

The Future of Hunters Within Nation States; and, the Theory and Practice of Anthropologists.  
Questions Arising out of the Canadian Experience and Particularly Experiences in the James  
Bay Region of Quebec

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Preliminary Paper Prepared for Conference on Hunters and Gatherers, June 27-30, 1978, Paris

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My most recent research on the hunting peoples of the Canadian north has focussed on the interaction of groups of hunters with the political institutions of the nation state and with the international economy. The issues involved derive from a number of developments both within anthropology and within the Canadian north, and I think they raise important theoretical and practical questions for anthropologists. These questions concern both the transformations of hunting societies, and the possible significance of these developments for the theoretical understandings and practical activities of anthropologists.

The revolution in anthropological thought of the last 10 years brought about by the "discovery" that the productive activities of hunting and gathering peoples are relatively reliable, abundant, and efficient has stimulated the re-examination of a series of anthropological models and explanations. Among the most important areas of revision are the anthropological models of how hunting and gathering societies change and undergo transformation. The questions I have been particularly interested in are the transformations that occur when hunting and gathering societies become less isolated and must increasingly relate to and respond to nation state political and bureaucratic structures and to international economic structures. These questions are relevant to a wide range of the surviving societies of hunters and gatherers today. These are not simply questions of the transformation of hunters and gatherers into something else: farmers, pastoralists, slum dwellers, ethnic minorities, proletarians, or specialized laborers. Rather, these are also questions about the transformation of hunting societies into new forms of hunting societies, with diverse productive organizations, consumer goods, and complex imported productive technologies. In these societies hunting and/or gathering is no longer the sole productive activity, but hunting and/or gathering still is significant in an ideational, ecological and social sense in the lives of the people. The changes have been extremely complex and not easily described within a theoretically informed comparative framework. This is a project which I see as worthy of continuing attention.

It is not only a matter of continuing to record transformations. Change in the current context is somewhat unique because it is being done more and more self-consciously. Increasingly the hunting peoples themselves are actively trying to play a determining role in the transformations they themselves are undergoing. They are not just trying to survive. At least in some regions the hunting peoples have for the first time sought to restructure their relationships with macro-institutions in terms of their own cultural systems. They have, in short, set out to redefine their own futures. This is a situation in which the anthropologist may be a participant and an observer, but in a wider than anthropological sense of those terms. And it is a situation in which anthropological understanding and theory may be both applied and transformed in the process.

To take Canada as an example, hunting and gathering societies have continued to exist in the northern parts of the country despite 350 to 150 years of involvement with the international fur trade and despite 75 to 25 years of administrative involvement with national and provincial governmental structures, and despite governmental policies that have frequently been based on the assumption that hunting was a dying way of life. In the last

decade several developments have simultaneously brought these facts into the forefront of both public attention and anthropological interest. New plans have been put forward for the "development" of the resources of northern portions of Canada by the national and provincial governments, and by international economic interests. These plans and projects have been a stimulus for significant changes both in the consciousness of the hunting peoples and of the anthropologists and other social scientists who are familiar with the region.

The Native peoples have increasingly sought to stop and/or prevent such development, because it has been undertaken without their consent and participation. They have been using legal means, and particularly recourse to claims for legal recognition of their "aboriginal rights". Across much of the Canadian north aboriginal rights have some prima facie recognition within the legal system and have not been effectively extinguished. This fortunate circumstance provides a legal resource with potential political and economic clout. The Native position has not been a simple opposition to development, but rather an insistence that aboriginal rights must be recognized before development can proceed. Although it has taken many forms, this has been interpreted by all the groups of Native peoples to mean the negotiation and establishment of land claims settlements between themselves and the appropriate levels of government. Such settlements would recognize their rights, clearly define them, and afford legal protection to such rights. All native groups have sought a comprehensive settlement that would include among the rights and benefits, at a minimum: a) protection and development of their hunting and gathering economies including protection of the environments and biotic resources on which they depend; b) expansion of their job economies and increased control and/or involvement in the local economic projects of regional, national or international institutions; c) maintenance and expansion of community self-determination; and d) new social and political institutions to articulate the local and regional native interest with the larger political systems up to the national level. And, while the means by which each group seeks to accomplish these general goals varies, and the relative values they put on each goal vary, the Native groups have all sought such goals with increasing clarity and with a determination not to be satisfied with mere tokenism.

