smith, 1969; Weitzer, 1990: xi). However, the current conflagrations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the fierce national and ethnic struggles in the former Soviet Union, and the racist violence perpetrated against 'foreigners' across Europe lend caution to such judgements. While the book concentrates on settler societies created primarily as a result of European settlement in non-European territories, it does not date the beginnings of these societies at the European invasion. Nor does it assume regional and ethnic conflicts resulting from conquest or other processes of settlement to be specific only to those countries. They exist and are far from being resolved in

many areas of the third world and within Europe itself – including the countries from which the settlers originated. Indeed, the complex dynamics of gender, race, ethnicity and class analysed in the different case studies in this book exist, albeit in different combinations and intensities, in all societies. The case studies presented in this volume therefore invite comparisons with a variety of societies, including those not constructed as settler regimes.

If we define 'settler societies' as societies in which Europeans have settled, where their descendants have remained politically dominant over indigenous peoples, and where a heterogeneous society has developed in class, ethnic and racial terms, then it becomes clear that 'settler societies' must be seen as falling along a continuum rather than within clear and fixed boundaries. As elaborated below, our resistance to drawing an unambiguous line of demarcation between settler and other (colonial, post-colonial or metropolitan) societies is consistent with our understanding that the circuits of power are vastly more complicated both globally and in specific locations than any binary division allows. Moreover, the extent to which a society is a 'settler society' is contested by the de-colonizing movements of various ethno-national groups within. Settler colonization may play a more formative role in state formation and nation-building in some periods than in others. Different settler societies have ties to different colonial powers and forms of imperialism, as well as to diverse social movements; they have different demographic ratios of indigenous, European, non-European and mixed populations. Some (for example, Mexico and Algeria) are acknowledged more in the present-day as countries of emigration, rather than immigration.

'Settler societies' have complicated the neat dichotomy between Europe and the rest of the world insofar as they are distinct from 'colonies of exploitation' (Adam, 1972: 17). The latter typified a more common form of colonialism whereby the appropriation of land, natural resources and labour entailed indirect control by colonial powers through a 'thin white line', a relatively small, sojourning group of primarily male administrators, merchants, soldiers and missionaries. In contrast, settler societies were characterized by a much larger settler European population of both sexes for permanent settlement. Settler states developed much more elaborate political and economic infrastructures and 'achieved *de facto* or *de jure* political independence from the metropole' (Weitzer, 1990: 26).

Curiously, most of these societies maintained relations of dependency with their original 'sponsors', even as they achieved considerable political and economic autonomy from European colonial powers. In some instances, as in the case of the 'white dominions' (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), the dominant culture and institutions

were fashioned directly on those of the 'mother' country (Britain).

Typically, settler societies featured extensive systems of exclusion and exploitation of both 'indigenous' and 'alien' peoples within, exercised through a variety of coercive, ideological, legal, administrative and cooptative mechanisms. One measure of the sense of broadly shared interests among settler societies has been the modelling and borrowing of systems of control over indigenous and migrant populations among settler states. Instances of this were the reserve and pass systems of control over indigenous peoples, which South African elites borrowed from Canada and Australia, and the 'Natal formula' used to restrict the entry of migrant people of colour throughout the British colonies of settlement.

The paradox of settler societies is that they simultaneously resisted and accommodated the authority of an imperialist Europe, where 'colonial rule was the foundry within which [non-European institutions and culture] were melted down and recast into new political alloys . . . compatible with European requirements' (Kennedy, 1987: 335). The relative prosperity, high material standards and liberal democratic governments of many settler societies have captured the attention of historians and political economists insofar as these were achieved in a context of dependence on European colonial powers for capital, transport and markets (Denoon, 1983; Ehrensaft and Armstrong, 1981; Panitch, 1981). But to the extent that the focus of these inquiries has been on the capitalist and liberal democratic achievements (and limitations) of settler societies, they often read as Eurocentric 'settler historiographies', categories in which indigenous peoples and others who are not considered to be settlers go missing (Abele and Stasiulis, 1989; Denoon, 1983: 207; McGrath, 1990: 191).

