

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

AUGIE FLERAS and JEAN LEONARD ELLIOTT, *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada*, fourth edition. Toronto: Prentice Hall. 2003, xv + 361 pp.

Unequal Relations is the fourth edition since 1992, although joint authorship for this edition is, as Fleras notes "metaphorical ... a jointly authored text in name only... collaborative in intent rather than process" due to Elliott's death in 1995 at age 54.

The book's subtitle identifies its function, as Fleras states in the Preface: "... some of the anomalies that animate the dynamics of race, ethnic and aboriginal relations..." in Canada. The structure deals with twelve nexus contexts, in three Parts. Part 1 ("Conceptualizing Race, Ethnic and Aboriginal Relations") consumes nearly half the pages in six chapters. Part 2 examines "Canada's Multi-Layered Diversity: Peoples, Nations, and Minorities" in three chapters and takes almost a third of Fleras' book. The last, shortest Part ("Multiculturalism and Canada-Building") has just over a fifth of the volume, with its three chapters.

Each chapter has a tripartite structure -- a one-to-three page "Debate," setting out the central issues-topics on which the chapter focuses, followed by an equally brief "Introduction" stating the parameters of interest, which then the author probes in several substantive sections. Thus, *Unequal Relations* has a broad reach, convening a diversity of issues, questions, problems, policies, and programmes. Countless Canadian books have ranged the same issues since John Porter's 1965 precedent-setting *Vertical Mosaic* and Peter Li's early book in 1988, *Ethnic Inequality in a Class Society*, and their subsequent long strings of updating books and articles. The *Unequal Relations* editions established a uniqueness and importance, this edition being no exception, thankfully maintaining -- even exceeding -- its standards of detailed and rigorous sociological inquiry.

The book's title clues its analytical perspective on ethno-racial inequalities in Canada, not merely the forms of discrimination of the past and today, but also the paths by which resolution or prevention of ethno-racial discrimination can eventuate. This is not at all to infer that either the analyses or conclusions in the book are *a priori* ideologically driven. Indeed, the *Unequal Relations* title accurately refers to what the book reveals as outcomes for ethno-racial communities. My use of the "ethno-

racial" term does not at all exclude the Aboriginal Peoples, but is applied for literary expediency here.

The contents of the book vary from classical or traditional analyses to recent statistical information. Each chapter addresses its subject matter in a different way— some concentrating on conceptual and theoretical clarifications and their implications, others heavy on historical information and change, still others summarizing past research findings, and a few that highlight advancements and events promoting ethno-racial equality.

Fleras's book is much advantaged by the vigour of its ideas and description, nicely expressive, while eschewing jargon, all in a flowing fashion. The narrative is always cogent, stating issues and comprehensively scribing about the analyses and implications from these. Moreover, the logical transition among the various parts of each chapter and among early chapters and the final ones is almost always readily evident, making one's drawing from the writing of each Part and Chapter of *Unequal Relations* an intellectually worthwhile experience.

There is little to quibble about in the book. There is, though, a significant technical error of definition. Throughout, reference is made to "Aboriginal Peoples," and whether planfully or implicitly, "First Nations" alone are depicted as constituting "Aboriginal Peoples," with hardly a mention or consideration of the Inuit or Métis, the other two constituent Aboriginal Peoples defined in our 1982 Constitution (Section 35 (2)). A possibly more serious problem pervades *Unequal Relations*. Although there is no ideology of inequality that strictly speaking engenders analyses or conclusions, there is a wafting prospect throughout that visible-minorities—especially the immigrant generations—are inevitable victims of racial and religious discrimination today. However, several researchers have shown that immigrant visible-minorities generally possess educational and occupational levels exceeding most white ethnicities, including the two so-called Charter Groups, and Tables 5.1-5.2 [pp. 118-119] belie any presumptive hypothesis of lesser earnings amongst visible-minority/immigrant Canadians.

Notwithstanding, Fleras' *Unequal Relations* is richly rewarding, a worthy resource for anyone interested in ethno-racial divides and inequalities extant in Canada. It is eminently suitable for college and/or university, and probably advanced secondary-school students, concerning our history[ies], the need for and achievement of equality, particularly amongst minority ethno-racial and Aboriginal communities in Canada.

Edward N. Herberg *University of Toronto*