The last decade has therefore led to the treshold of a series of very significant and widespread new transformations that will be occurring in the hunting societies of the Canadian north during the last quarter of this century, and beyond.

In this context social scientists, and anthropologists in particular, have been called on to take up some relatively new roles, relatively new in the Canadian context. At least three general demands have been made upon the social scientists: 1) to document the aboriginal and contemporary ways of life of the native peoples, and the transformations that have occurred, especially in systems of land use and subsistence economies; usually in order to provide evidence for use by the Native peoples in their legal, para-legal and political confrontations; 2) to advise the Native peoples on the detailed formulations of their goals and the means of attaining them in the light of present social science theory and knowledge of the interactions, processes, and transformations of hunting societies and national and international institutions; and, to help present and articulate such policy as is adopted by the Native people to the courts, to the government, and to the public; and 3) to help implement the changes sought.

One of the things that is significant in all this for anthropology is that these developments provide an opportunity to link anthropological thought and action in a way that both, fulfills the claims for the ultimate usefulness of anthropological knowledge, while at the same time making possible significant advancement of that knowledge. Thought, and particularly theoretical thought, gets clarified in its application to particular human situations, and action in particular situations provides critical opportunities to confirm or revise

knowledge, including theoretical knowledge. This basic dialectic is unfortunately lost in the highly polemical debate between wholly abstracted theoreticians and wholly engaged activists. Neither polemics nor pigeonholing should be allowed to cloud the important dialectic between the two dimensions of anthropological being. Anthropology like all other cultural orders is actualized in action, and confronts us as reality in experience. There is a growing opportunity to be both useful and to do theoretically significant research that I think should be a focus of at least some of the research to be done over the next few years.

In the remainder of this paper I propose to briefly outline two examples of the interaction I see between action-oriented and theoretically-relevant research. These examples bring out the theoretical issues involved in action, and the theoretical implications of self-consciously studying that action and its consequences. These examples are drawn from ongoing research projects, and therefore set out examples of problems and issues, but do not provide answers, although some indication of the preliminary results will be offered. I will examine first the general orientations currently being adopted in land claims negotiations in Canada and James Bay, and then I will examine a particular program established by the James Bay land claims settlement, a guaranteed income program for Cree hunters.

#### - Land Claims Negotiations in Canada and James Bay

As I indicated above, a number of Canadian anthropologists have been called on to serve as advisors and participants in the legal cases and negotiations concerning the aboriginal rights of Canadian Native peoples, and to contribute to the land claims settlements, or agreements, that are the ultimate results of those negotiations. The approaches taken to date have been diverse, at least eight negotiating position papers have been drafted to date by Native groups, although only two such settlements have been completed. The various approaches adopted by the Native people, whether on the advice of social scientists, or without such advice, all involve assumptions and concepts characteristic of one or another social science theory of the relationship between an indigenous population and national states and economies. The results of the negotiations and the consequences of the agreement are therefore relevant case studies of the adequacy of the theories explicitly or implicitly adopted and will not only be relevant in the Canadian context, but for the general study of the interaction between hunters and the larger political systems in which they are irrevocably enmeshed.

A land claims settlement is from a historical perspective one step in the history of the administration of Northern Native peoples, and in the course of the "development" or alternatively the "under-development" of northern resources and the northern economies. The theoretical frameworks for scholarly research on or participation in Native land claims settlements are therefore closely linked to the theoretical frameworks used to analyze administration and development in under-developed regions. Two such theoretical frameworks are widely used today, a Marxist and an assimilationist. The Marxist framework as used here generally assumes that developers, including most government administrators, and indigenous populations are in fundamental and extensive conflict over most of the issues to be considered by a Native land claims settlement including, but not limited to, economic development policies, land, resource use, environmental protection and personal and community social control. In its strongest form, it is claimed that there must be a separation of Native communities and national structures or extensive dependency will be created. On the other hand, the assimilationist model assumes a pluralism, that there has been or will be a rough equilibrium between the benefits received and the costs paid by northern Native peoples and southern administrators, including developers. In its strongest form it is claimed that the only hope for development of a minority population within large