Historical accounts of settler colonies tend to focus on the transplanted habits, tastes and skills of a European capitalist culture among 'settlers' or more accurately among the racially and ethnically dominant settlers. This focus has had four consequences. First, by dating history or the 'formative period of history' in settler societies as coinciding with the beginnings of European colonization, it effaces and distorts the complex histories and societies of indigenous peoples which existed prior to and during prolonged periods of contact with Europeans. Where oral traditions rather than written records prevailed and historical periods were not clearly defined, the temptation has been for social scientists to construct for indigenous peoples 'a unitary and static "past" in which changing realities are reduced to the lowest common denominator' (Etienne and Leacock, 1980: 5). The 'prehistory' of (pre-contact) indigenous peoples is rendered irrelevant to the 'history' of settler societies, a dichotomy that exists in contemporary disciplinary boundaries between 'Native (or indigenous) studies'

and 'history'. Secondly, the selective gaze on the institutions and values of British and other European migrants deflects attention from how diverse the 'settlers' and the settlement process in such societies have been. Hence, adventurers, merchants, homesteaders, convicts, slaves, indentured labourers, religious and political refugees and many other types of migrants – from many different European and non-European countries – have all shaped the settler societies to which they migrated.

Thirdly, analyses of settler societies have tended to concentrate on a relatively narrow range of societies – either those which have emerged as a result of British imperialism or those whose formative periods as settler societies took place during the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In spite of marked differences among the colonizing powers whose imperial projects included the transplanting of European communities, the settler communities established by, for example, the British, Spanish, French and Dutch had a number of characteristics and problems in common (Elliott, 1987; Pagden and Canny, 1987). Furthermore, as Weitzer (1990: 25) remarks, 'The period during which the foundations of settler domination were laid is . . . not the distinguishing feature; settler states were established in the seventeenth century in South Africa, the nineteenth century in Rhodesia and Liberia, the 1920s in Northern Ireland, and as late as the 1940s in Taiwan.'

Fourthly, analyses of settler states have tended to privilege one form of social relations and one form of domination – such as centre–periphery, class or race – and thus reduced the inherent complexity of the social relations in such societies (Wallerstein, 1979, 1980; Denoon, 1983; Huttenback, 1976). Moreover, the gendered character of nation-state building in settler colonies, recently problematized in feminist scholarship, has been almost entirely ignored in most (non-feminist) accounts of settler societies (Haggis, 1987; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989). Moreover, few analyses of settler societies have examined how settler capitalism exacerbated and transformed relations based *simultaneously* on colonialism, capitalism, gender, class and race/ethnicity.

In this book we attempt to move beyond the dichotomies and compartmentalization which characterize the literature on settler societies, particularly those that separate the histories of indigenous peoples from those of (im)migrants, frameworks of colonialism versus migrant labour systems; race versus class; gender versus race; and so on. The different case studies – individually and in combination – reflect an understanding of settler societies which views the histories of indigenous and migrant peoples as interdependent, and which takes into account the gendered character of these histories. Each case study examines how the process of development of these settler societies, and the positions of indigenous and migrant peoples within them, reflects

the place of these societies within a global economy, and internal dynamics based on articulations of race, gender, ethnicity and class. The ways in which these various social relations combine are explored in relation to state-building processes and ideologies, economic life and oppositional social movements.

While the historical period surveyed in the chapters varies, many of them are cognizant of the contemporary internationalization of production and the neo-liberal and neo-conservative cast of states, associated with the 'New World Order'. As Wendy Larner and Paul Spoonley suggest, the internationalization of the economies of countries such as New Zealand and many others with formative settler society histories profoundly challenges the regional economic orientation and identities of these societies; this problematizes the contemporary applicability of the concept 'settler society' to countries which had earlier been viewed by settlers as fragments of Britain (Spain, France or other metropolitan 'sponsors'). New Zealand and Australia view their future in the context of the Pacific Rim, not the British Commonwealth; Canada and Mexico in the context of North America, not Britain and Spain; and so forth. Several chapters, then, analyse the effects of contemporary globalization of production, the division of labour and the state, and concomitant New Right agendas on indigenous and migrant populations. They also explore the effects of these volatile and unsettling trends on the nationalist/ethnic/feminist projects and politics pursued by women in these diverse collectivities.

Beyond these commonalities, the individual case studies are diverse, reflecting the varied and distinctive histories of both the different countries and the contributors. Together, however, they represent a wider definition of the concept of 'settler societies' than the one currently dominating the literature. The latter generally only recognizes settler projects that have occurred during the nineteenth century onwards. We include studies of countries in which the foundations for European settlement occurred earlier, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Mexico, Peru, South Africa and the United States). Most settler societies analysed in this book were products of British colonial expansion. In addition to the so-called 'white dominions' of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, this volume includes South Africa and Zimbabwe, which similarly became part of the emerging British 'empire of free trade' but where, in contrast, the European settlers have always formed a numerical minority. The United States is also included; although it is usually taken to be either 'exceptional' or the ideal-typical case of a metropolitan society, Dolores Janiewski cogently makes the case that as the first settler society to gain independence, the US can usefully be compared to other settler colonies. Also included are cases of settler states which were sponsored by imperial powers other than