

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Settler Colonial City: Racism and Inequity in Postwar Minneapolis. By David Hugill.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0kv531p5>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 46(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Harjo, Laura

Publication Date

2023-07-14

DOI

10.17953/aicrj.46.2.reviews.harjo

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Settler Colonial City: Racism and Inequity in Postwar Minneapolis. By David Hugill. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021. 216 pages. \$100 cloth; \$25 paper.

Hugill's work traces the political economy that governs how Indigenous peoples live in the Twin Cities. It historicizes and provides a background on the well-known Indigenous enclave in Franklin Avenue's neighborhood. The Franklin Avenue cultural corridor is touted in the discipline of public planning and in Indian country as an exemplar of Indigenous placemaking. However, Hugill reveals the complexity of the neighborhood by addressing how settler colonialism organizes life for Indigenous people and other people of color in Minneapolis. Minneapolis, as a settler colonial city, is an ongoing set of conditions and relations that continue to generate oppression for Indigenous peoples. Hugill focuses on how the Indigenous neighborhood develops across time and sheds light on a lesser-known narrative of its development within a political economy grounded in the military-industrial complex.

Settler Colonial City shows readers a deep study of Minneapolis and how settler colonial logics are produced and maintained to the detriment of Indigenous peoples and people of color. The author's argument supports the claim of settler logics' structuring of everyday life, starting first with the social milieu of Indigenous neighborhoods in Minneapolis, the failure of white liberal organizations to ensure social justice, community clashes with the police, and the role of the military-industrial complex in providing jobs to the Indigenous community.

The book is organized into four main chapters encapsulating a compelling narrative about Minneapolis as a settler colonial city. In chapter one, "Urban Change and the Settler Colonial Relation," Hugill demonstrates how Indigenous people are not contained within Minneapolis' Phillips neighborhood but are in movement—they have kinship networks within the Twin Cities and beyond. Chapter two, "Liberal Antiracism as Political Dead End," highlights the problem of white liberal organizations wanting to "do good" for Indigenous peoples but only insofar as it does not jeopardize their white privilege. Chapter three, "Cops and Counter Patrols," elucidates the surveilling and policing of Black and Indigenous neighborhoods and local hangouts and discusses Black and Indigenous groups that organize to protect themselves from the police. Finally, chapter four, "Land Mines at Home and Abroad," shows readers how carceral geographies operate to subjugate peoples within the United States and abroad. Hugill unpacks the role of the military-industrial complex in developing the neighborhood. For example, a bindery is developed but underwritten with military-generated capital.

Settler Colonial City traces how white supremacy operates overtly, such as walling Indigenous peoples out of affluent neighborhoods and policing them. I am reminded of

Sherene Razack's work about respectable and degenerate spaces and how the Phillips neighborhood is cast as a degenerate neighborhood needing continual overpolicing. Hugill shows us how the prison and military-industrial complexes are coproduced in an urban Indigenous neighborhood. Indigenous people are policed at night when exiting bars. Impoverished Indigenous peoples are working to create machinery to kill poor people in another part of the world. Their primary employment is working for Honeywell to support the military; they are pushed to maintain the same systems that seek to eliminate them.

Settler Colonial City is essential reading because it shows how settler logics structure the everyday life of urban Indigenous people. For example, Indigenous people are typically restricted to living in small enclaves of the city, and limited to work opportunities within the military-industrial complex—corporations such as Honeywell. Black and Indigenous bodies are hypervisible in public spaces, and communities organize themselves to protect against police brutality. Oversurveillance and policing of Indigenous peoples were one factor leading to the birth of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis.

Settler Colonial City reveals the political economy of living in the city and what the stakes are for Indigenous peoples regarding genocidal histories, safety, housing, labor, and spaces of belonging. In comparison, research in similar areas typically focuses on large cities and their impact on people of color broadly, often overlooking Indigenous peoples entirely. This book provides a critical case study of how an urban political economy affects Indigenous peoples and the ways they must participate to access a livelihood. *Settler Colonial City* demonstrates what it means to be Indigenous in the city—to have a deep history and relationship to place, a vibrant community not typically understood by non-Indigenous peoples, and ongoing participation in the city's political economy. *Settler Colonial City* is a must-read for city planners.

Settler Colonial City would be helpful to a range of audiences, such as geographers wishing to understand how the white spatial imaginary operates in relationship to an urban Indigenous community and how Indigenous and carceral geographies operate in the city. The book could be an assigned reading to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, the disciplines of American studies, critical ethnic studies, and urban planning would find it helpful in examining racial capitalism, overcriminalization of people of color, and the failure of white liberal activism to dismantle racist structures that benefit them. Finally, This book should be necessary reading in Native American studies and critical ethnic studies. It is a deep, US-based case study, but is also instructive for scholars wishing to examine Indigenous peoples living in industrialized nations in large cities with legacies of settler colonialism.

Laura Harjo
University of Oklahoma