nation states is political and economic incorporation into existing institutional frameworks. The basic assumption of both views is that there is an underlying evaluation which all actors at least potentially share and which is the basis for defining the conflict, or the benefits sought. Recently, this kind of underlying assumption has been questioned by many anthropologists working in the areas of economic, cultural and development theory. The case of the James Bay and Northern Quebec land claims settlement is a potentially interesting one in this respect because the Native groups involved did not adopt either a Marxist or an assimilationist view of the linkages they wanted with macro-structures.

The JBNQ Agreement was signed in 1975 by the James Bay Cree, the Northern Quebec Inuit, the Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec and the James Bay Corporations after two years of detailed negotiations. The Agreement provided for the extinguishment of any aboriginal rights or claims the approximately 11,000 Cree and Inuit might have, in exchange for the specific rights and claims spelled out in the thirty sections and over 400 pages of the Agreement. The Agreement was comprehensive covering the questions of: hunting, fishing and trapping, land allocations and regimes, local and regional government, education, health and medical services, economic and social development, income security, police and justice, environmental protection, modifications to the James Bay Hydro-electric Project, compensation, eligibility. In each of those areas the Agreement provided for specific rights, benefits and responsibilities of the parties and for the mechanisms thought necessary for successful exercise of those rights, benefits and responsibilities.

The James Bay Cree and Northern Quebec Inuit had as their most fundamental goal the maintenance and continued exercise of self-determination over their communities, traditional activities, cash economies and social and political institutions. They did not want assimilation. The Cree sought the goal through the continuation and development of separate ethnic institutions linked extensively to regional, provincial and federal macro-institutions. They sought encapsulation with linkages. The Inuit sought the goal through formation of non-ethnic regional structures controlled by Inuit. The aim of both was to create institutions sufficiently autonomous to be highly responsive to local knowledge and aspirations, and sufficiently powerful that they could be linked to provincial and federal structures and effectively implement and fulfill those aspirations. Neither the goals set by the Native peoples nor the negotiations process itself "fit" into the major theoretical approaches outlined above. The Native people sought neither assimilation nor complete political and economic autonomy, assuming they could exercise sufficient real power in interaction with macro-structures to be able to avoid dependency and to be able to effectively pursue self-determination.

The outcome of this approach will of course only be clear over a number of years, but the negotiations process itself is a first case for study. The case of a land claims settlement is a potentially significant context to examine these theoretical differences because it provides a context in which the native populations, the administrators and the developers are brought into a direct and sustained interaction in order to give a particularly precise formulation to the rights and responsibilities of each within a territory. In James Bay and Northern Quebec the negotiations process revealed the assumptions, knowledge, interests and powers of each of the parties, and in particular it revealed the degrees of correspondence and conflict that existed between the parties and what effect these had on the course of the interaction.

Since December 1973 I have served as an advisor to the Cree Indian organization, the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec), first in their court fight against the hydro-electric project, on the social implications of the James Bay development, and later in the negotiations, on the social aspects of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Land Claim Negotiation. This work has provided extensive first hand experience of the events leading up to and during negotiations, as well as some experience of the events that have accompanied the implementation of the Agreement.

My initial sense of the negotiations, subject to a more sustained and complete analysis, is that elements of both conflict and pluralist theories were supported by the data, but that neither theory is adequate to account for the actual negotiations process, nor the Agreement that resulted from that process. Each party was fundamentally self-interested, self-organized, and willing to make trade-offs and continue negotiations, but no single underlying shared system appears to have existed, nor could such a system plausibly explain the course of the interaction. Rather than systematic conflict or cooperation, what appears to have existed were several sets of relatively self-consistent assumptions, bodies of knowledge, and interests, each unique to a party and each having specific areas of conflict or overlap with those of other parties. Given this, the interaction of the parties appears best to be viewed as a historical processes of individual strategies through which each party sought its highly valued goals, and exploited the areas other parties undervalue relative to the agent. The negotiation was clearly constrained by the historical conditions and powers of the respective parties, but these came into play only in areas of direct conflict, and parties with lesser power sought to specify and thereby narrowly focus the areas of such conflict. The consequence was that the course and outcome of negotiations were not solely and objectively determined by power in the wider political sphere, the outcome was significantly determined in the series of the strategic decisions taken in the course of negotiation.

A full analysis of the data will be needed before final conclusions can be drawn, including assessment for each party of the goals, assumptions, perceived conflicts, perceived cooperation, perceived power distribution, tactics, strategic decisions, leverage and their changes over time. The unequal distribution of knowledge and the relationships between knowledge and assumptions on one hand and strategy and outcome on the other will also have to be examined. The interaction between parties will have to be analyzed with respect to initial positions and final agreements, examining confrontations, alliances, means of conflict resolution and trade-offs. It is expected that the analysis of negotiating data will reveal the basic interests and powers of the parties, and the processes and degrees to which these are successfully applied to achieve specific goals. The initial analysis of the data, however, appears to bear out the Native assumptions during the course of the negotiations. The Native peoples themselves although they did not get what they wanted, did achieve a sufficient number of their goals to convince them that the agreement provided an adequate basis for maintaining and expanding their self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Seeking a theoretical framework that might adequately account for the negotiation process and the outcome, a combination of decision-making theory and cultural theory seem appropriate. The former is now being broadly applied to economic, political and social interactions and it provides a means of analyzing interaction that does not assume cognitive correspondence among parties. Cultural theory on the other hand provides a methodology for analyzing the partially consistent set of values, assumptions and interests of a party, and for describing how such knowledge develops and is transformed in the process of decision and action. Both must be studied in historical context. The interaction of cultural knowledge, strategic decisions and action are complex. The cultural knowledge of the Cree and Inuit, both basic values and their understandings of their actual historical experience of the Euro-Canadians determined the initial goals and assumptions. The ongoing course of negotiation activity however involved a series of strategic decisions and choices, and a reevaluation of their experience in the light of the results of those decisions in the context of the ongoing political and economic realities revealed in negotiations. The course of the negotiations did not require many changes to the political and economic

assumptions of the Native people but it did require frequent cultural innovation within existing cultural belief systems. The assumptions about how and to what extent institutions can and will be changed is now going to be tested as the agreement is implemented.

The aim of my research is therefore to develop a more adequate theoretical model of the potential interaction of local societies of Native peoples and administrators and developers of the national and international systems, using decision theory, cultural analysis, and a historical analysis of their relationship to political and economic changes. The study of negotiations is one step in that analysis.

Research on this interaction is also being continued to monitor and analyze the process of implementing the agreement over the next several years. Researchers at the Programme in the Anthropology of Development at McGill University, headed by Professor Richard F. Salisbury, hope to study these processes, and to evaluate the outcome in the light of alternative theories of regional development.

#### An Income Security Program for Cree Hunters

A specific implementation project currently underway is to monitor and assess a guaranteed income program for Cree people who live by hunting, fishing and trapping, one of the first programs to be established under the agreement. Several researchers, including Ignatius LaRusic, Colin Scott and myself, are involved in this project.

The program grew out of the difficulties Native people perceived they were having to maintain the hunting sector of their economy. Anthropological research both documented the extent of that economy in James Bay, and the factors that were leading to abandonment of hunting by some individuals across sub-arctic Canada. These data, which I will briefly summarize, led to several specific provisions in the settlement and to the negotiation of the particular income security program.

Studies have been conducted across the Canadian north from east to west from James Bay to Baffin Island to the Mackenzie Delta communities to Old Crow which consistently demonstrate the continuing intensity of subsistence production from wildlife resources. As an example, in the James Bay area, there have been a series of community studies since the late 1940's, and recently a five-year study was begun to monitor wildlife harvests over the entire region covering approximately 250,000 sq.mi. and 7 Cree and 11 Inuit communities. The study has indicated to date that the population of approximately 6,000 Crees includes 1550 adult males, of which 1280 actively practice hunting, and of which 670 are considered to live predominantly by hunting. The Cree hunters as a whole produce a conservatively estimated total of 1.7 to 1.9 million pounds of edible food a year from their wildlife harvests, the equivalent of .9 to 1.0 pounds of meat per adult consumption unit per day. Somewhat lower figures have been reported from other areas in the Canadian sub-arctic and higher figures from the Inuit areas of Quebec. The subsistence food they produce is conservatively estimated to be worth six times the value of the commercially salable products they produce. Hunting production varies considerably from household to household, many households produce three quarters of their caloric intake, and most of their protein by hunting, others may produce 25 percent or less. Overall, it has been estimated that one-half of the diet comes from hunting.

As it is, hunting is sufficiently meaningful and productive that about one-half the adult Cree males prefer hunting as a way of life to the alternatives presently available to them, and the other half practice hunting on a more limited basis, many moving back and forth between welfare dependence or employment and hunting. Only the very aged and the ill do not hunt at all. The numbers change but the pattern is characteristic across

large parts of the Canadian north. Presumably, similar transformations have occurred elsewhere in the world.

Ethnographic studies have identified about a dozen factors affecting transformations of the productive activities of the hunting peoples of the Canadian sub-arctic, including: employment; transfer payments; schooling of children in settlements; changes in resource base; changing rates of pay for salable goods produced; changing costs of goods required to hunt; changing aspirations for more efficient and secure hunting and for consumer goods.

While it may be useful to isolate any one of these factors for comparative cross-cultural study, the actual course of events in any region or community has to be studied by examining all those factors at work in the situation.

In the James Bay area where hunting appears to have remained an especially viable part of the total economy, our studies have indicated that the factors that have been most decisive in movements away from hunting have been inadequate and unstable cash incomes and unstable access to credit to cover the basic costs of hunting. It costs about \$1000 to \$3000 per year to hunt and fur sales bring in only \$500 to \$700. The instabilities are a result of changing world prices for furs, changing conditions of transfer payments, changing opportunities for seasonal employment, and changing availability of goods and services as trading companies open and close stores and alter policies.

Our analysis of the actual shifts of men between hunting activities and local employment suggested that while some clearly preferred one or the other activity many were choosing between one or the other as situational conditions changed, and there were recurrent declines and increases of participation in both hunting and in wage labor over time. The choices, of many men, appeared to be "rational" given cultural values and the actual conditions affecting the activities at any moment. The main reasons cited for abandonment of hunting were instability of the cash available and insufficiency of the total cash actually available. Since these were the main factors it was decided that what was needed was a program designed to provide a stable cash income to those who practiced hunting, sufficient to meet needs.

The Cree people have paid particular attention when formulating their land claims to the changes which would be needed to help maintain the hunting economies. To this end they have sought to protect the land and the renewable resource base, by seeking guaranteed rights to the resources, conservation of the resources, priority in their use, and the protection of wildlife and the land from the impacts of non-renewable resource developments. They have sought to assure that bureaucratic structures and services, including social services, educational and medical services are adapted to the needs of a hunting way of life. They have sought to take control over the provision of goods and services to hunters, and over the means of access to markets for the salable products of hunters. They have sought to assure that regional planning and the development of regional infrastructures take hunters' needs into account. And finally, they have sought to provide a stable economic base for hunters that would insure them sufficient cash to practice harvesting, and that would buffer them from the changes in market prices of the goods they sell and require. They have achieved each of these goals only in part.

The income security program agreed upon provides an annual guaranteed income to Cree hunters who meet the basic requirements. Requirements for participation are, generally: a) that more time be spent each year in hunting and related traditional activities than are spent in wage employment; and b) that at least 4 months are spent in hunting and traditional activities of which 90 days are out of settlements "in the bush". In fact, 80 percent of all participants spend over 150 days "in the bush", and 50 percent more than 200 days, almost seven months. Eligibility for any year is based on the activities of the previous year.

The main payment is presently \$15.27 per diem for the head of household, and a similar amount for the consort, for every day spent "in the bush" in hunting and related traditional activities, paid four times a year. This amounts to 75 percent of the total paid under the program, and it is guaranteed to all beneficiaries. In addition a basic amount is calculated for each family based on the composition and size of the family. From this amount 40 percent of all family cash income is deducted, and the balance paid to the family. This amount, which is approximately 25 percent of the total paid, goes primarily to families that have a large number of dependents and to those with relatively few days "in the bush".

In 1977-78 there were a total of 870 beneficiary units, single individuals 18 years of age or over, or heads of families, male or female. The average payment is about \$5300 per year, and the total paid \$5,000,000 per year. This is about \$2,000,000 more than was paid on welfare. Beneficiaries also receive other universal transfer payments such as family allowances, old age pensions, etc., but are not eligible for social aid or welfare. The amounts paid under the program are indexed annually to the cost of living.

The program is not like welfare in several respects. First, it is a legally established program ultimately based on a contractual agreement between Cree and the Government of Quebec, so that it cannot be unilaterally changed by government. Second, beneficiaries have a legal right to benefit if they meet the criteria for eligibility, and they choose whether to meet the criteria and apply for benefits. Third, it does not presuppose that beneficiaries will eventually enter wage employment, it presupposes that hunting will continue on a permanent basis. Fourth, the Cree participate in management and administration of the program. The Quebec government is legally bound to transfer necessary funds to a separate administration, where decisions are taken by a body of 50 percent Native appointees and 50 percent government appointees. The local level administration is entirely Native staffed. Finally, the entire administrative structure is set up to meet hunters' needs, to work in the Native language, to provide cash at time appropriate to hunters' needs, etc.

We are presently studying the initial responses of the Cree hunters to the program and our results to date are incomplete. The main indication I can give of the response is the history of enrollment. During the initial registration there was a provision to admit people who wanted to try hunting as a way of life, but who were not currently doing so. Approximately 300 beneficiary units were admitted under this provision, approximately 43 percent of 700 already hunting as their main source of livelihood. After one year of operation about 75 dropped out, and the remaining 225 stayed. These people have effectively returned to, or begun hunting as their major productive activity, apparently as a result of the establishment of the program.

Other preliminary results suggest that hunters stay away longer in the bush, and most of those who had not taken their families to the bush in the recent past because of the costs involved have begun to do so. In some communities more isolated geographical areas have begun to be used because of the additional funds to cover travel costs, and significant new capitalization has occurred to increase the ease and efficiency of hunting - skidoos especially being purchased in large numbers. Data on harvests are still only available for a few communities, but it appears that individual harvests may not have increased, although the increase in people hunting may have increased the total harvest proportionally.

These data are far too limited, and cover too short a term to draw any conclusions concerning whether the Income Security Program will meet its stated objectives, namely to:



"... ensure that hunting, fishing and trapping shall constitute a viable way of life for the Cree people, and that individual Crees who elect to pursue such a way of life shall be granted a measure of economic security consistent with conditions prevailing from time to time."

A study of the program and its impacts is important for the alternative anthropological models of the transformations that occur to economies that are partially subsistence based when they become dependent on goods manufactured in industrial production and on cash transfer payments. It will also be worth examining whether the maintenance of this subsistence production is itself an important factor in the levels of autonomy or dependence experienced by the Cree.

### Conclusions

The data are too limited to comment on whether this particular land claims settlement will meet the objectives the Native people hold for it. It is already clear that it is not considered an adequate model for other areas in the Canadian north, given the particular goals, values and aspirations of other Native groups. Nevertheless much is to be learned from the study of such changes.

Not the least that can be learned is how to test and improve anthropological theories of the cultural, social and economic structures of hunting and gathering societies, how they interact, and to what extent and how they may be transformable. It especially clarifies what these possibilities are when the hunters themselves set out to self-consciously have a more determining say in their own future interactions with the larger political and economic spheres. And, finally, but not least, studies such as these may inform us of how theory, knowledge and action may be integrated in history by anthropologists, as they constantly are by those we study.